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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
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**ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES
POUR L'ÉDUCATION, LA SCIENCE ET LA CULTURE**

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

**COMITÉ INTERGOUVERNEMENTAL DE LA PROTECTION
DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL CULTUREL ET NATUREL**

**Extended forty-fifth session
Quarante-cinquième session élargie**

**Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia / Riyad, Royaume d'Arabie saoudite
10-25 September 2023 / 10-25 septembre 2023**

SUMMARY RECORDS

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The text contained in the present document is a transcription of the debates of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee held on 10-25 September 2023 at Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is therefore to be considered as a verbatim.

Le texte contenu dans le présent document est une transcription des débats de la 45^e session élargie du Comité du patrimoine mondial tenue à Riyad, Royaume d'Arabie saoudite, du 10-25 septembre 2023. Il doit donc être considéré comme un verbatim.

N.B: *The languages used for the verbatim of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee are English and French.*

Les langues utilisées pour le verbatim de la 45^e session élargie du Comité du patrimoine mondial sont l'anglais et le français.

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INTRODUCTION

The session was chaired by Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais, Chairperson of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee.

The 21 Members of the World Heritage Committee were present: Argentina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand, Zambia.

Representatives of the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee, namely the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) also attended the session.

The session was conducted in two languages: English and French - the two working languages of the Committee - with additional interpretation in Arabic provided by the Host Country. Thanks to the generosity of the Kingdom of Spain and of the Russian Federation, Spanish interpretation was also available for the entire duration of the meeting, as well as Russian interpretation from 11 to 20 September. Interventions and comments made originally in another language are indicated by *[interpretation from xxx]* at the beginning of the transcription.

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre provided the Secretariat for the meeting.

The following 110 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, which are not members of the Committee, were represented as Observers:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Holy See, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru,

INTRODUCTION

La session a été présidée par le Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais, Président de la 45^e session élargie du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

Les 21 membres du Comité du patrimoine mondial étaient présents : Afrique du Sud, Arabie saoudite, Argentine, Belgique, Bulgarie, Égypte, Éthiopie, Fédération de Russie, Grèce, Inde, Italie, Japon, Mali, Mexique, Nigeria, Oman, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint-Vincent-et-les-Grenadines, Thaïlande, Zambie.

Des représentants des Organisations consultatives du Comité du patrimoine mondial, à savoir le Centre international d'études pour la conservation et la restauration des biens culturels (ICCROM), le Conseil international des monuments et des sites (ICOMOS) et l'Union internationale pour la conservation de la nature (IUCN), ont également assisté à la session.

La session s'est déroulée en deux langues : anglais et français - les deux langues de travail du Comité - avec une interprétation supplémentaire en arabe fournie par le pays hôte. Grâce à la générosité du Royaume d'Espagne et de la Fédération de Russie, l'interprétation a également été disponible pendant toute la durée de la séance en espagnol et du 11 au 20 septembre en russe. Les interventions et commentaires effectués dans une autre langue sont indiqués par *[interprétation de/du xxx]* au début de la transcription.

Le Centre du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO a assuré le secrétariat de la séance.

Les 110 États parties à la Convention du patrimoine mondial suivants, qui ne sont pas membres du Comité, étaient représentés en tant qu'observateurs :

Afghanistan, Albanie, Algérie, Allemagne, Andorre, Angola, Arménie, Australie, Autriche, Azerbaïdjan, Bahreïn, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bénin, Bosnie-Herzégovine, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cambodge, Cameroun, Canada, Chili, Chine, Chypre, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatie, Cuba, Danemark, Djibouti, Émirats arabes unis, Espagne, État de Palestine, Finlande, France, Gambie, Géorgie, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinée, Haïti, Hongrie, Indonésie, Iran (République Islamique d'), Iraq, Irlande, Jamaïque, Jordanie, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kirghizistan, Koweït, Lettonie, Liban, Libéria, Lituanie, Macédoine du Nord, Madagascar, Malaisie, Malte, Maroc, Mauritanie, Maurice, Monaco, Mongolie, Monténégro, Myanmar, Namibie, Népal, Nouvelle-Zélande, Norvège, Ouganda, Pakistan, Palaos, Panama, Paraguay, Pays-Bas, Pérou, Philippines,

Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint-Lucia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Pologne, Portugal, République de Corée, République démocratique populaire lao, République dominicaine, République-Unie de Tanzanie, Roumanie, Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord, Saint-Siège, Sainte-Lucie, Sénégal, Serbie, Singapour, Slovaquie, Slovénie, Sri Lanka, Soudan, Suriname, Suède, Suisse, Tadjikistan, Tunisie, Türkiye, Turkménistan, Ukraine, États-Unis d'Amérique, Ouzbékistan, Venezuela (République bolivarienne du), Viet Nam, Yémen, Zimbabwe.

Sunday 10 September 2023

OPENING CEREMONY

The Opening Ceremony of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee was held in Al-Riyadh (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).

Speeches were delivered by the following dignitaries:

- H.H. Prince Badr bin Abdullah Al-Saud, Minister of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- H.E. Ms. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO

The speeches were followed by a cultural performance and a reception at the National Museum of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh.

Dimanche 10 septembre 2023

CÉRÉMONIE D'OUVERTURE

La cérémonie d'ouverture de la 45^e session élargie du Comité du patrimoine mondial s'est tenue à Al-Riyadh (Royaume d'Arabie saoudite).

Les discours ont été prononcés par les dignitaires suivants :

- S.A.R. le Prince Badr bin Abdullah Al-Saud, Ministre de la Culture du Royaume d'Arabie saoudite
- S.E. Mme Audrey Azoulay, Directrice générale de l'UNESCO

Les discours ont été suivis par un spectacle culturel et une réception au Musée national de l'Arabie saoudite, Riyad.

FIRST DAY
Monday, 11 September 2023
FIRST PLENARY MEETING
10:17 am – 1:12 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

PREMIER JOUR
Lundi 11 septembre 2023
PREMIÈRE SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h17 – 13h12
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

1. OPENING SESSION // SÉANCE D'OUVERTURE

The Chairperson:

Shall we have a seat?

Dear Colleagues,

Please allow me to welcome you again at the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee. I hope you have had a pleasant evening yesterday and that you enjoyed the Opening Ceremony.

Before we start with our work, the Assistant Minister of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the General Supervisor of the Saudi National Commission for Education and Culture and Science, His Excellency Mr. Rakan Ibrahim Al-Touq, and the UNESCO Director-General, Madam Audrey Azoulay, honour us with their presence in this first Plenary meeting and will address the Distinguished members of the World Heritage Committee.

I would now like to give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rakan Ibrahim Al-Touq. Please, Your Excellency.

Assistant Minister of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

[message from the interpreter] Unfortunately, the sound is not making it into the booth. Unfortunately, there is no sound for the English booth. Unfortunately, the interpreters cannot hear the original, it appears that there is a problem with the microphone of the speaker. Message from the English booth interpreters: unfortunately, the microphones at the lectern do not seem to be working. Message from the interpreters: it would appear that the microphones at the lectern are not working. *[end of the message from the interpreter]*

The Chairperson:

Dear interpreters,

Do you hear us from here?

[message from the interpreter] Message from the interpreter: we can hear you loud and clear from the podium. Yes. *[end of the message from the interpreter]*

The Chairperson:

Apologies, Your Excellencies, dear colleagues.

There was an issue, the mic was not linked to the interpreters so that they couldn't interpret the speech. So, we'll do it from the podium. Apologies again.

Assistant Minister of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

Apologies, this is technical difficulties. Everybody appreciates everyone's patience. So, I'll start over with better translation, I hope.

[interpretation from Arabic] Madam Director-General of UNESCO, Director of the World Heritage Centre, Director of ICCROM, Director of ICOMOS, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May peace and blessings be upon you. I should like to welcome you to the 45th extended session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO. I'm delighted to inaugurate the work of this session, and His Highness Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Farhan Al-Saud, Minister of Culture and President of the Saudi National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, extend their wishes for a most successful session here at this session of the World Heritage Committee so as to protect and safeguard the heritage of humanity. We want to build on the synergies to protect heritage and its various forms, because heritage conveys the essential values of our humanity, and they stand for our future not only our past. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and especially thanks to our Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz, may God protect him, has been able to set the guidelines for all of the efforts deployed in this country for safeguarding heritage. In the course of this Committee's work here at the 45th extended session, we shall be working for protecting heritage but also for sustainable development. Obviously, we need sustainable solutions to safeguard the world's heritage, and it's important that we have a shared vision to be adopted by all States Parties so as to and this is where the Committee's efforts for safeguarding are going to prove vital.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is doing its utmost at safeguard its World Heritage sites, and we shall continue to do our utmost to lend our support to the cultural sector and to ensure that the inventories are up to date so that we can protect our natural and cultural sites. So, we have developed our human resources, we have created a Saudi fund under the auspices of UNESCO so as to better safeguard World Heritage going forward, and we feel that it's important to work hand in hand with the World Heritage Committee when it comes to our shared objectives. We have an overarching vision for the shared protection of World Heritage sites and shall continue to bolster our efforts across all areas of action of the Committee, and we are very aware of how important the Committee's work is. We would like to extend our thanks to all of you for your participation, for having come to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and we want to thank the States Parties of UNESCO who are here present for having honoured us with their presence, and we wish you every success here at the Committee in your work and we extend the same thanks to all of the different associations and organizations that are working towards a well protecting World Heritage and sustainable development.

Thank you. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much Excellency for this very enlightening message that will accompany us through our work during the next two weeks.

Now, it is my pleasure to give the floor to the UNESCO Director-General, Madam Audrey Azoulay.

Please, Madam Director-General, you have the floor.

La Directrice générale de l'UNESCO :

M. le Président du Comité du patrimoine mondial, Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais, M. le Vice-ministre de la Culture, Excellence Rakan Ibrahim Al-Touq, Mmes et MM. les Ministres, Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs, très chers amis.

Je suis particulièrement heureuse d'ouvrir ici avec vous cette session élargie du Comité du patrimoine mondial. Avant tout, je voudrais redire ici solennellement au peuple marocain, en notre nom à tous, notre émotion, notre solidarité.

[interprétation française de l'arabe] Nos sincères condoléances au peuple marocain et au roi Mohammed VI. *[fin de l'interprétation française de l'arabe]*

Nous serons bien sûr à leurs côtés le moment venu. Mais aujourd'hui, nous nous retrouvons à Riyad pour un moment très attendu, avec un programme de travail dense. Ce Comité va examiner ainsi 50 propositions d'inscriptions, ainsi qu'un nombre exceptionnel de rapports sur la conservation des sites du patrimoine mondial. Ces chiffres nous disent combien est grand, dans le monde contemporain, le besoin de nous appuyer sur le patrimoine culturel, le patrimoine naturel aussi. Mais ils disent aussi combien le patrimoine a besoin de nous, de nos efforts pour le conserver, pour le valoriser, pour le transmettre.

Je veux donc remercier l'Arabie saoudite d'accueillir cette importante session. Je me souviens du rôle pionnier qu'a joué le Royaume, alors Président du G20, désormais G21, pour lancer des sessions dédiées à la culture, encouragées et soutenues par toutes les présidences successives depuis. Cet engagement en faveur de la culture s'ancre, bien sûr et avant tout, dans la profondeur et dans l'authenticité des patrimoines culturels et naturels de ce pays, dont témoignent tant de traditions et de sites exceptionnels. Mais il témoigne aussi d'un choix important pour l'avenir, car la culture emporte avec elle des opportunités uniques de dialogue, d'approfondissement de la connaissance, et possède cette rare vertu d'allier identité et universalité. La diversité des dossiers examinés à ce Comité et des Délégations ici présentes en témoigne. Soyez tous les bienvenus, car chacun a sa place autour de cette table, chacun aussi a sa part de responsabilité. Dans le monde entier, nous sommes mobilisés pour mettre les patrimoines plus haut dans l'Agenda des politiques publiques et nous pouvons nous appuyer sur ce socle normatif universel qu'est notre Convention pour le patrimoine mondial. Depuis sa ratification, en mai dernier, par les Tuvalu, la Convention compte désormais 195 États parties et nous aurons besoin de ce socle universel, de sa lettre mais aussi de son esprit, face aux défis à relever. L'universalité d'abord. La Liste des sites du patrimoine mondial ne l'incarne pas tout à fait encore. 27 États n'y ont encore aucun site inscrit. L'UNESCO travaille sans relâche pour y remédier, notamment en vertu de notre priorité pour l'Afrique. L'intégralité des 12 pays africains non-représentés au patrimoine mondial aujourd'hui sont soutenus par l'UNESCO pour pouvoir présenter, d'ici deux ans, une proposition d'inscription, et dès cette session, sept sites en Afrique seront examinés. Nous formons aussi, sur le terrain, des dizaines d'experts africains du patrimoine, et dont la moitié sont des femmes.

Nous pourrions, je l'espère aussi, nous réjouir collectivement d'une bonne nouvelle en la matière puisque les Tombes des rois du Buganda à Kasubi en Ouganda pourraient, si vous le décidez, sortir au cours de cette session de la Liste du patrimoine en péril, après 13 années de travail conjoint. Mais, ce n'est qu'un début, car d'ici 2029, notre objectif est que la moitié des sites africains figurant aujourd'hui sur la Liste du patrimoine en péril puissent en sortir. Rendre le patrimoine mondial plus équitable, c'est aussi repenser parfois la gestion et la compréhension des lieux. C'est notamment mieux protéger le rôle des populations locales et des peuples autochtones pour l'identification et la sauvegarde des sites. C'est aussi pouvoir mieux lutter contre le tourisme irraisonné, qui sacrifie aux intérêts du moment la pérennité des trésors légués par les siècles, et pour cela, il nous faut aborder le travail

de conservation comme un processus social, économique et environnemental, un travail pour le progrès et la justice, comme en témoignent les révisions que ce Comité a apportées aux Orientations de la Convention au cours des années passées.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our regular reports show the existential threat, which is climate disruption, the existential threat it poses to our heritage. You know that we emerge from the hottest month of July on record, we know that floods devastate sites and populations as coastal erosion threatens the very existence of island nations.

Seven in ten marine and coastal World Heritage sites are directly endangered. Yet, a joint study by UNESCO and the IUCN, published at the end of last month, showed the crucial role of our sites for biodiversity: although they cover just 1% of the Earth's surface, our sites are home to 20% of known species. They protect life in its all its diversity, and human life too. I have witnessed, around the world, the success of strategies that combine the protection of nature and sustainable employment. But we have seen recently the destruction caused by extreme climate conditions in Madagascar, in Pakistan, in Cuba, in Peru. UNESCO has sent teams to each of these countries, to evaluate damage and support the preparation for the reconstruction, thanks to the Heritage Emergency Fund. But we also need to be better prepared for the long term. This is why, by 2025, all World Heritage site managers will have received training on climate adaptation strategies.

Excellencies,

We also know all too well that armed conflicts can sometimes ruin, in an instant, heritage shaped over centuries, when cultural and natural heritage is victim of combat. I am thinking, of course, of Ukraine, of Yemen, where UNESCO has rolled out decisive action in the field. But there are also other crises theatres: in Sudan, and you know that UNESCO has a very dear and particular history with the Sudanese Nubia. I am thinking also of great stretches of the African continent, from Kivu to the Sahel, where armed gangs are ransacking populations and heritage, as well as in Haiti. In a few days' time, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, we will show, in an exhibition, how powerful culture can be in supporting societies devastated by conflict, building also on the exceptional work we have done in Mosul, Iraq, in recent years, thanks to our collective mobilization.

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Vous aurez aussi lors de ce Comité à vous prononcer en responsabilité sur l'articulation sensible entre mémoire et patrimoine, à travers trois inscriptions proposées : en Europe, en Amérique latine et en Afrique. Des lieux qui incarnent, dans la Liste du patrimoine mondial, cette vocation singulière de mémoire, à l'instar du site d'Auschwitz-Birkenau, qui matérialise plus qu'aucun autre la tragédie de la Shoah et oppose la force des faits historiques à ceux qui s'essaient à les nier, les minimiser ou les déformer. Les témoins passent mais les sites resteront et continueront de parler aux générations, en gardiens vigilants de la mémoire et de la conscience collective. Ces sites qui portent les stigmates de l'histoire sont à la fois des lieux de recueillement et de vérité indispensables à la justice. Ils doivent pouvoir, en étant préservés et rendus accessibles au public, jouer un rôle d'éducation, de transmission, pour faire le lien entre passé et présent et construire la conscience universelle de l'humanité. Ce seront donc des dossiers importants sur lesquels vous aurez à vous prononcer lors de cette session.

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

La notion même de patrimoine s'enrichit, se complifie devant nos yeux. C'est pourquoi il faudra plus que jamais conserver cet esprit de responsabilité et de consensus qui a caractérisé, ces dernières années, les travaux de ce Comité en particulier et de l'UNESCO en général. Cette unité est notre force et nous en avons déjà collectivement recueilli les fruits. Je veux particulièrement remercier ici les Délégations palestinienne, israélienne et jordanienne, toutes ici présentes, pour leur confiance qui a permis à la médiation du Secrétariat de vous présenter, une nouvelle fois, des textes faisant l'objet de consensus, à rebours de tous les déterminismes. Je veux remercier les Délégations des autres pays qui ont soutenu ces efforts.

Je veux féliciter aussi particulièrement le Japon et la République de Corée qui nous ont fait confiance, qui ont fait confiance à la médiation du Secrétariat et qui ont permis de présenter un texte sur l'interprétation d'un site inscrit en 2015, où là encore mémoire, histoire et patrimoine s'entremêlent de façon complexe et sensible. C'est donc sous les auspices du dialogue et de l'esprit de consensus que je vous souhaite de fructueux travaux et remercie de nouveau le Royaume d'Arabie saoudite d'accueillir cette session consacrée à l'héritage du monde. Souvenons-nous que nous n'en sommes pas propriétaires, mais seulement dépositaires et passeurs.

Je vous remercie infiniment.

The Chairperson:

Many thanks, Madam Director-General for these wise and inspiring words.

2. ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS // ADMISSION DES OBSERVATEURS

The Chairperson:

So, moving to our schedule and work to directly Item 2.

Dear colleagues,

With deep gratitude for your trust in me as a Chairperson of this session, I wish to highlight my hope that, once again, all of us, Committee members and representatives of the States Parties, colleagues from the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies, as well as other organizations and stakeholders, all work together in a true spirit of multilateralism and through dialogue and cooperation, to promote the values of the World Heritage Convention, to forge trust and solidarity, and to make this awaited extended session successful.

I have no doubt that we all have at heart to achieve a consensus on all the draft decisions proposed before us and I will spare no effort in this regard.

This is our first session *in praesentia* since four years and the first one since 2021. We have, therefore, a very heavy agenda. Hence, I would like to remind all the participants to strictly follow the time limits of interventions and requirements of the Rules of Procedures, so that we can keep in pace with our timetable. Please also understand that although I will try my best to let all interested Parties make interventions and comments as per our Rules of Procedure, I may not be able to give floor to every observer every time. In this regard, I would like to already ask NGOs to group their various interventions on the subject matter into one joint statement, and to focus on this matter only. In addition, as a Chairperson, I want to make it very clear that I will reserve the right to interrupt any intervention, either by Committee members or Observers alike, which is not directly related to the technical item under examination by the Committee. I thank you in advance for your cooperation in this regard.

So, His Excellency and the Director-General will leave us, and we give them a round of applause for their presence and honouring us today. *[applause]*

Dear Committee members,

Now I would like to proceed with the Agenda and start with Document WHC/23/45.COM/2.Rev: "Requests for Observer Status". Before considering the admission of Observers, I would like to give the floor to the Director of World Heritage Centre and Secretary of the 1972 Convention, Mr. Eloundou Assomo for some general announcements.

Mr. Eloundou Assomo, please, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

First of all, allow me to recall that the Committee, at its 35th session, decided that World Heritage Committee meetings should be live streamed over the web. Therefore, the debates of our session will be live streamed through the address which appears on the screen now and which is also available on the website of the extended 45th session of the Committee.

Secondly, allow me to indicate that UNESCO gratefully acknowledges the Host Country for providing interpretation in Arabic throughout for the session. Please also note that thanks to the generosity of the Kingdom of Spain, interpretation will be available in Spanish for the duration of the entire meeting.

Finally, please also be informed that we will benefit from Russian interpretation from 12 to 20 September thanks to the generosity of the Russian Federation.

In this regard, I invite the Arabic, Spanish and Russian language speakers to choose in which working language, English or French, they would like to see their interventions being reflected in the Summary Records of the session. Your choice should be indicated orally at the time of your first intervention. It should also be transmitted in writing to the Secretariat before the end of our session today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much Mr. Director.

We now turn our attention to admission of Observers. The list is presented in Document 2.Rev, in accordance with Article 8 of the Rules of Procedure. For your information, this is a bilingual document.

I would like to ask our dear Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendments for this decision. It may be adopted as it is in 45.COM/2.Rev.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Ms. Rapporteur.

Dear colleagues, I have now to ask you if you agree to the presence of these Observers throughout the session.

I see no intervention. *[gavel]*

Thank you. I declare that Agenda Item 2 is closed.

3A. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA // ADOPTION DE L'ORDRE DU JOUR

The Chairperson:

Dear Committee members,

We can now move to the review of the Agenda and the Timetable of our session, Items 3A and 3B.

The provisional Agenda is presented to you in Document WHC/23/45.COM/3A, and the provisional Timetable in Document WHC/23/45.COM/3B and its Corrigendum.

Dear Committee members,

As you are aware, the Bureau held its first meeting this morning, as explained in our occasions, in reference to the state of conservation reports open for discussion. I propose that should any further request come from Committee members during the session, we would, we do accept them only until general Item 7 is open tomorrow morning at 10:00 am, then the final list of reports to be discussed will be closed. I also propose that any last-minute requests be only discussed after 24 hours to let sufficient time for all Committee members and experts to be prepared and to ensure a well-informed decision-making process. Furthermore, as we heard from the Director, only for state of conservation are open for discussion under Item 7A, which concerns the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Yet, two days are allocated to discuss this item, Tuesday 12 and Wednesday 13 September. With your agreement, I suggest that, in the interests of time management, we advance in the examination of Item 7B as soon as the time Item 7A is closed.

Dear colleagues,

Regarding Item 8B on nominations, considering the latest withdrawals, currently we have 50 nominations to examine between Saturday 16 September afternoon and Wednesday 20 September. And even in applying a strict scheduling, there would still be an issue of time management, as most probably we would not be able to achieve the examination of Item 8B by the end of the Wednesday session. For this reason, and in order to save time, I suggest that for the nominations that are recommended for inscription and do not present any particular potential issue, I will congratulate on behalf of the Committee, the State Party concerned and give it to the floor for two minutes statement. To this extent, I will ask for the cooperation of all Committee members, and Observers alike, as it would be preferable to unify applying this standard as from the beginning of the examination of all nominations with your agreement. I will remind you this principle while introducing Item 8B. In addition, there will be a specific space dedicated to celebrate, next to the Bureau Meeting Room on the left side.

I would like to invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo, to present the Agenda and the Timetable of this session, as contained in the relevant documents. These documents should be read in conjunction with Document WHC/23/45.COM/INF.3A.Rev.2, which contains the Provisional list of documents for our session.

Mr. Eloundou Assomo, you have the mic.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

First of all, allow me to recall that the provisional Agenda of the 45th session contained in Document 3A was already adopted by the Committee at its extended 44th session in July 2021, and I would like to remind you Decision **44 COM 4**. However, as you will remember following the decision in April 2022 to postpone the 45th session, the Committee, during its 18th extraordinary session in January 2023, examined the modalities of the present session and decided the session will be an extended one which Agenda will contain items already scheduled for the 45th session that would have been held in 2022 and items already scheduled for 2023 during the previous sessions of the Committee which are:

Items 5D on the World Heritage Convention and Sustainable Development.

Item 10B on the Report on the results of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Furthermore, Item 15 has been completed with a proposal for the budget of the biennium 2024-2025.

It is important to note that the number of items has not been doubled compared to the session initially scheduled in 2022, as the reporting period covered for regular/recurrent items (for example, the Report of the Secretariat and the one of the Advisory Bodies) has been extended from one to two years, without any additional document.

However, the number of State of conservation reports has been doubled, indeed the reports scheduled for examination in 2023 have been added to those already planned for in 2022. The number of reports on state of conservation you will have to decide on is therefore amounting 263.

The number of nominations has also been doubled: nominations scheduled for examination in 2022 will therefore have to be examined together with those already scheduled for examination in 2023 amounting to 50 nominations.

Distinguished members of the Committee, the provisional Timetable of the session is contained in Documents 3B and Corr. and includes a number of Agenda Items that are proposed to be adopted without debate, as indicated already during the 18th extraordinary session of the Committee. And those items appear in the document with grey highlight in your old documents. A short presentation of those items will be made by the Secretariat or the Advisory Bodies, and we will move directly to the adoption of the draft decision.

Of course, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies will stand ready to answer Committee members' questions while examining the relevant paragraphs of the draft decisions.

Allow me to recall also that all practical information for the holding of this session are included in Document INF.1 providing general information.

Distinguished members of the Committee, allow me to recall that due to the number of items on our Agenda and the time constraints, Rule 22.2 of the Rules of Procedures, which grants the Chairperson with the possibility to limit the time allowed to each speaker will be applied if circumstances make this desirable.

Time for interventions therefore will be limited to three minutes for Committee members and two minutes for Observers. In this regard, please note that a timer system to gauge interventions is in place which will blink in red whenever a speaker exceeding the recommended time limit. Concerning the interventions by Observers from civil society and NGOs, we strongly advise if they wish to take the floor on the same topic, to hold consultation among them in order to prepare and deliver one single intervention.

In order to save time as much as possible, we also appeal to you not to repeat what other Delegations have said or for making congratulatory statements.

Official statements/declarations should be transmitted to the Secretariat in writing as soon as they have been delivered in order to integrate them in the Summary Records of the session.

Furthermore, I would like to recall that for the item on "Nominations", after decisions for inscription made by the Committee, the submitting State(s) concerned may be invited by the Chairperson to give a speech. Regardless of the format of the intervention, submitting States will be allotted a total of two minutes. In the case of transboundary / transnational nominations, the duration of interventions (speech by one or more States Parties) shall also not exceed two minutes in total; the coordinating State for the nomination is asked to coordinate in advance the order and format of interventions that will be made. Due to the necessity to allocate a fair amount of time to all files, the cooperation of submitting States in respecting this time requirement would be very much appreciated.

Please note that timing of sessions will be strictly respected and allow me to insist on this point as we will have no possibility to prolong our session. Please note that, as indicated in the Timetable, the meeting of the Bureau will be held every morning from 9:30 to 10:00 am, as of tomorrow Tuesday 12 September, with an exception on Friday 15 and 22 September when the Bureau will be held from 2:30 to 3:00 pm and on Monday 25 September where we will not have a Bureau on the last day of our session.

Dear Committee members,

Allow me to remind you that the bilateral consultations will have to be arranged by Delegations aside of session, the Secretariat will not be able to provide assistance in this regard.

However, for the meetings of Working Groups, or in case of establishment of Drafting Groups by the Chairperson, the Secretariat will facilitate the organization of these meetings. The Secretariat will also participate in these meetings as deemed as necessary.

I would also like to recall that all micros should be turned off when not speaking, so as not to disturb the proceedings.

Please note that no specific coffee breaks are foreseen during our daily meetings.

Mr. Chairperson, as it was indicated in the Bureau meeting, I also wish to remind all Committee members that all amendments to draft decisions have to be submitted well in advance before the discussion to our Rapporteur, Ms. Shikha Jain, in writing, preferably showing the changes proposed in track-changes.

Indeed, considering that the 45th session has an extended Agenda, the Rules of Procedure will have to be strictly respected in order to ensure a timely and smooth processing of all Agenda items. Therefore, amendments to draft decisions shall be submitted by Committee members by email to: wh-rapporteur@unesco.org, using the appropriate form, which has been sent to all Committee member Delegations. Please, ensure that you do not modify the form and do not add new headings.

While Committee members are entitled to submit an amendment at any moment until the decision is made, oral amendments made during the examination of the item concerned should remain, as far as possible, small changes to the wording of the draft decision.

Furthermore, Mr. Chairperson, I want to clarify that “co-sponsoring” of amendments is not an option for Committee sessions, in line with Rule 23.2 of the Rules of Procedure. Committee members can however be co-authors of an amendment, with other submitting Committee members. All co-authors should then always be in CC of the email exchanges and their names should appear in the box entitled “Amendment submitted by the Delegation of...”. Alternatively, a Committee member can take the floor during the Plenary to express its support for a proposed amendment.

The submission of substantial proposals of amendment should be made at least 24 hours before the discussion of the Agenda item concerned, if feasible, in accordance with Rule 23.3 of the Rules of Procedure and as reiterated by the Committee in Decision **15 EXT 3**. This would greatly facilitate the organization of the online debates and an informed decision-making process. The Secretariat will upload written of the submitted proposed amendments on the webpage of the meeting on the World Heritage Centre webpage, under the tab “Documents” and will inform Committee members accordingly in a timely manner.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Eloundou Assomo, for this presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments on this Agenda item. So, thank you. I see no more questions and comments. I now invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 3A**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendments on the Draft Decision **45 COM 3A**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any comments or questions? I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 3A** adopted. *[gavel]*

Also, I declare Agenda Item 3A closed.

3B. ADOPTION OF THE TIMETABLE // ADOPTION DU CALENDRIER

The Chairperson:

I now invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 3B**.

Dear colleagues,

With this information on the outcomes of the Bureau, I would now like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the Draft Decision **45 COM 3B** proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

No amendments are received for the Draft Decision **45 COM 3B**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments or questions? I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 3B** adopted. *[gavel]*

4. REPORT OF THE RAPPOREUR OF THE EXTENDED 44TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE (FUZHOU/ONLINE, 2021) // RAPPORT DU RAPPOREUR DE LA 44^E SESSION ÉLARGIE DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (FUZHOU/EN LIGNE, 2021)

The Chairperson:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us now examine Item 4 of our Agenda.

As you know, Ms. Miray Hasaltun Wosinski, from the Kingdom of Bahrain, was the Rapporteur of the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee, which was held in 2021 online with the Chairperson, Tian Xuejun, from Fuzhou, China.

As you know and remember, in the line of the Decision **18 EXT.COM 3** and Annex 2 of the Document WHC/23/18EXT.COM/3, this Agenda item will be adopted without debate. I now have the pleasure to invite Ms. Hasaltun Wosinski, who is with us today, to present her Report, which will highlight the main issues discussed during our last session.

The Rapporteur of the extended 44th session (Ms. Wosinski):

Dear Mr. Chairperson, members of the Committee, Delegates of States Parties, members of the Secretariat, Advisory Bodies and participants of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee,

I have the pleasure to be here with you today to present my report on the proceedings of the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee, which was held in Fuzhou (China) and online, from 16 to 31 July 2021.

Distinguished Committee members, it was an honour that you allowed me to serve as the Rapporteur of the extended 44th session, which was the first ever session to be held under unique arrangements. I had the privilege to attend the session from the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris with many representatives from the Secretariat of the Convention and from UNESCO; and all other participants including Committee members attended the meeting online.

The extended 44th session was chaired by His Excellency Mr. Tian Xuejun (Shejun) from Fuzhou and I would like to take this opportunity to commend him for his dedication and excellent Chairmanship; as well as the entire team in Fuzhou who contributed immensely to the success of the session. Please also let me offer my gratitude to the UNESCO Secretariat whose assistance was invaluable for my work as Rapporteur during the session.

The session was attended by 1,414 participants in total, including members of the Committee, representatives of States Parties to the Convention, NGOs and Observers.

Over more than two weeks, the World Heritage Committee adopted 360 decisions. Due to exceptional nature of an extended session, some Agenda items were adopted without debate, and many were opened on the first day of the Plenary meetings to allow the creation of consultative groups.

On the second day of debates, the World Heritage Committee endorsed the draft updated "Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage" and requested the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, to revise it for subsequent transmission for consideration and adoption at the 23rd session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in November 2021.

Under Items 7A and 7B, the Committee examined 255 State of conservation reports which included the 53 properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger at the time, and 20 reports were open for discussion. Two properties were recommended for deletion, and following a vote by secret ballot, Liverpool, Maritime Mercantile City (United Kingdom) was removed from the World Heritage List while Selous Game Reserve (United Republic of Tanzania) was retained on the List in Danger.

In addition, seven properties were recommended for inscription on the List in Danger, however the Committee decided not to approve those. The reasons given were largely based on the consequences of the pandemics, particularly the impossibility of carrying out missions and also the difficulty of balancing conservation and development.

Furthermore, one property recommended to be maintained on the List in Danger was removed from the List (Salonga National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo). Lastly, one property was inscribed at the same time on the World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Roşia Montană, Romania). 52 properties are currently inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Regarding Nominations, the World Heritage Committee inscribed 34 new properties on the World Heritage List (five natural and 29 cultural). In total 17 properties were not recommended for inscription at the 44th session, but the Committee decided to inscribe 15 of those. Furthermore, eight referrals and seven deferrals became inscriptions. The newly inscribed property Borders of the Roman Empire – the Danube Limes (western segment) was heavily debated by the Committee following the withdrawal of one of the nominating countries from the nomination after the evaluation of the site had been made. Consequently, ICOMOS declared that its evaluation was no longer valid. The property was inscribed after a vote by secret ballot.

The Committee also referred one nomination back, the Heart of Bronze Age Culture, Mongolia, and adjourned *sine die* the examination of the nomination of the property Gdańsk (Poland). Lastly, it approved the extension of three properties already inscribed on the List.

The World Heritage List now consists of 1,157 properties, of which 900 are cultural, 218 are natural and 39 are mixed.

Mr. Chairperson, let me add that under Agenda Item 8, the Committee had a discussion on the purpose and scope of the World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines in relation to “sites of memory associated with recent conflicts”. Consequently, a Drafting Group was established in order to arrive at a consensus draft decision. However, after an extensive debate, and since no conclusion was reached, the Committee decided to establish an Open-ended Working Group open to all States Parties to the Convention, the results of which will be presented for consideration at the current session.

Distinguished Delegates, following the recommendations of the Ad-hoc Working Group, the Committee decided to adopt the reformed nomination process which aims at restoring and enhancing the credibility and balance of the World Heritage List. The Committee also decided to extend the mandate of the Ad-hoc in two sub-groups, to propose innovative solutions to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the reform, and the outcomes will be reviewed at the present session as well.

Before I conclude, allow me to wish all the best to Ms. Shikha Jain from India, Rapporteur of the present session, who I am certain will find this important role equally demanding and rewarding just like I did. I wish all the members of the Committee rich debates, smooth proceedings, and a successful session under the excellent Chairmanship of His Excellency Dr Abdulrahman Al-Tokhais. Lastly, I present my sincere thanks to the Host Country of Saudi Arabia for this outstanding organization.

Thank you for your attention and *shukran jazeelan*.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for your presentation.

On behalf of all the Committee members, I would like to reiterate our gratitude to Ms. Hasaltun Wosinski for such a high-quality work. I also wish to thank the State Party of China, once more, for the perfect organization and conditions provided for the previous session.

I propose that the Committee takes note of the Report by the Rapporteur of the extended 44th session. Is there any comment or question on the report of last session? I see none.

I propose that the Committee takes note of the Report by the Rapporteur of the extended [44]th session. If there is no other objection, it is so decided. *[gavel]*

15. PRESENTATION OF THE FINAL ACCOUNTS OF THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND FOR 2020-2021, REPORT ON THE EXECUTION OF THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2022-2023, BUDGET PROPOSAL OF THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND UNDER THE BIENNIUM 2024-2025 AND FOLLOW UP DECISION 44 COM 14 [Report of the consultative body] // PRÉSENTATION DES COMPTES FINAUX DU FONDS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL AU TITRE DE L'EXERCICE BIENNAL 2020-2021, RAPPORT SUR L'EXÉCUTION DU FONDS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL AU TITRE DE L'EXERCICE BIENNAL 2022-2023, PROPOSITION BUDGÉTAIRE DU FONDS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL POUR L'EXERCICE BIENNAL 2024-2025 ET SUIVI DE LA DECISION 44 COM 14 [Rapport de l'organe consultatif]

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We are now moving to the opening of our Agenda Item 15, dedicated to budget matters. The relevant document for this Item is Document WHC/23/45.COM/15. I would like to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo, who will provide us with some important clarifications regarding this Agenda item.

But before that, I would like to announce this: smoking is not allowed in the venue or indoor anywhere around the property, so please, if you want to smoke, smoke outside the venue.

Mr. Director, the floor is yours.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

As you will remember, the Committee established, by its Decision **35 COM 12B**, a standing consultative body for review of the Committee's biennial budget in conformity with Article 20 of the Rules of Procedure. This Consultative Body is open obviously to all Committee members as well as to States non-members of the Committee that wishes to attend its meetings. I would like also to recall that the Advisory Bodies will have the possibility to attend this Working Group as Observers.

In this regard Mr. Chairperson, I would like to clarify that we will not have any general presentation of the document of the Budget in the Plenary but that, this is done, as per practice, at the first meeting of the Working Group. I would

also strongly encourage all the members of the Committee to attend the first meeting of this Working Group. As per practice, the Working Group will be held for three days at lunch time to avoid heavy Agenda and overlapping of meetings. Furthermore, due to the exceptional duration of the present session, it has been proposed to hold the meetings of the Working Group closer to the examination of the item in Plenary, which is foreseen on 22 September afternoon. So, it is proposed that the Budget Group meets from 18 to 20 September from 2:00 to 3:00 pm.

Allow me also to recall that the whole purpose of this Working Group is to examine the draft decision proposed in order to recommend it on a consensual basis for adoption to the Plenary.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Many thanks.

These are indeed extremely important points to consider in our deliberations.

Dear colleagues,

After having heard the explanation of the Director, can the Committee agree with this proposal? I see no interventions. Let us proceed then. I will ask Mr. Eloundou Assomo as well to answer... Apologies.

Furthermore, as you know, as per Rule 20.2 of the Rules of Procedure, it is of the responsibility of the Working Group to elect its Chairperson. However, I understand that some consultations already took place in this regard, therefore, I would like to know if a Distinguished Delegation would like to make a proposal. State of Qatar, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. *Salem Aleykum*. I wish you every success and the same to all. So, I would like Madam Yara Al-Ghafri from the Sultanate of Oman for the position. She has a great deal of experience in the field, since she chaired the working group, and thank you very much Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Good morning. We would like to support the candidature put forward by Qatar. We would like Madam Yara Al-Ghafri to spearhead the Ad-hoc Working Group. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, your Excellencies.

If there is no objection to this proposal, this is so decided.

Congratulations to Ms. Al-Ghafri, who will be with us in a couple of days. *[gavel]*

Thank you very much for your cooperation on this. Based on the previous years' practice, and if you are in agreement with this proposal, I would propose that the Budget Working Group meets for its first meeting on 18 September, in the Bureau Meeting Room, from 2:00 to 3:00 pm. We can, therefore, now move to our next Agenda item.

5A. REPORT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE ON ITS ACTIVITIES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE'S DECISIONS // RAPPORT DU CENTRE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL SUR SES ACTIVITÉS ET SUR LA MISE EN ŒUVRE DES DÉCISIONS DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We are moving to the next item concerning the Report of the World Heritage Centre on its activities undertaken since the last session of the World Heritage Committee in July 2021 until May 2023, which is contained in Document 45.COM/5A. This report of the Secretariat spans over a two-year period and is therefore very comprehensive.

I would like to thank, on behalf of all the Committee members and States Parties, the World Heritage Centre for the excellent work conducted under the leadership of Mr. Eloundou Assomo.

The Report of the World Heritage Centre on its activities will now be introduced by the Director of the World Heritage Centre.

Please, Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

As I indicated, this report covers a two-year period, so, bear with me, I'll try not to be too long, but to give you the most important points of this report. First of all, let me start by explaining a little bit the structure of the report of the Secretariat on its activities. Since 2021, and to align with the reporting processes of the Governing Bodies of the different Culture Conventions, the information was streamlined to emphasize the synergies between Conventions while highlighting the overall strategic assessment of the Secretariat's activities, its keys achievements and challenges encountered.

Keeping into account that no session of the Committee could be held in 2022, this Document 5A presents a report on the main activities that were conducted during this period and the results, and follows the structure of Expected Result 1 of Major Programme IV, as defined in the Approved 40 C/5. So, the narrative part presents notably the progress made against the performance indicators, a report on World Heritage Thematic Programmes and Initiatives, a report on the synergies with other Conventions and Programmes, and, finally, the challenges and way forward.

I also want to bring to your attention that the table contained in Annex 1 presents a list of activities with results obtained in pursuit of the 5 Cs, to recall: Credibility, Conservation, Capacity-building, Communication and Communities. That's for Annex 1. For Annex 2 of the Report, it contains the status of the implementation of the decisions at the extended [44]th session. Annex 3 of the Report provides a list of meetings related to World Heritage from August 2021 to December 2023. In Annex 4, you'll have a report on the use of the World Heritage Emblem, while Annex 5 inventories World Heritage partnerships.

Now, just a word on the structure and composition of the World Heritage Centre, for the World Heritage Centre, which is an entity of the Culture Sector, headed by the Assistant General Director for Culture, as Director, I am supported by a Deputy Director, five Regional Units supporting the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, a specific unit team dedicated to Natural Heritage as well as a team dedicated to Nomination matters, in addition to a unit which is responsible for Policy and Statutory Meetings.

As you know, the number of posts has decreased over the last years while the number of properties on the World Heritage List and the tasks for the World Heritage Centre have constantly increased. So, we are facing a situation that is no longer sustainable, and sustainable solutions will have to be identified very soon.

In this regard, it is to be noted that without extra-budgetary support, it would be difficult for the World Heritage Centre to continue with its work, which I think most of you have been appreciating. This gives me the opportunity to thank all the States Parties who are financing several positions within the Centre and namely Austria, Belgium, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Oman, the Republic of Korea, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sweden and Spain via secondments, Junior Professional Officers, Project appointments under extra-budgetary projects or through contributions to the sub-account for Human Resources.

Just to recall the Expected Results, the activities of the World Heritage Centre are fully in line with the Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2029) and the Approved Programme and Budget for [2020]-2021 of the 40 C/5.

For the World Heritage Convention, you know that one Expected Result was established which is "Tangible heritage identified, protected, monitored and sustainably managed by Member States, in particular through the effective implementation of the 1972 Convention".

And of course, we have five clear Performance Indicators that have been developed to track progress and achievements for this Expected Result.

You also know that a special attention is paid to UNESCO's two global priorities, and the Director-General has mentioned in her intervention already, Africa Priority and also Gender Equality, in all activities, the Secretariat, as well as to priority target groups, we are giving priority target groups Youth and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) a focus and a priority in this sense. In this regard, an item related to Priority Africa is inscribed on the Agenda of the Committee since 2018, and this current session will be examining a proposed Strategy for World Heritage in Africa.

A specific report on activities of the World Heritage Programme for SIDS is also included in Document 5A as part of the report on the Thematic Programmes.

With regards to Performance Indicator 1, you have all details in the Report.

We have heard the key outcomes of the last session of the World Heritage Committee from the Rapporteur. The decisions report and the video recordings of the session are fully available on the website of the extended 44 COM, as well as the Summary Records.

And just for you to know, since our unique extended 44th session in 2021, which, as you recall, was held online, circumstances did not allow for the Committee to meet in regular session. To respond to such a special situation several meetings were organized to prepare our ongoing session and notably two meetings of the Bureau as well as two extraordinary meetings of the Committee. This is therefore our first meeting *in praesentia* in four years and I know that a lot of expectations are awaited from this meeting.

But in the meantime, several meetings were organized in between our last session in 2021 and notably three different Open-ended Working Groups, and most of you participated actively and I would like to thank you for them. Just to recall very quickly:

- This Working Group has developed a consensual “Declaration of principles to promote international solidarity and cooperation to preserve World Heritage” which was endorsed by the last General Assembly in 2021, and this was done through nine online meetings.
- The different Open-ended Working Groups also broadened the scope of the reflections on the sites of memories of recent conflicts, and I don’t have to come back to it because you will be examining three files in this regard but I just want to recall that the outcomes of this Working Group were presented to and by the 18th extraordinary session of the Committee last January.
- This Open-ended Working Group also considered revisions to the Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage with the mandate to develop the final version, and this Open-ended Working Group met six times between March 2022 and July 2023 and a last meeting is foreseen in October 2023 after which the text will then be presented at the next General Assembly of States Parties, And I’d like to thank all the Chairpersons who have been leading this Working Group, from Madagascar and also from Colombia.

Furthermore, the World Heritage Centre continued to provide support for meetings of the Ad-hoc Working Group which met ten times between January 2022 and June 2023, with the mandate to discuss also the reform of the nomination process and related matters, as well as the long-term financial sustainability of all current and potential new Convention funds and mapping. As you know, the recommendations of Ad-hoc Working Group will be reported to our session under Item 11 of the Agenda.

Now, with regard to the performance on capacity-building, as you know capacity-building is one of the 5 Cs that have been set as a strategic objective of the Committee. And this is indeed a major pillar that ensure the proper implementation of the Convention.

Capacity-building requests and needs have increased as a result of, first of all, the last COVID-19 pandemic and consequently activities were implemented in all regions, with a focus on Africa and Arab States, and capacity-building, as you know, concerns, for example, the elaboration of strategies and enhanced management of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger and to set them on a path towards removal from this List.

Capacity-building has been also strengthened through implementation of, for example, impact assessments as well as through activities related to implementation of Global Strategy and the development of Sub-Regional Action Plans for World Heritage in the Caribbean.

It has also been addressed in the framework of the Periodic Reporting Exercise, and we’ll see with the presentation, but always in the framework of issues intrinsic to the World Heritage Convention in Africa. In particular, the World Heritage Centre has reinforced its collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund and universities and Category 2 Centres to develop capacity-building activities targeting African Heritage professionals for the period 2021-2024, but also a mapping of African institutions of higher learning with heritage and everything.

With regard to civil society, which is Performance Indicator 3, higher education activities have been reinforced, notably through the development of curricula on heritage management and conservation, and establishment of UNESCO Chairs, which are actively contributing to training. We also continue the implementation of the World Heritage Education Programme, as you know, and the programme implemented the first online edition of the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum, that was for the Fuzhou meeting, which brought together young professionals from nearly 30 States Parties to discuss, debate and provide recommendations on the theme of World Heritage and sustainable livelihood. But I just want to bring to your attention that this programme is currently facing serious challenges, notably in terms of staffing, which are putting at risk its implementation. Indeed, while you have stressed all the time that education to heritage is recognized as one the highest priorities, there’s no permanent staff within the World Heritage Centre in charge of this programme. So, as I said at the beginning, we really encourage you to provide us with the necessary support.

You know the participation of civil society has been reinforced through the participation in the Site Managers' Forum and side events. We are organizing the fifth edition of the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum here, and I would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the ICCROM and IUCN who are helping us coordinate this. But I also want to inform you that the African Site Managers Network has been established with the support of the World Heritage Centre, in close collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund. This idea is to really bring together all of them to continue to support their work so that they can share experience and also learn from others. But we also have a network, which we are supporting, which is a network of Marine managers, and you know that the World Heritage Marine Programme connects 50 Marine site managers on a daily basis to share solution and improve conservation outcomes. I can list many of them, but what is important also is that, through this Performance Indicator, the support to communities as well as the enhancement of their involvement in the protection of World

Heritage has also been reinforced in many regions and notably in the Africa region. Several activities to strengthen the role of local communities continue to be organized, notably, for example, in India, with the support of the Republic of Korea Funds-in-Trust but also in the Arab States, supported by the Netherlands Funds.

Now, let me move to the Performance Indicator 4 on conservation and Sustainable Development Goals.

And here, you know that the World Heritage Centre has continued to provide technical support for several States Parties for emergency situation after disasters like floods, wildfire, earthquake, and we know exactly what the Kingdom of Morocco has been facing now, and we will continue to support them as the Director-General has said in her intervention. So further details on this are also contained in Document 7, which you are going to examine.

The issue of armed conflict situations have continued to represent a threat to World Heritage sites, notably in Africa where UNESCO has been very active and here we've tried to provide capacity-building under the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund, which we invite you and encourage you to continue supporting, but also with our partners, for example, with ALIPH, the Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict areas and many others also. UNESCO and its World Heritage Centre have been very active and involved in the assistance provided to Ukraine, notably through the development and implementation of the UNESCO Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine, in close cooperation with the Secretariat of the 1954 and the 1970 Conventions. Furthermore, UNESCO has worked closely with the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture, and the World Heritage Centre is an active member of the International Partners for Culture in Ukraine Group, which has met already four times at UNESCO's initiative since the war began. In addition, the World Heritage Centre and the Culture in Emergencies entities cooperate closely to strengthen Ukraine's capacity to undertake urgent cultural heritage protection and recover under the UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust funded project.

Now, let me say a few words on the situation of sites in danger. The World Heritage Centre has continued to provide the necessary technical assistance to several States Parties through different projects and support initiatives thanks to the continued support from UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust, substantial funding from Norway, the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust, and the World Heritage Fund also.

And thanks to funding from Norway, the World Heritage Centre has also developed a study to identify approaches to reverse the negative perceptions of the List of World Heritage in Danger. And more information on this is also found and available under Item 7. Concerning conservation management activities at other sites, the World Heritage Centre continues to provide support for the elaboration or the review of conservation and management plans for World Heritage properties in the region through various means, notably international assistance or voluntary contributions that we are receiving. And as you know and as already indicated, a specific Strategy for World Heritage in Africa is going to be presented to this session and a support for activities to strengthen management and sustainable conservation properties in the continent has been made possible through a funding from Norway. Mr. Chairperson and Distinguished members of the Committee, I also would like to report on one particular issue in view of providing innovative tools for enhancing World Heritage conservation management and virtual accessibility. UNESCO launched the "Dive into Heritage" platform project funded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The project aims to create an accessible online platform that leverages digital technologies to safeguard and promote World Heritage properties and their related intangible heritage. You will be able to better know about this project throughout a side event and an exhibition which will be held during our session.

On sustainable development, you know that further to the adoption of the World Heritage Policy for Sustainable Development in 2015, the Centre continues to mainstream sustainable development in all our activities, and this is reflected in further details in Document 5D that you are going to examine later.

And just to let you know that we have continued to ensure that the World Heritage Convention is relevant in pursuit of some of the Sustainable Development Goals during the 2022-2025 period, especially SDG 11.4, which you know very well. On Performance Indicator 5, which is on Tentative Lists and Nominations. The World Heritage Centre continues to support States Parties in the process of updating the Tentative Lists and provide advice and information. And I think we have tried to do it in order to also help you plan the elaboration of your future nomination file. And the same trend is noted since more than ten years with Europe and North America and the Asia and Pacific region, which always having much nomination submitted and subsequently also more properties inscribed than the other three regions. And for what concerns Tentative Lists, the trend in the categories of sites proposed for inclusion reflects the same trend noted in the World Heritage List, with a very high proportion of cultural sites. Just a few words on the Thematic Programmes. As you know, we have some Thematic Programmes which you have, and Thematic Programmes and Initiatives in our report are presented also in this document, and you'll have them before you. But I just want to mention the one on Sustainable Tourism Programme and the World Heritage Education Programme, which I have mentioned already, and we will continue to work on the expansion of these programmes, and we will pursue our work on the Marine, SIDS and City Programmes through organization of specific activities.

I also, at the beginning, told you that I was going to say some few words on the synergies with other Conventions, because this has been very important, and you have always mentioned it. Synergies with other Conventions and Programmes have been further enhanced in a proactive manner by the Centre since the last Committee meeting. In the framework of the online consultation on the preparation of the 41 C/4 and 41 C/5, the main UNESCO Conventions and Programmes identified as being the ones the World Heritage Convention should collaborate with in the period 2022-2025 are the 2003 Convention, just to recall, the 1954 Convention, the 1970 Convention, the 2001 Convention, as well as MAB and the Geoparks Programmes. So, cooperation and synergies with other biodiversity related and Cultural Conventions and Programmes have been also strengthened in the framework of

the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Asia and Pacific and also in the Latin America and the Caribbean regions, which you will be examining. You know, the World Heritage Centre has also participated in the sector's wide Working Group on the establishment of the model Rules of Procedures for the Assembly's Conferences of Parties.

We will then continue to work closely with the Secretariat of the 2003 Convention, notably in order to continue to exchange best practices. Operational strategies between the two Conventions, the 1954 Convention and its two Protocols and the World Heritage Convention have been also developed through a specific project.

Now, on biodiversity related Conventions. As regards to World Heritage Centre's collaboration with other biodiversity related Conventions and Programmes, the focus has been on the preparation of the Post 2022 UN Biodiversity Agenda following the expiration of the Aichi targets. And of course, you have all the details in the report.

I would like to conclude my presentation. Chairperson and Distinguished members of the Committee to maybe recall a little bit some of the key challenges and the way forward.

While some of the challenges faced by the Convention have been addressed through reflections undertaken in the framework of the 50th anniversary, there are several of them that remain critical and of utmost importance, and notably the challenges on Governance and also the challenges on Climate Change and the impact of COVID-19, but also Priority Africa. And these are among others, and we cannot name all of them. On the Governance, discussions and reflections around the indispensable ethical values of the different stakeholders of the Convention, to ensure that fundamental principles of objectivity, transparency and impartiality are respected and promoted within the Convention and within the decision-making of the Governing Bodies of the World Heritage Convention, have taken place both during the World Heritage Committee and General Assembly, just to recall.

It is in this framework that the Open-ended Working Group of States Parties to the Convention hold the nine online meetings that I mentioned at the beginning, and which resulted to the consensual text entitled "Declaration of principles to promote international solidarity and cooperation to preserve World Heritage". You know that there was a serious impact of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, and this has impacted significantly the activities planned by the World Heritage Centre in all regions since 2020, and many measures have been taken in this regard. Furthermore, to respond to the impact on the World Heritage properties globally, among which the closure of World Heritage sites resulting in socio-economic impacts for related communities, and this the Secretariat has a two-pronged approach to culture, tourism, and recovery.

On climate change, I need to say more about it because we have been discussing it that since the beginning of the years 2000, climate change has been the subject of in-depth discussion, and this continues with the Working Group on the Policy Document that you are going to examine at the General Assembly. But just to recall that in November 2020, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, with contribution from Switzerland and France, released the first global scientific assessment of both the current state and future scenario of glaciers in World Heritage properties. This report, which has been the subject of a large media coverage, also provides a set of actions and recommendations to protect and address threats to glaciers in World Heritage properties. And you also know that UNESCO has continued to support activities with the main objective to continue raise awareness about climate change, adaptation, education, and capacity-building. In this regard, some projects notably aiming at empowering site managers as well as the youth to strengthen adaptation, you know, have been supported by the Netherlands Funds-in-Trust and through the Australia Funds-in-Trust and Flanders Trust Fund; projects were also implemented with a view of establishing a sustainable funding platform for building climate adaptation. Distinguished members of the Committee, before ending, I would like to also mention, of course, what I said at the beginning is the issue that concerns staffing and staff issues. Indeed, the challenge that concerns the ratio between the requests put forward to the Secretariat and the actual human and financial means available. Limited human resources are still a major challenge faced by the Secretariat, which I am heading. The Secretariat continues to rely heavily on temporary staff thanks to some reinforcement and continues to rely heavily on temporary staff. But we appreciate already the contribution that we have received from States Parties. But however, there is an increasing number of new thematic consideration initiatives that the Governing Bodies of the Convention request to initiate and implement. Therefore, this reinforcement, which is not sustainable on the long term, does not offset the regular statutory and operational workload of the Secretariat, which continues to increase.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, my dear friend Director, for this detailed presentation on the work accomplished.

I would like to know whether there are any comments or questions. Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. President, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines congratulates you on your appointment as President of this session, and you can count on our full cooperation during your mandate. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the excellent organization of this session, for the warm hospitality and for the

magnificent opening ceremony of yesterday. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Her Highness, Princess Haifa Al-Mogrin for her outstanding and inspiring leadership at the 17th and 18th Extraordinary sessions of the Committee held in Paris, and also for her constant availability to help reach common ground in meetings and negotiations. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes Tuvalu, a Small Island Developing State, as a new State Party to the Convention, which is almost universally recognized as one of the most ratified legal instruments in the world. Regarding the report, I would like to thank the Director for his clear and very useful presentation, and we congratulate the Secretariat for the activities undertaken and the support provided to States Parties despite the lack of financial and human resources. We thank the donors for their financial and in-kind contributions, and we encourage States Parties to pay its assessed contributions on due time. The report indicates that more properties were inscribed in the Europe and North America and Asia and Pacific regions than in the other regions, and we congratulate them. Therefore, we emphasize the importance of enhancing capacity-building in other regions and subregions to help them in the identification of potential properties to be inscribed.

The update of the Tentative List, the preparation of inventories and nomination files, as well as the conservation and protection of the properties. Technical and financial assistance is needed more than ever in this regard as we face the threats of climate action on World Heritage properties, as well as the negative impacts of economic development and infrastructure projects around the sites. We encourage the Secretariat, and we thank the Secretariat in the integration of the Disaster Risk Preparedness and Response Mechanisms to the management plans. We request the Centre to take into account in the future the UNESCO Small Island Developing States Operational Strategy 2023-2029 and its flagships in the implementation of the World Heritage Programme for SIDS. We welcome the work of the different Working Groups and encourage them to continue the dialogue, especially on the policy document on climate action, on World Heritage properties to be presented at the General Assembly. We know that the work has sometimes been difficult, but we are convinced that the work must be done with some compromises to reach an agreement suitable for all.

Mr. President,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are among the 27 States Parties to the Convention that still do not have a property inscribed on the World Heritage List. Therefore, we must continue our efforts to consider sustainable and innovative strategies for the future and to improve the geographical representation of heritage in all regions, strengthening the credibility of the Convention founded, among other principles, on a system and respect for the highest scientific standards to safeguard heritage assets.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Let me begin by taking this opportunity to congratulate the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the excellent organization, as well as for the extended warm hospitality since our arrival in Riyadh. Allow me also to congratulate you, Chair, for assuming the Presidency and appreciate at the same time the manner in which you are skilfully steering our debate. You can count on the full support of my Delegation. We would like to thank and commend the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr. Lazare, for a comprehensive report on the World Heritage Centre activities, the close collaboration the Centre has with the Advisory Bodies, the regional field offices, the Category 2 Centres, and other institutions, as well as for the implementation of the World Heritage Committee decisions. At this juncture, I would like to express my gratitude to States Parties who have contributed to the budget support.

The capacity-building for the preparation of Tentative Lists and nomination dossiers, including my country, Bale Mountains National Park document, is worth recognizing. Unfortunately, the imbalance of the nomination could still not be minimized. The Report states that there are 1,157 properties across 167 States Parties. 12 States Parties in Africa with a rich heritage are still not inscribed on the World Heritage List. The structural imbalance in Africa remains a critical issue. My Delegation believes that a balanced and credible World Heritage List should be ensured. Moreover, amid existing fragile and changing societal circumstances, we encourage the Centre to continue with its work and introduce measures that are pertinent to the protection of World Heritage property worldwide.

Finally, Mr. Chairperson, I would like to express Ethiopia's support for the draft decision on Item 5A and wish us a fruitful, successful deliberation.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Well noted. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and good morning to my colleagues.

At the outset, I would like to echo the message of congratulations for your Chairpersonship, and also our gratitude to the Government of Saudi Arabia for making remarkable, wonderful arrangements for our Committee.

And also, I would like to concur with the Director-General in expressing our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims of the recent catastrophic earthquake in Morocco and express our strong solidarity with the people of Morocco in this regard.

Back to the topic at hand now, first, I would like to express our appreciation for the activities of the World Heritage Centre for all the points mentioned by its Director earlier. We know that Mr. ADG Culture and also the Director of the Centre, all of you are very busy, but we appreciate your work a lot. Mr. Chair, with your indulgence, I would like to take the opportunity to mention four major items as priority items for our future contribution to the World Heritage Convention.

First of all, we would like to pursue a more balanced model List of World Heritage with enhanced authenticity. In this context, we should enhance our focus on Africa and SIDS which are under-represented in the current List. If I am allowed to introduce some of our activities, Japan is trying to support the nominations by African countries in terms of capacity-building. Also, we have made contributions to the delisting of Ugandan property, Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi, from the List of World Heritage in Danger. This will be in the current session of the Committee, which would like to express or expand this point in Item 5C, Priority Africa. Our second point is the enhanced synergy with other Conventions protecting the heritage, including Intangible Cultural Heritage, Geopark and MAB. This point was actually specifically mentioned by the Director of the Centre earlier. If we can create synergies among the programmes with common elements, we should be able to promote more effective and comprehensive protection policies. Thirdly, compatibility with sustainable development. Regrettably, as we will see in the days ahead, the compatibility between economic development and heritage conservation has become a really serious issue, which requires more dialogue between the concerned Member States and the Advisory Bodies. From this point of view, Japan is making a proposal to enhance such dialogue in this Committee under Item 7. Finally, the mitigation of the impact caused by the climate change and other natural disasters. Japan is supporting a UNESCO project designed to introduce to Africa the early warning system for natural disaster, making use of AI, and if we could introduce this technology into protection of World Heritage, we should be better prepared to deal with natural disasters. Mr. Chair, Japan will continue to make contributions to the World Heritage Convention through the efforts that I have explained in this intervention.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Many thanks, Your Excellency. Giving the floor to Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

Thank you for giving me the floor again. First of all, I should like to thank you and to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their organization of this current session. Our thanks also go to the World Heritage Centre and to Mr. Lazare Eloundou for his detailed report providing thorough information on the activities of the Centre and which is very useful to us because we are attending for the first time in person at a World Heritage Committee since 2021, because we are members of this Committee only as of 2021 to 2025. Our thanks also go to my colleagues, the Delegates and my thanks go also to Her Highness Princess Haifa Al-Mogrin, for her able stewardship of the two Extraordinary General Assemblies for the World Heritage Convention.

Moreover, I should like to extend our most sincere condolences to the Moroccan people and to the Kingdom of Morocco in the wake of this disaster that has struck the people and the country, our brotherly nation of Morocco.

During our tenure here on the Committee, please rest assured that we shall do our utmost to uphold our own responsibilities, not only vis a vis World Heritage, but also including Marrakesh and throughout Morocco. I should like to thank the Director-General for having provided the information concerning Morocco heritage sites and UNESCO's efforts in this regard. And we should like to underscore Qatar's unwavering support for the activities of the World Heritage Centre in the face of various challenges such as sustainable development, climate change, obviously protecting the OUV of the sites and yet working hand in hand with sustainable economic development. In this regard, the State of Qatar encouraged international cooperation with the creation in collaboration with UNESCO together with some other countries of the Heritage Emergency Fund with a first donation from Qatar of US\$10 million in 2014 when the World Heritage Committee met in Doha and we are continuing our support by concluding a new agreement concerning this fund earlier this year.

We hope that our contribution has made a difference as well. Qatar is completely dedicated to safeguarding the world's cultural and natural heritage and we hope to further contribute to the fund this year. We implement and fully comply with all of the Committee's decisions wherever possible, and this needs to be done on a worldwide scale, particularly as concerns the occupied parts of the Palestinian territory.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of this session, and our thanks to Her Highness Princess Al-Muqrin for all of her support, and you can count on Egypt's support for the success of our work in this Committee. We should also like to extend our thanks and gratitude for the excellent organization and hospitality that we received on the part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Here at the session, which honours us, and we are convinced that it will be an outstanding success.

We take due note of the Director's report, but before getting into the details of that, I should also like to express our sincere condolences to the people of Morocco. On behalf of Egypt, I should like to express our solidarity with the Moroccan people. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

I would like to thank the Director of the World Heritage Centre for presenting a comprehensive report on the activities in implementing the Committee's decisions. The World Heritage Convention became indeed one of the most ratified legal instruments globally with 195 States Parties, which emphasizes the growing interest of the whole world in the protection of cultural and natural heritage and developing innovative solutions to tackle the emerging challenges facing it. Hence, we stress the growing demand on capacity-building activities, mostly from African and Arab states, as well as Small Island Developing States in order to enhance their conservation and management of heritage sites to contribute to the removal of the properties inscribed on the List of the World Heritage in Danger and improve the quality of nomination files prepared for new sites with the aim of reaching a balanced and representative World Heritage List. In this regard, Egypt commends the efforts exerted by the World Heritage Centre in Africa through launching the Mentorship Programme for African Heritage Professionals, which is implemented in close collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund and the Advisory Bodies, with generous support from a number of donors to whom we extend our appreciation and gratitude.

We also commend the collaboration between the Centre and higher education institutions in Africa, with the aim of developing the heritage curricula. In the Arab region, Egypt appreciates the efforts exerted by the World Heritage Centre in collaboration with the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, based in Bahrain, as well as the fruitful initiatives and activities organized in the region, most notably launching the "Dive into Heritage" project, funded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In conclusion, we are looking forward to expand the capacity-building activities developed by the World Heritage Centre Advisory Bodies, in cooperation with UNESCO Category 2 Centres, to reach out to more participants in both Africa and Arab region.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]* Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair, and congratulations on your election as Chair.

Know that you can support on Mexico's unwavering support throughout your work. We also wanted to thank UNESCO and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for organizing this extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee here, in person. Mexico would like to convey its sincere solidarity and condolences to the families affected by the dreadful earthquake in Morocco. Mexico would like to thank the Director of the World Heritage Centre for this report and acknowledge all of the work that has been done in line with the Medium-Term Strategy. We welcome the initiatives underway in terms of capacity-building and would like to congratulate you on the outcome of the Third Cycle of Reporting for the Latin America and Caribbean session, with the Zacatecas Category 2 Centre has been implementing and taking due note of some of the best practices in the region. Mexico has 35 inscribed sites, four of which are Marine sites, and we are delighted that some of our Marine sites and the DNA expeditions has highlighted the importance of Marine heritage. We support the ongoing reflection concerning the World Heritage Danger Listing and welcome the efforts done in removing since we want to extend a warm welcome to Tuvalu, our latest member of this family and we want to congratulate all of those countries who are working so hard to safeguard and protect the World Heritage.

The 2023 of the Young Professionals Forum for World Heritage here in Saudi Arabia, I think, has been of the utmost relevance, and we're looking forward to their statement.

We've also taken due note of the HUL 2011 Recommendation, particularly under 5A when it comes to promoting the implementation of that Recommendation in line with the Convention, and also Item 7.2 with the Recommendation concerning the nomination process and management plans. Our country is working with the 2030 Action Plan so as to ensure that culture contribution and heritage contribution to sustainable development is duly acknowledged.

We also welcome the MONDIACULT 2022 event that was held in Mexico and celebrate now its first anniversary. We are also pleased to see the synergies with the CITES Convention and we reiterate our commitment to ensuring a representative, credible and balanced World Heritage List, and we are delighted to be taking part of it.

We want to thank and congratulate UNESCO for all of its efforts in this regard.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you very much, Chair.

I should like to thank you and also congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election. Our thanks also go to Her Highness, Princess Haifa Al-Mogrin for her work and cooperation in the previous sessions, and we wish you all the greatest of success and going forward. We should also like to express our most sincere condolences to the Kingdom of Morocco, and we hope that they will soon recover from this shock. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

I'll switch to English. Oman would like to thank the Secretariat represented by the World Heritage Centre for all the efforts and excellent work during this period, just briefly mentioned by the Director of the World Heritage Centre, as well as their cooperation. And here, I would like to acknowledge the importance of one element, that is the online platform of World Heritage Canopy as a relevant tool to support the operationalization of the World Heritage Sustainable Development Programme, as well as for the capacity-building initiative and invite States Parties to contribute to these initiatives and to support the effort together and to analyse and to share information on good practices and innovative solutions integrating heritage conservation with sustainable development. Oman concurs with the comments raised by Ethiopia, Japan, Saint Vincent [and the Grenadines] and Qatar and Mexico.

Oman also would like to support the amendments submitted by Mexico for this element and coauthor it.

I thank you.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much. Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Dear Chair of the World Heritage Committee and Director of the World Heritage Centre,

Congratulations, Mr. Chairman, on your election.

Director of the World Heritage Centre,

We want to thank you for your excellent and detailed report on the activities of the Centre. We also want to express our solidarity and condolences to the people of Morocco. As a permanent Delegate of Argentina to UNESCO, it's an honour to be able to address you here at this meeting. We wanted to thank the organizers for their excellent organization and to make everything possible to deal with one of the most important topics on UNESCO's agenda. We wish you a successful session. The work on compromise and our commitment in Argentina has been exemplary also. We have been periodically updating our inventory of World Heritage sites so as to ensure the safeguarding and protection of World Heritage sites. We see that World Heritage is a vehicle for furthering human rights, and we welcome the efforts being done on sites of memory, particularly as concerns of sites of memory in our own country. We are actively involved in working towards extending the membership of this Convention and ensuring the successful rollout of the recommendations stemming from the Convention.

I should like to reiterate our thanks to the Host for working in a spirit of consensus and cooperation so that all of us can ensure the broadest possible ratification of the Convention and the highest standards in upholding its recommendations and decisions. The sites and spaces that are before us here, I think, reflect an enormous duty that we have to future generations.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

At the outset, I would like to express our condolences and words of support to the Government of Morocco, as well as all of those who have suffered due to the devastating earthquake. Their families and friends are brotherly people of Morocco.

I would like to also thank you, Mr. Chairperson, as well as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for the excellent organization of the 45th extended session of the World Heritage Committee for the warm welcome and hospitality expressed to members of the Committee. I would like to thank all of the experts, and I hope that, for the first time in four years, we are finally able to meet in person with each other so that we can discuss the implementation of the Convention, share our practices as well. This is particularly important for site managers as well as experts.

As for our part, we are ready to make every effort to ensure that the session takes place in a productive atmosphere for the benefit of all States Parties of the Convention and stakeholders, including local communities, which, in accordance with the Guidelines, play a key role in maintaining the integrity of the properties. We were very interested to learn about the report of the Secretariat, and we have noted the wide range of issues being addressed by the World Heritage Centre. In our opinion, some of these go beyond the scope of the Convention as mandate and detract resources from its main goal, which is helping States Parties to form a balanced, credible List of World Heritage sites while ensuring geographic representation and capacity-building.

We propose focusing on seeking out ways to decrease financial expenditures related to nominations, to provide active assistance to developing countries, building national expert capacity, and also seeking out creative ways of achieving the SDGs, as well as creating the necessary infrastructure and ensuring the conservation of World Heritage sites. We also call upon the Secretariat, while preparing its report to use only terminology that is accepted for use in the Convention.

And here, I have a question for the Secretariat. Many properties on the List of World Heritage sites are both religious and holy sites. Local communities, including religious organizations, play an important role in managing these sites and conserving their Outstanding Universal Value. So, we would like to find out what has been done during the reporting period as part of UNESCO's initiative and the World Heritage Centre to protect the World Heritage of Religious Interest. That's the name of the initiative.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Je voudrais vous féliciter, vous, pour votre façon remarquable de diriger nos travaux et féliciter votre pays pour son hospitalité généreuse. Le Mali félicite aussi le Centre pour la mise en œuvre du Programme de mentorat pour les professionnels africains du patrimoine mondial 2021-2024 et encourage les États membres à donner les moyens de sa poursuite. La cartographie précise des établissements africains d'enseignement supérieur avec les programmes de recherche et d'enseignement sur le patrimoine est une bonne initiative, mais demeure incomplète sans la participation d'une Délégation permanente pour y fournir les informations indispensables. Il faudra également que cette base de données soit accessible et que des mécanismes soient trouvés pour renforcer la coopération entre les établissements.

Le Mali tient à saluer la création du Réseau des gestionnaires de sites africains et se réjouit de l'élection du Comité permanent en décembre 2022, conformément au Plan d'action régional pour l'Afrique 2021-2027 du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

Nous saluons également les premières formations de guides, organisées dans le cadre du Programme sur le patrimoine mondial et le tourisme durable et appelant à son extension à plus d'États, car il faut bien que le tourisme, qui est une activité très dynamique, puisse continuer afin d'éviter que le secteur ne s'effondre totalement. Nous nous réjouissons du soutien de l'UNESCO et d'ALIPH pour la poursuite des efforts concernant le patrimoine malien, notamment le tombeau des Askia ainsi que les falaises de Bandiagara. Concernant ces derniers, il est heureux de constater la bonne poursuite de la mise en œuvre du programme relatif au patrimoine culturel, bâti et matériel et aux objets et aux pratiques associés aux falaises de Bandiagara, dont les travaux ont débuté en octobre 2021.

Enfin, réitérons nos chaleureux remerciements aux Gouvernements du Japon, des Pays-Bas, du Sultanat d'Oman et de Corée pour le Fonds en dépôt en vue de soutenir les États n'ayant aucun bien inscrit sur la Liste.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Kingdom of Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Mr. Chairperson, dear Committee members,

Please allow us to begin by expressing our gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, our Host Country, for their warm hospitality extended to us. We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Chairperson on assuming the Chairmanship of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee. We would also like to comment and thank you, you, Mr. Director of the World Heritage Centre, for the comprehensive report presented under this item. We also want to express our sincere condolences and the solidarity of the Kingdom and the people of Thailand to the people of Morocco after the disaster.

Mr. Chairperson, after these four years without *in praesentia* meeting, my Delegation also would like to join the sentiments expressed by other Committee members that it is a great opportunity for all of us to resume our duties, to discuss matters of mutual interest. Mr. Chairperson, a balanced representative and credible World Heritage List is at the centre of our work. Strengthening the capacities of States Parties to prepare dossiers and files to improve the quality of nominations of States Parties is key. Resources should be mobilized equitably from technical operations or from bilateral sources so that countries with World Heritage potentials could be better represented in the List. In this regard, we would like to reiterate that close consultation between States Parties and the Advisory Bodies lies at the heart of these efforts. Mutual respect for the role of States Parties as well as that of the Advisory Bodies within their mandates is crucial. We also encourage closer cooperation and consultation between experts of the States Parties and the Advisory Bodies through their regional and country offices, which must have a more defined role in relating to States Parties. We also view the need for more experts in the Advisory Bodies coming from developing countries.

Mr. Chairperson, we are living in the world of turbulence and many challenges manifesting themselves from many fronts. My Delegation would like to stress the importance of the spirit of multilateralism, the spirit of collaboration and consensus, as we all desire to uphold the value of the Convention. Lastly, Thailand, as Vice-Chair of the session, stands ready to assist you. Mr. Chairperson, in the meeting. My Delegation is certain that your able Chairmanship will guide the Committee to reach positive conclusions and overcome obstacles in an amicable way.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, now we have four Committee members left. If you are okay, we continue after, in the session after noon, because we have a message from the youth that is already scheduled on 12/13. If that's fine with the remaining Committee members to continue after noon, then we will do. Otherwise, we will proceed now. Is that okay?

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, can you please name out the four Committee members that are left so that we are sure.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Noted.

Dear Director,

Can you name the remaining countries?

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Now that Nigeria has also expressed interest to speak, you are now five, which I will list: Belgium, Bulgaria, South Africa, India, Nigeria. And there is a sixth one I see: Greece.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, dear colleagues, as we are just from discussion the report of the Secretariat about the past 50 years of our Convention and look into the next 50 to finish our morning session, it is a real pleasure for me to give the floor to Ms. Pravali Vangeti of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, who will lead us through the outcomes of the capacity-building and networking event that gathered those who will be taking care of our World Heritage during these next 50 years. I mean the participants of the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum.

Ms. Vangeti, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen.

As an integral part of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee and in the framework of the UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme, the Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through the National Committee for Education, Culture and Science and the Saudi Heritage Commission, hosted the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2023, under the theme of "Looking Ahead: The Next 50 Years of Protecting Natural and Cultural Heritage". The Forum has taken place from 3 to 12 September, here in Riyadh and at the Al-Ahsa Oasis. The Forum was developed and implemented with the support of the NGO Diadrasis, and it was an opportunity for the young professionals to assess the achievements of the past five decades of the Convention. Now, it is our pleasure to invite the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee to deliver his remarks towards this Young Professionals Forum.

MESSAGE FROM THE WORLD HERITAGE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS' FORUM 2023 // MESSAGE DU FORUM DES JEUNES PROFESSIONNELS SUR LE PATRIMOINE MONDIAL 2023

The Chairperson:

Dear Distinguished guests,

We are delighted today to present the World Young [Heritage] Professionals Forum, under the title: "Looking Ahead: The next 50 Years of Protecting Natural and Cultural Heritage". The Forum is held in conjunction with the Kingdom hosting the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee and continues for ten days, from 3 September until the 12 September 2023, in Riyadh. This Forum is attended by 34 young professionals among 17,000 applicants from different countries around the world and includes an integrated Agenda comprising cultural experiences and various visits, as well as workshops and dialogue sessions on the Forum's topics and areas. The Forum explores the various possibilities and active role that young individuals can perform in enriching their preservation of heritage considering its place in culture and facing modern challenges surrounding it. The session revolves around the achievements of the past 50 years since the signing of the World Heritage Convention, which laid the foundation for the preservation and protection of World Heritage and looking forward to what the next 50 years of heritage preservation may look like considering what has been achieved. Young professionals play a vital role in ensuring the sustainability of our future work and the preservation of World Heritage sites. The Forum provides the young professionals with the skills, knowledge, and the basic principles to improve the development of heritage conservation.

The Forum's work revolves around four main topics. The first is global heritage and climate change as climate change is a major threat to the natural and cultural heritage sites, resulting in one third of natural heritage sites and one in six cultural heritage sites being under the threat of extreme weather conditions like floods, forest fire and storms. The session also discusses the concept of sustainable tourism as World Heritage sites form tourist attractions that are visited by many tourists each year, requiring the application of sound practice that ensure the safety and sustainability of the sites. The Forum also explores the digital dimensions of World Heritage as technology tool and continuous digital development have interesting potential to enhance the means of action around World Heritage conservation. And the last topic is the diversity and representation of World Heritage. The Forum started in Riyadh on 3 September. The Agenda includes a visit to several heritage and cultural sites in Riyadh, as well as a visit to Al-Hasa Oasis as a case study to explore the most prominent natural and cultural competence of the World Heritage sites and to examine the tools and practices used to protect attributes.

Through the Forum, the Ministry of Culture, represented by the Heritage Commission and the National Commission for Culture, Education and Science, aims to enable young people to invest their abilities and potential to benefit World Heritage and to equip them to develop their skills and careers, as well as partake on the international level in discussion on heritage sector and the integrity of World Heritage sites and their values.

Thank you.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chairperson, for your kind and encouraging words towards our young professionals.

We now invite the Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO, Mr. Ernesto Ottone, to deliver his closing remarks to our young professionals.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

Thank you.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to join you for this closing session of the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum. I would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to the Minister of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the National Committee for Education, Culture and Science, the Saudi Heritage Commission, and to you personally, Chairperson, for having generously hosted the 2023 edition of the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum. Thank you also to the NGO Diadrasis for its support in making this event possible. I would like to congratulate all the young professionals present here for their efforts, your commitment, and your passion for heritage, which has made this Forum a resounding success. This year, the Forum received over 17,000 applicants, out of which 34 participants were selected. This shows the growing commitment of youth around the world to the protection of our shared heritage. Each of you are unique. You come from different countries, and you have different backgrounds but share the same conviction. The conviction that your voice and young people's voices everywhere matters in shaping a better future for heritage, and it is our conviction that we share with you at UNESCO. As we continue to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, we must not forget to think about the challenges facing heritage today. As key actors in the future of heritage, we will need your vision to develop sustainable solutions as we need to protect, preserve, and promote our heritage. The vision must be holistic. Heritage is cultural, natural or mixed, tangible or intangible, ancient or modern. The communities responsible for safeguarding heritage have also expanded. Central and regional governments, NGOs, local associations, and individuals, all have a place in the process of promoting and protecting our common heritage. During the past week, you have immersed yourself in various topics linked to World Heritage and explored in greater depth themes such as climate change, sustainable tourism, diversity and representation, and the digital dimension of heritage. You heard from local and international experts on the subject, participated in many workshops, group discussions, and learned from one another. You also had the opportunity to discover, we didn't have the chance yet, the diverse heritage of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and gain from local insight. We hope you have benefited from this enriching learning experience and have no doubt that the World Heritage Committee will benefit from your fresh ideas. The outcome document which you have developed together and will be presented to the 195 States Parties of the World Heritage Convention is proof of this. Your feedback and recommendation will be crucial as we proceed with the session of this World Heritage Committee. We hope that your recommendation in extension will reflect the role of culture as a driver of development, as it was mentioned some days ago by the G20 leaders, as a tool for ensuring sustainable livelihoods and most importantly, as a global public good, reaffirming what we all witnessed during MONDIACULT in Mexico, in September last year.

In closing, I congratulate all of you once again for your contribution to this fruitful Forum and wish you the greatest success in all your fruit future professional pursuits.

Thank you so much.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, ADG for those very impactful and encouraging words towards our young professionals.

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Excellencies,

I think it is now time for us to meet our young professionals who have been hard at work for the last ten days. As you know, the Young Professionals Forum preceded the Committee session, so I now invite our young professionals to join us on the stage. And as they do so, we would like to present to you a little snapshot, a small video of the activities that the young professionals have undertaken in the past ten days. And as our ADG rightly mentioned, they have had the opportunity to discover the rich heritage of Saudi Arabia through the At-Turaif District and the Al-Ahsa Oasis. I now invite you to watch this small video of the young professionals' activities and the capacity-building efforts over the last week. Thank you.

[video]

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you can see, our young professionals have been very hard at work over the past week, learning new skills, developing their capacities, but also preparing their message for you because they have something to say to the 195 States Parties of the World Heritage Convention. And so now, I turn to you, dear participants, because we have arrived at the most awaited moment of this morning. It is time for us to hear your voices and your vision for the future of World Heritage. It is my pleasure to invite two participant representatives from this wonderful cohort of the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2023, Mr. Rodrigo Sainz Lara from Mexico and Ms. Refan Abed from the Host Country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to present the outcomes of the Forum to the Plenary session this morning.

Thank you.

World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2023:

Dear Distinguished guests,

We, the participants of the UNESCO World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2023, would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Chairperson of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee and to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for organizing this Forum. Furthermore, we are grateful to the Ministry of Culture, the Saudi Heritage Commission and the National Committee for Education, Culture and Science in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting the Forum. Our heartfelt thanks go as well to the non-governmental organization Diadrasis

for the support, and the groups of experts and facilitators for their enriching insights and mentorship. Along with them, we have examined the pertinent vectors of World Heritage, including climate change, sustainable tourism, digital evolution, and the diversity and representation of World Heritage. We have benefited from the local experience of the Host Country diverse heritage and have gained valuable skills and expertise to support the next 50 years protecting natural and cultural heritage.

First and foremost, we call upon the States Parties to address the effects of climate change on cultural and natural heritage through a multidisciplinary approach. We stress the importance of the identification and the engagement of diverse and multiple stakeholders. With the pressing global impact of climate change, we urge States Parties to work on international preparedness through risk assessment, reactive emergency response, and post-disaster recovery and conservation, resulting in effective risk related policies and mitigating procedures. Recognizing communities as the custodian and caretakers of heritage, we urge States Parties to bridge the gap between local communities and heritage experts by creating frameworks and capacity-building initiatives which valorise the inherent knowledge residing in the communities and ensure equal participation in the decision-making process.

We further encourage the States Parties to foster creative ways of mobilizing society to react collectively to pre and post climate crisis scenarios. Understanding the long term and rapidly evolving impact of tourism on heritage, we recommend the States Parties to ensure the neutral, sustained study and monitoring of these effects on communities and to establish active communication with them to co-develop context related sustainable tourism approaches and strategies. Recognizing the fact that tangible and living heritage are vulnerable to external influences alike, we urge decision makers to ensure that the community's tradition and relationship to their environments are protected. Realizing the negative impact of over tourism on heritage destinations, we urge States Parties to transform their national tourism strategy from a quantity-based approach to a quality-based approach, focused on local livelihoods and economies by promoting local crafts and businesses. We further invite the States Parties to develop and support initiatives and trainings on sustainable tourism mechanisms which will directly impact future careers in the field and contribute to national gross domestic product.

World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2023:

Understanding that authenticity plays a key role in the preservation of heritage and forms the core of the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties, we urge States Parties to retain unique ways of expression and develop effective policies and procedures that ensure the active participation of all stakeholders and move towards regenerative tourism. Digital technology should be seen as a complementary tool to study and promote cultural and natural heritage rather than as the ultimate aim themselves. We invite States Parties to reflect on the best ways in which innovative digital technologies can aid in the management, capacity-building and documentation of heritage sites. We advise to consider these tools as a way of engaging younger generations and groups with different capacities and reach a wider international audience. These platforms could also serve as an opportunity for international collaboration of scientists, researchers, and heritage professionals through enhanced accessibility. We call upon the States Parties to ensure the ethical and secure use of data and to promote open-access software and platforms. However, we suggest that they remain mindful of the risks attached to the use of rapidly evolving digital technology, including the nefarious use of data, security breaches, exclusion of certain groups, and the neglect of the physical attributes of heritage. In addition, acknowledging the potential of social media, we strongly recommend that the concerned authorities of the States Parties leverage all digital tools and utilize existing social media communities to promote heritage with a holistic approach.

We call on all the States Parties to intensify their efforts into bringing more diversity into inscription of World Heritage sites through the continuous exploration of opportunities for underrepresented regions and categories of heritage. The States Parties must involve local communities and ensure the inclusion of traditional and indigenous knowledge in the inscription process.

Lastly, we demand the States Parties include the younger generations and give agency to their voice in the discussion on cultural and natural heritage. The perspective and new approaches of young professionals are indispensable to modern planning and management of heritage, as well as to navigate a world of evolving technology. The States Parties must hence provide additional support to young people who are passionate about heritage, its promotion and protection. We advise the States Parties to reaffirm their efforts to the best of their capabilities and provide young people with programmes, platforms and the resources required to better manage heritage in the future. We acknowledge our role as the future decision makers of heritage and as we continue to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, we are ready to take the baton of protecting our shared natural and cultural heritage for the next 50 years and beyond.

Shukran, thank you very much.

The Secretariat:

Thank you. Thank you, Rodrigo and Refan.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you have heard from the youth. You have heard their passion, their commitment, and moreover, their responsibility to take over the protection and promotion of our World Heritage for the next 50 years and beyond. So now, it is a moment for us to celebrate their hard work of the last ten days and to congratulate them

for all the capacity-building initiatives, we know, they are sure to follow with in their own States Parties. I invite our Chairperson and the ADG of Culture to now hand over the certificates to our participants to celebrate their victory.

So, I will now invite each of our participants to join the ADG and the Chairperson for the certificate ceremony. Our very first participant, Abdirahman Yasin from Somalia, followed by Ahabyona Aliguma from Uganda. We have Ayoob Younus from Iraq, Bruna Tabajara Brilmann from Brazil, David Mornout from the Netherlands, Dayana Blanco Quiroga from Bolivia, Diana Mroczek from Poland, Dimitra Klairi Gianniri from Greece, Dzarina Suzuke from Papua New Guinea, Emmanuel Banahene Owusu from Ghana, Fares El Euch from Tunisia, Fatima Alsuwaidi from the United Arab Emirates, Hewan Berhane from Ethiopia, Jawaher Al-Kharusii from Oman, Joseph Tsongo from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenley Rudimch Kenneth from Palau, Mahda Foroughi from Iran, Grace Malie from Tuvalu, the newest signatory to the World Heritage Convention, Manytuch Ruei from South Sudan, Neliswa Mkhathshwa from Eswatini, Nigar Shaikh from India, Nova Vera Aranda from Peru, Paninnguaq Boassen from Greenland, Rawdah Abdelhady from Egypt, Refan Abed from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Rime El Harrouni from Morocco, Roberto Aguilar Chan from Guatemala, Rodrigo Sainz Lara from Mexico, Ruth Carolina Pion Vizcaino from the Dominican Republic, Sanyati Mark from Tanzania, Suhail Alsuhaymi from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Tejyas Dasa Singh from Guyana, Qin Yue from the People's Republic of China, and last but not the least, our participant, Zeina Alkhaja from Bahrain. ^[applause]

Thank you, Chairperson and dear ADG for felicitating our participants for their hard work.

I now invite you to join our participants for a group photo here on the dais. Thank you. I also take this opportunity to invite the Secretary General of the National Commission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the CEO of the Saudi Heritage Commission, Dr Jasir. Please, together with the implementing organization, Diadrasis.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

As we are coming at the end of our morning session, we will resume our session at 3:00 pm. But before that I will give the floor to our Director, Mr. Lazare.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I just want to share with you that today during the lunchtime, there will be three side events organized:

- The first one will be on "Using the Impact Assessment for Heritage Conservation and Renewable Energy Development", organized by UNESCO, the Netherlands, Norway, and the Advisory Bodies, and this will be in the Rock Art Room from 1:15 to 2:45 pm.
- The second side event which will be "Conserving AIUla's Cultural Heritage through Awareness Raising and Scientific Cooperation, the example of RCU/Saudi ICOMOS partnership". It is organized by the Royal Commission for AIUla in Al-Ahsa Oasis, and this is in Al-Ahsa Oasis Room, and this starts at 1:30 until 2.30 pm.
- And then, you will have in the Advisory Bodies Space, Hegra Room, you have a side event which is called "How the IUCN Green List Can Support Effective World Heritage Sites". This is organized by IUCN and will start at 1:15 pm and will last for an hour.

So, the side events space is located outside the Al-Faisaliah Centre. The Host Country has put up signage and direction to lead the participants to the dedicated zone. You can follow them.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and see you at 3:00 pm.

The meeting rose at 1:10pm. // La séance a été levée à 13h10.

FIRST DAY
Monday, 11 September 2023
SECOND PLENARY MEETING
3:29 pm – 6:16 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

PREMIER JOUR
Lundi 11 septembre 2023
DEUXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h29 – 18h16
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

5A. REPORT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE ON ITS ACTIVITIES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE'S DECISIONS (Ct'd) // RAPPORT DU CENTRE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL SUR SES ACTIVITÉS ET SUR LA MISE EN ŒUVRE DES DÉCISIONS DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

The Chairperson:

Good afternoon, dear colleagues.

We are now resuming our examination of Item 5A. Several Committee members had requested the floor before the Message from the Young Professionals Forum and the lunch break. I will ask the Secretariat to read the list of Committee members that had requested the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chair.

Maybe, before I start, can I again invite all the Delegates, please, to take your seat? The following Committee members have requested the floor: Belgium, Bulgaria, South Africa, India, Nigeria, and Greece.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I give the floor now to the Representative of Belgium.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président.

M. le Président,

Puisque c'est la première fois que je prends la parole, je vous félicite tout d'abord avec votre nomination. Je vous souhaite beaucoup de patience, sagesse et réussite pour cette session importante. Vous pouvez compter sur la coopération de la Belgique, qui est composée par des représentants et des experts en patrimoine de nos régions de la Flandre et la Wallonie. Au nom de la Délégation, je tiens à remercier chaleureusement le pays hôte, le Royaume d'Arabie saoudite, pour l'hospitalité et l'organisation impeccable.

Avant d'aborder le point 5A, M. le Président, la Belgique souhaite exprimer ses plus sincères condoléances à nos collègues et au peuple marocain. Nous sommes profondément attristés par les vies perdues et la dévastation causée par le séisme d'Al-Haouz. Notre pays fait tout ce qui est en son pouvoir pour contribuer aux nombreux efforts de secours. Bien qu'éclipsées par la souffrance humaine, qui ne pourra jamais être réparée ou reconstruite, la Belgique souhaite également exprimer sa tristesse et son inquiétude pour les dommages causés aux merveilleuses médinas de Marrakech et d'Essaouira ainsi qu'aux autres biens du patrimoine mondial dans la région.

I will now continue in English. Regarding Item 5A, we would like to congratulate the Secretariat on the achievements and the impressive list of successful activities. We thank the Director of the World Heritage Centre and his team for the excellent report and presentation. Belgium shares the many priorities addressed, notably Priority Africa, which we will discuss under Item 5B. We encourage the continuous efforts to innovate and create synergies with other UNESCO Programmes and Conventions, as reflected in the report.

Belgium attaches great importance to capacity-building as a pillar to achieve conservation, and we noted with satisfaction the great number of local activities in this regard. We would like to ask the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies, who also take active part in this, to examine the feasibility to increase the global impact of these activities, such as workshops and seminars, so that their impact exceeds the local level. In the same spirit, we would like to stress the importance of the role of the site managers and welcome the initiatives to involve them more in the Convention. We thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as well as previous Hosts, for organizing the Site Managers' Forum and encourage further awareness raising in order to increase participation to these events. I conclude by expressing our support to the Mexican amendment to the DR. And finally, Belgium welcomes the ratification of the 1972 Convention by its 195th member, Tuvalu. The universality and hence importance of the Convention is hereby once more demonstrated.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, now we go to Bulgaria. You have the floor.

La Délégation de la Bulgarie :

Merci, M. le Président.

Avec nos émotions les plus profondes, la Bulgarie se joint aux messages de condoléances et de solidarité envers le peuple marocain.

Comme c'est la première fois que nous prenons la parole, permettez-nous, au nom du ministre de la Culture de Bulgarie, M. Krastev, qui nous a fait l'honneur de nous joindre ici et de notre Délégation de saluer le Président de la 45^e session élargie du Comité et de saluer aussi la manière avec laquelle vous menez nos discussions. Vous pouvez compter sur le soutien et la coopération de notre Délégation. Nous remercions aussi le Royaume de l'Arabie saoudite de son hospitalité et l'organisation impeccable de cette session élargie. La Bulgarie voudrait également remercier le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial pour le rapport qui nous a été soumis sur ses activités et sur la mise en œuvre des décisions du Comité. La Délégation de Bulgarie note avec appréciation les activités réalisées dans les différentes régions du monde avec une attention particulière portée sur les priorités de l'UNESCO comme l'Afrique, l'égalité des genres, la jeunesse et les petits États insulaires en développement. Nous saluons les efforts infaillibles du Centre du patrimoine mondial ainsi que ses partenaires pour le travail réalisé en vue de la mise en œuvre des décisions du Comité. La Bulgarie considère qu'il est également essentiel d'accroître la participation des communautés locales à la gestion des sites du patrimoine mondial en mettant en œuvre des politiques spécifiques, avec le soutien des formations sur le terrain, organisées par le Centre du patrimoine mondial.

Nous restons prêts à mobiliser nos efforts afin de parvenir à un équilibre entre la conservation du patrimoine mondial et la nécessité du développement, en tenant compte également des effets du changement climatique sur les sites du patrimoine mondial.

L'approche multidisciplinaire et la promotion de la synergie entre les conventions culturelles sont une priorité pour la Bulgarie, et nous sommes satisfaits de voir le Programme de l'Éducation et le patrimoine mondial, et la collaboration renforcée avec les conventions mentionnées dans la présentation de M. Eloundou. Tenant compte des changements climatiques qui touchent chaque aspect de notre vie, nous saluons l'engagement continu avec des programmes de sciences naturelles de l'UNESCO et avec d'autres mécanismes internationaux. Notre pays salue la pertinence des efforts du Centre du patrimoine mondial dans la poursuite des objectifs de développement durable et responsable, et l'encouragement de l'inscription des sites des pays qui ne sont pas représentés sur les listes du patrimoine mondial pour les rendre encore plus équitables, crédibles et représentatives.

Pour conclure, notre pays considère la préservation du patrimoine mondial comme un facteur de développement durable et responsable pour l'avancement de toute l'humanité, et pour cette raison, reste fortement engagé dans la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie de l'attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, now we give the floor to South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, the Delegation of South Africa wishes to extend our appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the warm welcome hospitality and the magnificent performance that we had last night. The generosity in hosting us as we meet in person once again after an extensive absence due to COVID-19, is highly appreciated. May I also take the opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as our Chair for this extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee. We wish to affirm our commitment and support to you throughout the session to enable a conducive environment for constructive deliberations. We further express our sincere appreciation to the former Chair, Her Highness Princess Haifa Al-Mogrin, for the skilful and professional manner in which she chaired the transitional period of the Committee and wish her well in her new appointment bestowed on her by the Kingdom.

Mr. Chair, the last four years have been a challenging time, including those who work in the conservation sector. We, therefore, wish to express our appreciation to the World Heritage Centre, and, in particular, the Africa Unit, for the tireless support they have rendered to African States. Africa's contribution during the Committee meeting is dependent on preparedness of African States. We, therefore, acknowledge the support extended to the Africa Group and to my own Delegation to ensure that issues of importance to Africa are tabled during the Committee's annual meetings. We further note with concern that African States are disproportionately listed on sites in danger, and this is quite concerning in the context of other impacts that affect the African continent, such as the recent disaster that was experienced in the Kingdom of Morocco, for which we express our condolences to the people

of Morocco. Further that, most of our sites are also affected by the impacts of climate change, as we all know, and the conflict also in some parts of the continent. In that context, therefore, we would urge the Centre and the Advisory Bodies to continue to support the African continent in ensuring that the African Member States continue to bring sites that can be included on the World Heritage List, as we noted that there are about 12 countries that do not have sites listed. Furthermore, in our efforts towards making the World Heritage List more representative and credible, we appreciate the efforts of the Centre to identify those sites and those States that are in most need of support to inscribe their list.

Mr. Chair, we have often heard of the need to safeguard the reputation of the Convention and, therefore, in this regard, States Parties are therefore continuously reminded to abide by the Operational Guidelines to ensure that timeframes are strictly adhered to. Accordingly, in line with Rule 45 of the Procedure, we encourage the World Heritage Centre to release the documents at least six weeks before the beginning of the session, as we noted that some documents were only released a few days ago, which does not give States Parties adequate time to prepare.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, South Africa would like to congratulate the World Heritage Centre on the comprehensive report that we have received.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. So, now India. The floor is yours.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Excellencies and colleagues. *Namaste* and *Salam Aleykum* from India. At the outset, India would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for excellent organization of the extended 45th of the World Heritage Committee. India also would like to congratulate Mr. Abdulelah Al-Tokhais for assuming the position of the Chair of the Committee. India offers full support and cooperation for the smooth organization of the Committee meeting.

We join other States Parties in expressing our solidarity with the Kingdom of Morocco for the loss of life and property.

We would like to thank the Director of the World Heritage Centre for presenting an exhaustive report. The report summarizes the role and functioning of the World Heritage Centre and the Secretariat. India has gone through the exhaustive report prepared and submitted by the Centre.

With Tuvalu becoming the 195th Member State. The Convention is one of the most ratified legal instruments in the world, celebrating heritage of humanity. India notes with satisfaction various indicators. We appreciate the Secretariat to have functioned during the very difficult time of COVID. We commend the successful conducting of various meetings that were held in hybrid mode or in person, which included the Ad-hoc and Open-ended Working Group meetings. India has noted various challenges being faced by the Secretariat, from lack of adequate human resources to funds. There is a need to increase human resources as well as financial resources for the Secretariat for the implementation of the Convention. We need to work towards developing alternate financial models for the effective functioning of the Centre, and we complement its efforts and responses in the past two years, despite various circumstantial hiccups. We would like to congratulate Madam DG, ADG Culture, Director of the WHC and the Centre and their team for their continuing efforts and assure them of India's full support.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Nigeria, the floor is yours.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Nigeria would like to take this opportunity to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting this very important session and the hospitality extended to us. Let me also congratulate the Chair for assuming the leadership of this session and the excellent manner in which you have been conducting this meeting. I also want to commend the role played by Her Excellency, Her Highness Princess Haifa during her tenure. Nigeria will always be ready to support the Chair for this successful session.

I join others to extend our sympathy to the people and the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco on the devastating earthquake and the loss of life.

Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the Director of World Heritage Centre for the comprehensive report on the activities and implementation of the World Heritage Committee's decisions in the recent past. We indeed appreciate the reference and the report to the climate change challenge as posing a significant threat to the World Heritage property and the work of the Governing Bodies in guiding responses to the impact of the climate change on the World Heritage since 2005. Nigeria believes that these efforts must be sustained and intensified as recent events

around us proved the more challenging time is ahead. While it has been established that World Heritage sites are levers for biodiversity conservation, mobilizing for climate change adaptation plans and more training for site managers on biodiversity are good steps to further strengthen our action in this regard. Please, allow me also to commend the work of the World Heritage Centre for the strategy for World Heritage in Africa, developing following the adaptation of the Global Priority Africa and Flagship Programme in 2021. We recognize the efforts of the Centre so far and look forward to examining this issue further in Item 5C later in this session.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the excellent organization of the 45th extended session, as well as you, Mr. Chair, for your election and the professional way in which you are conducting the works of our session.

The Delegation of Greece is extremely pleased to participate, for the first time since our election as a Member State of this Committee since 2021, in an ordinary session. We would like to express our commitment to the spirit and principles of the World Heritage Convention and to assure you, Mr. Chair, that we will make our utmost so as to have a very constructive meeting in consensual spirit.

We also echo previous speakers in expressing our deep condolences to the Kingdom of Morocco concerning the losses of human lives and property as a consequence of recent devastating earthquakes.

Regarding Agenda Item 5A, we would like to thank the Director of the World Heritage Centre for this excellent and detailed report covering a wide range of issues on the implementation of 1972 Convention. Among the various topics analysed in this report, we would like to highlight the importance of further enhancing synergies among UNESCO Cultural Conventions and other relevant UNESCO Programmes. From our experience as members of both the World Heritage Committee and the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention Committee, we strongly believe that useful measures can be developed and strong tools created through synergies, thus ensuring the integrated protection of monuments of great importance for humanity, both natural and cultural, in all their different aspects and values they may represent.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, now we have some States Parties that requested the floor. I ask the Secretariat to list their names.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you. Chairperson.

The following Observers have requested the floor: Djibouti, Ireland, Armenia, Lebanon, Azerbaijan, Kuwait, Palestine, and Slovakia. So, excuse me, I forgot China and Slovakia.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Director. Djibouti, the floor is yours.

La Délégation de Djibouti (Observateur) :

M. le Président, Excellences, chers collègues, M. l'ADG Culture, M. le Directeur du Centre,

Tout d'abord, permettez-moi, M. le Président, de vous adresser mes plus sincères félicitations pour votre élection à la présidence de cette importante conférence. Je tiens à vous assurer le plein soutien de notre Délégation tout en exprimant notre coopération active pour faire de cette conférence un succès.

Notre profonde gratitude envers le Royaume de l'Arabie saoudite, le pays hôte de cet événement important, tant attendu. Nous sommes véritablement reconnaissants pour l'accueil chaleureux et l'hospitalité exceptionnelle que nous avons reçus depuis notre arrivée.

M. le Président,

La République de Djibouti s'associe à la peine du peuple frère du Maroc et lui présente ses condoléances les plus attristées suite au tremblement de terre dévastateur.

M. le Président,

Tout en remerciant M. le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial pour son rapport détaillé, notre ami, M. Lazare Eloundou, le patrimoine mondial représente la quintessence de l'histoire de l'humanité et de la splendeur de la nature. Ces sites et ces monuments portent les récits de civilisations passées et présentes, et abritent une biodiversité précieuse. Ils sont les témoins de notre passé, les piliers de notre identité et source d'inspiration pour notre avenir, et il est de notre responsabilité de prendre des mesures pour sauvegarder ces merveilles et nous devons nous engager à renforcer nos efforts collectifs, à promouvoir l'éducation et la sensibilisation du public, et à encourager la coopération internationale.

M. le Président,

Cependant, permettez-moi de vous adresser quelques mots concernant un aspect critique de notre engagement envers la Convention relative à la protection du patrimoine culturel et naturel. En effet, selon les statistiques, nous observons que certaines régions bénéficient d'une part très élevée des inscriptions au patrimoine mondial tandis que d'autres sont nettement sous-représentées.

Les chiffres, M. le Président, sont têtus. L'Europe et l'Amérique du Nord, avec 47,19 % des inscrits, jouissent d'une part bien importante. L'Afrique et les pays arabes sont, avec une part de 8,47 %, inégalement répartis. Ces déséquilibres ne limitent pas seulement aux statistiques, mais ils relèvent aussi des inégalités et des disparités significatives à l'accès aux avantages de la protection du patrimoine mondial.

C'est pourquoi, il est important d'agir, M. le Président, pour remédier à cette situation. Nous sommes conscients que cela nécessite une mobilisation de ressources, une sensibilisation accrue et un examen des critères pour garantir une représentation plus équilibrée, mais nous sommes convaincus que ceci renforcera la crédibilité de la Convention et assurera que chaque région ait la possibilité de partager son héritage.

En 2023, il y a 12 pays africains qui n'ont pas encore un site inscrit, et trois qui n'ont pas encore établi de Liste indicative.

M. le Président,

La République de Djibouti présentera très prochainement un premier bien inscrit de sa Liste indicative mondiale.

Pour conclure, je vous exhorte à travailler ensemble avec détermination et passion pour protéger notre patrimoine mondial culturel et naturel, afin de construire un avenir meilleur et que nos actions d'aujourd'hui façonnent le monde que nous laisserons aux générations futures.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, we have now two more States, and we would like to close the list. Now we have... Can you go over them, Mr. Lazare?

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I think we also had Burkina Faso and Guinea. I think that's the list, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to give the floor now to Ireland, but I would like to remind all States Parties that we are running behind a little bit and would like to stick to the schedule. So, all Observers have two minutes. Ireland, the floor is yours.

The Observer Delegation of Ireland:

Shukran Said Al-Rais.

Ireland congratulates the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting this conference and we congratulate you, Sir, on your election as our Chairperson. We extend our solidarity and our sympathies to the Government and people of the Kingdom of Morocco following the weekend's devastating earthquakes.

We thank the World Heritage Centre and you, Mr. Director, for the comprehensive report before us.

The past two years have been marked by many emergency situations, and we applaud the World Heritage Centre for its key role in providing vital support for the protection of cultural, natural heritage in emergency situations around the world. This includes natural disasters and situations of conflicts including, as our Director-General mentioned, Yemen and Ukraine.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement to be read about Ukraine by our colleague from the Slovak Republic.

For the past two years, my country has voluntarily increased its contribution to the World Heritage Fund and contributed a total of €200,000 for the protection of cultural heritage in Ukraine. Last year, and again this year, we have made a contribution to the Fund for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. We are ready to consider a further request for contribution as they arise.

Mr. President, through improved legislation and guidance, Ireland strives to achieve a balance between sustainable development and World Heritage preservation, for the benefit of local communities, and we encourage the Secretariat to continue its valuable work in this regard.

We note with appreciation the special attention that is paid to Global Priorities (Africa and Gender Equality), and to UNESCO two Priority Groups (Youth and Small Island Developing States). Recognizing the unique challenges facing many Small Island States, we are actively considering now how we can provide support to the World Heritage Centre, for SIDS-related capacity-building initiatives. And as an island nation ourselves, we recognize the special challenges posed by climate change.

We commend the World Heritage Centre for continuing to develop and implement guiding responses to impacts of climate change on World Heritage.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Armenia, the floor is yours.

The Observer Delegation of Armenia:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you, Chair.

First and foremost, allow me to express our gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its generous hospitality displayed to us as well as for its efforts to assure the success of this event. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

I will switch to English now. The Armenian Delegation extends its gratitude to the World Heritage Centre for the comprehensive report. Armenia has been a fortunate beneficiary of invaluable support and collaboration, as exemplified by the remarkable pilot Project Management of World Heritage Properties of Religious Interest in Armenia. This project, supported by the German World Heritage Foundation, enhances collaboration between the 1954 Hague Convention and its Protocols, as well as the World Heritage Convention, all aimed at safeguarding Armenia's cultural heritage. We commend UNESCO Thematic Programmes, particularly their success in promoting sustainable tourism for Small Island Developing States. As co-Chair of the Group of friends of the SIDS, Armenia is pleased with the positive outcomes and solidarity shown by the group's members. We are committed to providing ongoing support for their efforts. Armenia appreciates UNESCO efforts to protect cultural heritage in conflict zones worldwide. Preserving humanity's heritage is a priority for us, and we are committed to further supporting the Revive the Spirit of Mosul Initiative in Iraq.

However, we must also focus on the severe damage to the Armenian cultural heritage in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, particularly in regions controlled by Azerbaijan since the War of 2020. There have been numerous acts of destruction, appropriation, and vandalism, notably in Shushi and Hadrut regions of Nagorno-Karabakh. For the past three years, Azerbaijan has obstructed the UNESCO mission in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, proposed by the Director-General in November 2020. Today, Nagorno-Karabakh's population and heritage are in grave danger due to Azerbaijan's ongoing blockade of Lachin corridor since December 2022, aimed at ethnic cleansing and eradicating Armenian cultural presence. Therefore, we urgently reiterate the necessity of the swift deployment of this mission, confident that it will significantly protect the region's heritage. In conclusion, we deeply appreciate the World Heritage Centre's efforts to enhance Member States capacities and align programmes with UNESCO Global Priorities like Priority Africa and Groups like SIDS.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Lebanon.

The Observer Delegation of Lebanon:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you, Mr. Chair, I will speak in French. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

M. le Président,

Je souhaite commencer mon intervention par vous féliciter pour votre élection et, à travers vous, féliciter les autorités du Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour l'excellence de l'organisation et la chaleur de l'accueil qui nous a été réservé.

Je présente aussi les condoléances du Liban au Royaume frère du Maroc pour le séisme meurtrier qui l'a frappé.

M. le Président,

Durant la matinée, nous avons entendu le rapport du Centre du patrimoine mondial, ses réalisations, ses succès et aussi les défis qui l'attendent, notamment les conséquences des changements climatiques sur les biens du patrimoine mondial. S'il est élu aux membres du Comité, le Liban souhaitera prendre toute sa part, être partenaire de la réflexion et de la mise en œuvre des décisions qui en découleront. Pour cette raison, le Liban présente deux experts, Jacques Tabet, que beaucoup connaissent déjà, et Yasmine Makaroun, qui sera là demain. Et d'ailleurs, le Liban est en train de travailler sur ce sujet, puisqu'il est actuellement Vice-président du groupe de travail sur les changements climatiques et les biens du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Azerbaijan, the floor is yours.

The Observer Delegation of Azerbaijan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At the outset, on behalf of our Delegation, I would like to thank the Host Country, the Government, and the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the excellent organization of the work of the Committee and their generous hospitality, and wish all the best for the Chair, as well as would like to express our condolences and solidarity with the people and the Government of Morocco.

Mr. Chair, as you know, Azerbaijan pays a special attention to the capacity-building activities. The resources and the capacities of the States Parties are not the same, which is of course a concern for us. So, we are for a balanced and fair geographic representation on the World Heritage List. In this regard, Azerbaijan is ready to share its expertise for the effective conservation of the heritage sites. Azerbaijan actively supports the programmes and initiatives for the effective conservation and protection of cultural and natural heritage in different parts of the world, through Azerbaijan/UNESCO Fund-in-trust, which was established in 2013. On 9 October, this year, the administration of the State Historical Architectural Reserve Icherisheher, a public authority in charge of the management and preservation of the Walled City of Baku, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, will be organizing an international conference on liveable and sustainable heritage cities, in Baku, Azerbaijan. The conference is expected to involve managers of the Turkic World Heritage Sites, along with participants from different international and regional organizations.

The work of the World Heritage Centre with stakeholders in Africa, both with relevant organizations and States Parties, is very important in the framework of the capacity-building strategy. As you know, the National Commission of Azerbaijan, in partnership with the ADA University, has organized two capacity-building programmes for 24 Secretary Generals from the African National Commissions for UNESCO. Azerbaijan financially contributed to the World Africa World Heritage Fund in the amount of US\$100,000.

Mr. Chair, unfortunately, the Delegation of Armenia has no limits of hypocrisy. The country that kept Azerbaijan's one fifth territory under the occupation for 30 years and was condemned by the UN Security Council resolutions and demanded immediate withdrawal, is speaking about the protection of the cultural heritage. The country that completely destroyed and devastated Azerbaijan's cultural heritage in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan, as well as in Armenia itself, where the Azerbaijanis were completely expelled. As we speak today, the historical Azerbaijani quarter in Yerevan, which is the historical Azerbaijani territory, the only area of historical old town that has survived the city, is at risk of the same fate.

Mr. Chair, using this opportunity, I would like to wish all of us deliberation in our further work.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Kuwait.

The Observer Delegation of Kuwait: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, and our thanks to the organizers of this 45th extended session of the World Heritage Committee.

Dear members of the World Heritage Centre and UNESCO and Advisory Bodies,

I'm delighted to express our gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for everything they've done to ensure the smooth organization of this extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee. After having had so many online sessions, we want to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their outstanding hospitality and their warm hospitality that we've all experienced. Our thanks also to Her Highness Haifa Al-Mogrin for her able stewardship of the extraordinary sessions of our Committee. We wish our incoming and new Chairperson every success in his new role here in this Plenary session.

I would like to wish every success to all of the candidatures that have been submitted by States Parties for inscription on the World Heritage List. Any newly inscribed sites will be a success for one and all because the World Heritage, remember, is exactly that, World Heritage is universal and belongs to one and all, and the diversity of the files being presented, I think, will go far in ensuring a better, more representative and a geographically balanced list, and the experts also represent that geographical diversity. We'd also like to recall that the nomination process needs to be mainstreamed and more systematic in reducing costs.

Thank you very, very much and success.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you. Palestine, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the State of Palestine: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

Allow me at the outset to extend our most sincere thanks to the brotherly nation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including to His Majesty the Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and as well as the Ministry of Culture and the hosting State more generally for their warm hospitality. Allow me also to extend my thanks to the Director-General of UNESCO for all of her support when it comes to protect and safeguard heritage, especially in areas of conflict.

We know that the Secretariat is here representing all of those who work tirelessly behind the scenes for this, but IUCN, ICOMOS, ICCROM, we want to continue to thank them for their untiring efforts and we are sure that we will have a successful meeting thanks to your able conduct of our work and given the challenges we are facing, the States Parties who are from least developed countries require all the more support when it comes to capacity-building or site manager support. It's important that we ensure maximum participation by these site managers if we want a more balanced World Heritage List. If we look at Item 12 on the Agenda for this 45th session, it's important to see that the files be balanced, proportional and representative when it comes to the countries that already have sites inscribed.

And just from a logistics perspective, we've all got access to Wi-Fi. Or at least we should. Could you please address some accessibility issues? And also, we are very pleased with the temperature. It was a bit cooler this morning. So, thank you again very, very much for those little logistics issues that are really making everybody so much more comfortable.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

Yesterday, it was the orientation session, so we tested the AC temperature. So, consider it part of the orientation session. China, the floor is yours.

The Observer Delegation of China:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

My Delegation would like to laud you for your excellent leadership in conducting the meeting in a very smooth manner. We also laud the former Chair, Her Excellency Princess Haifa Al-Mogrin, for her efforts to make the preparation for the current session. We are grateful to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the hospitality provided to all participants. As the Host Country of the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee, we know very well how demanding it is to host such important session. We commend Mr. Lazare, the Director of the World Heritage Centre and the leadership of ADG Ottone, for organizing various activities in implementing the World Heritage Committee, the previous decisions, and for preparing his very first session of the World Heritage Committee meeting as the Director of the World Heritage Centre.

As the co-Chair of the Group of friends for Priority Africa, I'm glad to see both the Director-General and the Director of the World Heritage Centre highlight the importance of assisting African Member States to inscribe more sites in the World Heritage List, in particular for the 12 African countries which have no sites in the List. China will continue to support the World Heritage Centre for capacity-building for States Parties in Africa. UNESCO two Category 2 Centres in China in the field of the World Heritage, we also provide support to States Parties in Asia-Pacific, Africa and of course, Small Island Developing Countries and for capacity-building for heritage conservation.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Slovakia, the floor is yours.

The Observer Delegation of Slovakia:

Dear Mr. Chair,

Let me congratulate you on your election and thank you and your country for your great hospitality.

I would also like to express my most sincere condolences to the Kingdom of Morocco, its people, and send them a lot of strength and solidarity.

Distinguished members of the World Heritage Committee,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of 47 States Parties to the Convention in connection to the comprehensive report of the World Heritage Centre, especially information on its activities in Ukraine.

"More than a year and a half following the start of Russia's illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian sites of cultural and historical significance continue to be attacked and damaged. Repeated appeals by UNESCO to cease these attacks and safeguard World Heritage sites have only been met with intensification of violence by the Russian Federation. In July and August, Russian attacks repeatedly hit sites in the Historic Centre of Odesa and L'viv, both on the World Heritage List. Odesa, in particular, has faced near-constant attacks since Russia unilaterally terminated the international negotiated "Black Sea Grain Initiative". According to Ukrainian officials, dozens of Odesa's historic buildings and monuments have since been damaged and destroyed, including the Transfiguration Cathedral.

Russia's actions as part of its war strike at the very core of our organizational objectives, including the obligation not to undertake any deliberate step that may directly or indirectly damage any part of a cultural or natural heritage site. The scale of destruction and Russia's own justification of its war of aggression, based on the denial of Ukrainian culture, history and identity, shows that it is not only a war of conquest, but a war on culture itself. It is imperative that our organizations work to ensure that attacks on cultural sites are not normalized.

In this context, we, 47 States Parties to the Convention, strongly support the recommendation to inscribe the Saint-Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv and the Historic Centre of L'viv on the World Heritage List in Danger. We call once again on the Russian Federation to comply with its obligations under Article 6 of the Convention and reiterate our calls to end its war of aggression against Ukraine, completely withdraw its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters, and cease its destruction of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in Ukraine."

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. First and foremost, I'd like to apologize for my colleagues which have violated the laws of hospitality and have allowed themselves to make insulting remarks concerning my country. My country is connected to Saudi Arabia by our friendly relationship and a common approach to the values of preserving cultural traditions and heritage. It is unfortunate that this kind of authoritative expert forum, the World Heritage Committee, is being weaponized by an aggressive minority, harming the future of the 1972 Convention.

The false accusations are particularly hypocritical because they are being made by many countries whose militaries did not spare human lives using carpet bombs and destroying hundreds of natural and cultural World Heritage sites around the world, including in the Arab world. Let me remind you that these countries shamelessly looted other countries and they have stolen thousands of cultural objects. These countries policies and the bloody crimes of imperialism have left deep scars in these people's lives. And we will continue to speak about this at the sessions. We will be speaking about how those who subscribe to this statement have been pushing Ukraine to continue a military action by providing Kyiv with weapons and ammunition, including those banned by international treaties. Many sites have been harmed by these weapons, not just in Ukraine but also on Russian territory. We have said this multiple times and I'll say this once again. The Russian Federation is fulfilling its obligations under the 1972 Convention and other international treaties.

The military of the Russian Federation is not intentionally attacking cultural objects, cultural sites. On the contrary, the Ukrainian forces are regularly attacking them, and they are using them for military purposes. They are locating their militaries in neighbourhoods and on these cultural sites. We have information online and information in the Ukrainian blogosphere that supports this. And the real threat to the heritage of Ukraine is the unacceptable, irresponsible conduct of the Ukrainian military.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Burkina Faso.

La Délégation du Burkina Faso (Observateur) :

Merci, M. le Président.

La Délégation du Burkina Faso vous remercie de nous donner la parole. Pour la première fois que nous la prenons, je voudrais, au nom de l'ensemble de la Délégation, vous féliciter pour la conduite des travaux. Par la même occasion, qu'il nous soit permis de remercier les autorités du Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour l'accueil hospitalier, de même que les commodités de notre séjour. Nos sincères salutations et félicitations sont adressées à l'ensemble des États Parties ainsi qu'à toute l'équipe d'organisation de la 45^e session élargie du Comité du patrimoine mondial et particulièrement la Direction générale de l'UNESCO, le Secteur de la culture et le Centre du patrimoine mondial d'avoir réussi le pari de la tenue de la présente session au sortir d'une difficile année 2022 marquée par l'impact de la COVID-19.

Ma Délégation voudrait féliciter le Centre du patrimoine pour la qualité de son rapport. Le Centre n'a cessé d'accompagner le Burkina Faso dans la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial culturel et naturel. Pour ce qui est des actions en cours, nous notons les différents appuis, les différents appuis techniques dont notre pays, le Burkina Faso, a bénéficié dans le cadre du processus de préparation de la proposition de nomination de la Cour royale de Tiébéle sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

C'est également le lieu de remercier les bailleurs de fonds, en rappelant le soutien financier et technique dont le Burkina Faso a bénéficié récemment de la part de l'Allemagne dans le cadre de son programme intitulé « SOS Heritage ». Cette assistance a permis de surmonter l'impact de la pandémie du COVID-19 sur la gestion et la conservation des Sites de métallurgie ancienne de fer du Burkina Faso, site inscrit sur le patrimoine mondial.

Nous voulons enfin relever que, dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre du plan d'action, le Burkina Faso a renforcé son cadre de dialogue avec le Centre du patrimoine mondial en vue d'une actualisation de la Liste indicative.

Pour terminer, nous exprimons notre profonde compassion et nos sincères condoléances aux pays et amis du Maroc pour les pertes en vies humaines causées par le séisme. Nous formulons un prompt rétablissement aux blessés et je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. So, the last one, Guinea, the floor is yours.

La Délégation de la Guinée (Observateur) :

Merci, M. le Président.

En prenant la parole pour la première fois, je voudrais tout particulièrement féliciter M. le Président pour l'excellente conduite de nos travaux. Je voudrais également féliciter et remercier le Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour son hospitalité et pour toutes les dispositions pratiques envisagées. Qu'ils reçoivent, au nom de la Délégation guinéenne, notre profonde reconnaissance et notre gratitude.

Mon pays, la République de Guinée, remercie et encourage l'ADG Culture et le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial et toute son équipe pour tous les efforts, car nous reconnaissons que les défis à relever sont immenses dans le cadre notamment de la priorité Afrique.

Je ne saurais terminer sans pour autant avoir une pensée pieuse et une solidarité pour le peuple frère du Maroc pour le séisme qui a provoqué des dégâts matériels importants et, hélas, des vies, des pertes en vies humaines. Que l'âme des disparus repose en paix.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to ask Mr. Eloundou Assomo to answer some questions that were raised during the remarks.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Ce sera très rapide puisque nous sommes très en retard sur l'agenda. Je voudrais simplement, au nom du Secrétariat, remercier tous les membres du Comité ainsi que les États membres observateurs qui ont pris la parole pour apprécier le travail du Comité, le rapport qui a été fait et, surtout, toutes les questions que vous avez soulevées qui sont liées à la priorité Afrique et à d'autres travaux. Nous sommes très honorés par vos encouragements, et je peux vous assurer que le Secrétariat continuera de faire le travail. Et nous vous remercions beaucoup d'avoir aussi souligné effectivement la nécessité de continuer à soutenir les efforts du Secrétariat et aussi de renforcer les questions liées à la ressource humaine du Secrétariat.

I would like to quickly answer the question asked by the Russian Federation regarding what has been concretely done with regard to the heritage of religious interest, and I think I will use the intervention by the Distinguished

Delegate of Armenia, who in his response has mentioned one of the activities that has been conducted. Through the Initiative on the Heritage of Religions Interest. You will remember that in our last session, it has been decided that also this initiative will be mainstreamed within the activities of the regional units, while overall guidance on the governance, management and use of properties of religious interest will continue to be carried out in close cooperation with the Advisory Bodies. And this is what we started doing already, and that is in this regard that is indicated in Document 5A in this the framework of the Pilot Project mentioned by Armenia and funded by the German World Heritage Foundation, but also the International Assistance. So, we will continue to use the guidance of this programme and, of course, continue to monitor and also provide capacity-building and advice with regard to the protection of this type of site.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

So, we come at the end of our interventions on Item 5A and before I ask my dear colleagues to proceed with the adoption of the Draft Decision **45 COM 5A**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment on the Draft Decision **45 COM 5A**.

The amendment proposed by the Distinguished Delegation of Mexico is supported by the Distinguished Delegation of Oman, and it is to add a new Para 9, which was also rephrased by the Distinguished Delegation of Mexico and submitted again this morning.

So, the paragraph, as you see on the screen, reads as: "Takes note with satisfaction of the activities carried out around the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, and encourages the Secretariat to regularly share updates on its implementation in support of the World Heritage Convention;". We may request the Distinguished Delegation of Oman to reconfirm on this rephrased para submitted by the Distinguished Delegation of Mexico. A number of Committee members took the floor, and few also expressed their support on this amendment. So, this is the final amendment proposed for adoption.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, are there any comments? So, it seems there's nothing. No one wants to have any comments. But, since there is no intervention, I propose that we adopt the draft decision as a whole.

Mexico? Mexico, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

All we wanted to do was just explain very briefly the rationale behind this addition. Since 2011, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts had worked on a document which was this "Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape", and Mexico, at the time in UNESCO, in cooperation with Francesco Bandarin at the time put that to the General Conference at the time, and this is one of the standard setting instruments that we think is most poignant for the safeguarding of urban tissues and landscapes, and we think that it has so many valid and relevant points for good practices when it comes to safeguarding HUL, and particularly in our region, we've seen this transposed, for example, in the Paraiso initiative for Chile and Oaxaca instrument as well. And in 2018, the DG of UNESCO did actually request the States Parties to the Convention to take part in a consultation so that we could take a snapshot of the importance of the implementation of this 2011 Recommendation, in particular, as concerns policies and heritage practices. And we felt that it was the local authorities and historic site managers who made a most important input into that consultation. And in 2021, with the 10th anniversary of the Recommendation, the head of the World Heritage Centre, who actually coordinated the efforts in this regard, convened several countries, including my own, to work on a document called "The Call to Action on HUL", which meant that in 2002, we had the third round of consultations for States Parties of UNESCO concerning the implementation of the 2011 Recommendation and its outcomes. And that's why I wanted to submit this proposed amendment.

And thank you very, very much.

The Chairperson:

I thank you very much.

So, I propose to adopt the decision. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We want to support the proposal of Mexico. We see that this proposal is very important. And the Delegate of Mexico explained very well why this recommendation is very important, and it also reinforces the synergies with other Convention recommendations, I mean, the spirit of the synergies and in the follow up of this Recommendation.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I propose to adopt the decision as amended. Any comments or objections? Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to see also our country because we coauthored this from the beginning.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. So, I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 5A** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

13. 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION // 50^E ANNIVERSAIRE DE LA CONVENTION DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We now need to examine our next item concerning the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. The relevant Document is 45.COM/13.

This report on the activities held and planned within the framework of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the adoption of the World Heritage Convention will now be introduced by the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr. Eloundou Assomo. Please, you have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je suis heureux de partager avec vous, par le biais du document 13, un aperçu sur les activités menées aussi bien par l'UNESCO que par ses partenaires, dont vous, bien sûr, pour célébrer le 50^e anniversaire de la Convention du patrimoine mondial.

Comme vous savez, le 16 novembre 2022 est une date ayant marqué notre calendrier : la Convention du patrimoine mondial a célébré son 50^e anniversaire. Cinquante années de succès et d'engagement auprès de la communauté internationale. Et comme il a déjà été rappelé, avec une ratification de 195 États, elle se distingue comme l'une des Conventions les plus ratifiées au monde. Et juste pour vous rappeler, en termes de chiffres, que cette Convention compte aujourd'hui 1 157 biens repartis dans 167 pays, ce qui affirme ainsi pour cette Convention, qu'elle est importante et que sa plus grande réussite en tant qu'instrument normatif est justement de s'occuper de la conservation du patrimoine naturel et culturel de notre planète.

Cet anniversaire, en fait, a été l'occasion de faire un bilan critique sur les 50 années passées et de voir comment nous pourrions nous projeter sur le futur. Compte tenu des transformations que la Convention connaît et compte tenu aussi des transformations que notre monde connaît, et en vue de susciter une réflexion beaucoup plus large sur l'adaptation de la Convention face aux défis actuels, l'idée était aussi de recueillir des propositions de thématiques et de projets pour célébrer le 50^e anniversaire, et pour cela, l'UNESCO, vous vous rappelez, avait envoyé, un questionnaire de sondage à tous les États membres, les gestionnaires de sites, les universitaires ainsi qu'à des experts.

La synthèse des réponses reçues montre qu'une des réalisations les plus importantes de la Convention est qu'elle a servi comme outil pour identifier et sauvegarder des sites du patrimoine culturel et naturel de grande valeur par le biais de l'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. La Convention a aussi servi à élargir le champ normatif et a permis de sensibiliser les communautés locales à cette notion qu'est le patrimoine mondial pour mieux impacter leur mode de vie de manière globale, à la fois à l'intérieur des sites mais aussi autour des sites du patrimoine

mondial. La Convention du patrimoine mondial a permis de mobiliser la communauté internationale et contribué à la consolidation de la paix. Toutefois, face à un monde en constants changements, différents facteurs font obstacles à la mise en œuvre complète de cette Convention :

D'abord, il y a la question financière, des ressources financières et humaines qui constituent une barrière massive, et cela, c'est encore pour la sauvegarde des sites. Et cela s'est encore manifesté au cours de la période de la pandémie de COVID.

Vous avez évoqué dans le précédent point de l'agenda, avec beaucoup d'affirmation, la question du changement climatique, et la question du changement climatique est aussi ressortie comme une question qui est aujourd'hui le défi mondial le plus important pour le patrimoine culturel et naturel mondial. Ensuite, vous avez eu les initiatives de développement, qui sont souvent des initiatives qu'on qualifie de développement non durable. Ce peut aussi être des initiatives comme des questions liées à l'urbanisation incontrôlée. Les initiatives de développement urbain ou d'infrastructures mal planifiées ainsi que, bien sûr, la destruction du patrimoine dans les conflits armés ou encore suite aux catastrophes naturelles, comme on vient de le voir récemment avec le Maroc, qui constituent des menaces majeures aussi pour le futur. Les résultats qui sont sortis de cette enquête mettent l'accent sur l'importance d'avoir une représentativité équilibrée de toutes les régions géographiques. Un autre défi consiste à poursuivre notre travail scientifique et éducatif sur le patrimoine afin qu'il puisse être mieux compris et donc mieux préservé et transmis aux générations futures, et notamment à la jeunesse, comme on l'a vu. Bon nombre de biens du patrimoine mondial sont confrontés au défi d'un tourisme de masse, notamment le surtourisme, lorsque la pression touristique est trop forte, et aujourd'hui, des engagements et des actions sont nécessaires pour reconstruire un tourisme qui soutienne les communautés, qui crée des emplois et promeut la culture et protège le patrimoine et en assure la transmission pour les générations futures.

- Dans cette optique, les résultats ont permis de bien définir le thème que nous avons utilisé pour la célébration du 50^e anniversaire de la Convention, c'est à dire « Le patrimoine mondial comme source de résilience, d'humanité et d'innovation ». Et cela, pour objectif de relancer l'importance de la coopération internationale en lui donnant un espace fondé sur la culture, un cadre pour travailler aussi ensemble à l'avenir. Pour résumer, plusieurs événements ont été accueillis. Plusieurs événements ont été organisés, aussi bien par l'UNESCO que par les États parties, les centres de catégorie 2 ou les partenaires. Et je voudrais vraiment remercier l'ensemble des États parties qui ont organisé des événements au niveau national pour célébrer la Convention du patrimoine mondial, et je voudrais en noter quelques-uns : en étroite collaboration avec l'UNESCO, le ministère grec de la Culture et des Sports ainsi que la Délégation permanente de la Grèce auprès de l'UNESCO ont organisé une conférence internationale à Delphes, en Grèce, les 17 et 18 novembre 2002, pour discuter des différents défis auxquels sont confrontés les biens du patrimoine mondial ;
- ensuite, les ministres d'Afrique centrale, c'est à dire du Burundi, du Cameroun, du Congo, du Gabon, de la République Centrafricaine, de la République démocratique du Congo, du Tchad et Sao Tomé-et-Principe ont lancé, à la suite d'une réunion en octobre 2022, un appel, et d'ailleurs, il faut saluer cet appel qui a été lancé, un appel à l'action pour confronter les défis, initier un nouveau dynamisme et explorer de nouvelles possibilités liées à la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial en Afrique, notamment, en insistant sur les questions de trouver des voies beaucoup plus précises et beaucoup plus efficaces pour régler les questions de faible représentativité de cette région. Cet appel également a demandé des actions en matière de changement climatique, d'essayer de continuer à réfléchir sur l'équilibre entre conservation et développement durable et de travailler en faisant des efforts pour que les biens puissent être retirés de la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril, de renforcer les capacités des professionnels de la région africaine et surtout de faire participer les communautés vivant à l'intérieur ou autour des biens du patrimoine mondial, qui en sont les principaux gardiens et garants depuis des générations ;
- et l'UNESCO a notamment aussi organisé une série de dialogues intitulée « 50 penseurs pour les 50 prochaines années ». Ces penseurs ont exploré la signification du patrimoine mondial sous plusieurs angles dans le but d'essayer de façonner, d'une certaine manière, une nouvelle vision inclusive dans laquelle les communautés, mais aussi les citoyens du monde, puissent jouer un rôle actif. Et cela est d'autant plus important qu'aujourd'hui, la Convention est ratifiée de façon universelle.

À la suite des différentes consultations et débats, trois grands enjeux pour l'avenir du patrimoine mondial ressortent. Je voudrais juste rapidement les résumer :

- il y a d'abord la question de la conservation même des biens du patrimoine mondial. Le changement climatique est vraiment la principale menace que nous mesurons de façon tangible aujourd'hui, qui est ressorti et qui est, en fait, une question à adresser dans le futur ;
- ensuite, vous avez la question de l'accès et l'inclusion pour tous des biens du patrimoine mondial et le fait de vraiment placer les communautés locales et les peuples autochtones ainsi que leurs connaissances au cœur de la gestion du patrimoine mondial, en les reconnaissant comme des acteurs clés et des détenteurs de droits. Garantir l'inclusion sociale et économique implique également l'élaboration de stratégies de conservation du patrimoine qui promeuvent également des moyens de subsistance, surtout pour les communautés locales et les jeunes, et notamment, grâce à l'utilisation de nouvelles technologies.

Pour les jeunes en particulier, cela leur permettrait de devenir les nouveaux gardiens de ces biens. Je suis heureux que les jeunes, dans leur message ce matin, aient repassé cette question de l'utilisation des nouvelles technologies ;

- enfin, un point qui est ressorti aussi très important, c'est la question de la représentativité géographique. Il faut dire qu'au cours des 50 dernières années, de nombreux sites ont été inscrits, mais nous avons encore 27 États parties qui n'ont aucun bien sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial et 12 de ces États parties, comme l'a dit la Directrice générale dans son discours ce matin, sont situés en Afrique et 15 sont dans les petits États insulaires en développement. A contrario, la région Europe et Amérique du Nord représente à elle seule 47 % des biens inscrits. L'UNESCO, le Secrétariat et le Centre du patrimoine mondial s'efforcent d'intensifier leurs efforts pour continuer à former davantage de professionnels africains afin de renforcer les capacités de sauvegarde de ce patrimoine.

Voilà ce que je voulais dire sur ce point.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Director, for this presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments on this Agenda item. Italy, the floor is yours.

The Delegation of Italy:

Mr. Chair, from Italy too, all our support, together with the sincerest expressions of congratulations for your elections and admiration for the excellent way of conducting these sessions.

Let me also join the other Member States in expressing the warmest feeling of sorrow and solidarity to the Kingdom of Morocco and the Moroccan people for the recent devastating earthquake that hit a land to which I am particularly attached because Morocco is the birthplace of my daughter. An emergency team from Italy, on a private basis from our Civil Protection, has already reached the areas hit by the earthquake to assist the population. And I'm very happy to inform the Committee.

As far as the point in the Agenda, Mr. Chair, 2022, this landmark year for the Convention, arrived as the world faces new challenges affecting the economic, social and cultural lives of people, as well as the devastating effects of armed conflicts, combined with the accelerating environmental degradation exacerbated by the effect of climate change and widening social inequalities. We find ourselves in uncharted territory, questioning our fundamental values as individuals, society and as a global community. Climate change, globalization, technological revolution, mass migration, urbanization, conflict and the rise of inequalities are forcing us to reconsider our priorities and strategies. Within the heritage sector, these societal and environmental shifts are beginning to propel a more people-centred approach, enabling the safeguarding of heritage while meeting challenges of our time.

In the spirit of our long-standing commitment in upholding the 1972 Convention values, and as a member of the Committee, Italy intends to focus on the credibility and representativeness of the World Heritage List and to increase its efforts to ensure a greater number of inscriptions in favour of countries with fewer inscribed sites. Given our prominent experience in this sector, Italy is ready to share its expertise with other partners, as well as to offer collaboration and technical support on conservation and restoration of cultural heritage.

Secondly, Italy wishes to extend ideally, the horizon of this anniversary and we are proud to host an event in Naples, a conference on the cultural Heritage in the 21st century, in November, from 27 to 29 November 2023. This event, co-organized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Culture and the Municipality of Naples, in collaboration with UNESCO, want to celebrate two landmark anniversaries: the 50th anniversary of the 1972 Convention and the 20th anniversary of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The conference, we are sure, will represent a formidable opportunity to promote a global reflection on the main challenges related to the natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, fostering deeper synergies between the two Conventions and drawing up a framework for the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We would like to propose a minor amendment to the Annex. It currently reflects that South Africa hosted a High-Level Panel in December. The event, that we hosted was in May 2022, was an expert meeting that was held in Cape Town, under the theme "World Heritage in Africa, looking back, moving ahead".

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

I would like to thank my colleague Lazare and the Secretariat for emphasizing the importance of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Convention. I would also like to thank all of the countries that contributed financially to the celebration, as well as those countries which organized events at the national level. But specifically, I would like to thank Greece, for the exceptional event held in Delphi, and we hope that the Secretariat will continue to work, as was said by Mr. Lazare.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to thank the Director of World Heritage Centre for this excellent report. Greece was honoured to celebrate the 50th anniversary of UNESCO World Heritage Convention by hosting in the sacred place of Delphi, an international conference under the title "The Next 50 – The future of World Heritage in challenging times enhancing resilience and sustainability". As it was already mentioned, this international conference was held in Delphi, an emblematic archaeological site, a World Heritage property carrying unique memories, precious historic cultural values of humankind, and was organized by the Ministry of Culture of Greece together with the Permanent Delegation of Greece to UNESCO and in cooperation with UNESCO and the World Heritage Centre. The Prime Minister of Greece, UNESCO Director-General and the Minister of Culture of Greece participated to this event. Moreover, this anniversary coincided with a critical point in man's history when rising global challenges triggered unprecedented, complex forms of threats against our common heritage. In this context, the aim of Delphi International Conference was primarily to highlight the importance and the potential of the World Heritage Convention to contribute to the identification and to the mitigation of all those factors affecting the cultural and natural heritage worldwide. Interdisciplinary discussions were held on the most critical factors that may affect tomorrow's heritage, including representativeness, accessibility, and sustainability. A special session addressed climate change impact and sustainable tourism, which were examined through case studies from different geographic regions, highlighting the common challenges we all are facing. This anniversary international conference also examined the overall policies in the context of the Convention, giving special emphasis to Priority Africa and to SIDS, in order to achieve a more balanced and more credible and representative World Heritage List.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, it has been a great opportunity for my country to welcome experts from all over the world, who actively participated in the international dialogue on UNESCO's achievements so far, as well as on assessing the way ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

En ratifiant la Convention de 1972 concernant la protection du patrimoine mondial, culturel et naturel, en avril 1977, le Mali s'est engagé à la mettre en œuvre en inscrivant des sites sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial et en produisant régulièrement des Rapports périodiques sur l'état de conservation des sites. Les sites maliens du patrimoine mondial ont été, jusqu'à l'éclatement de la crise de 2012, des destinations touristiques par excellence et un potentiel majeur pour le développement socio-économique et culturel des collectivités locales qui les abritent. Les menaces et dommages d'ordre anthropique et naturels conjugués aux impacts négatifs de la crise ont engendré des défis de conservation et de promotion, notamment le maintien de leur authenticité, leur intégrité, leur protection durable, leur gestion efficace, d'où l'inscription de trois des quatre sites sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril. Ce tableau nous indique les défis qu'affronte le Mali dans la mise en œuvre de la Convention, notamment dans la gestion de ses sites du patrimoine mondial. Toutefois, ces difficultés n'ont pas entamé la détermination du Gouvernement malien à poursuivre ses efforts pour mettre en œuvre la Convention sur des aspects particuliers, à savoir l'implication des communautés vivant sur les sites. À ce titre, le Mali a pris conscience, suite à la crise de 2012, du fait que le patrimoine est un outil incontournable de conciliation, de cohésion sociale de façon durable, un agrégat qui contribue à créer de l'emploi au profit des communautés vivant sur les sites. C'est pourquoi mon pays s'est

engagé à mettre à profit les facteurs culturels en renforcement du processus de réconciliation et de reconstruction enclenchée par le Gouvernement, en se fondant sur le postulat que là où les armes échouent, la culture, le patrimoine trouvent la solution.

Aussi, pour le Mali, le patrimoine est un héritage qu'il nous incombe de transmettre aux jeunes générations. Le constat à ce niveau n'est pas reluisant. Les jeunes se détournent du patrimoine pour diverses raisons, ce qui met en péril la conservation de notre histoire et de notre identité. Mais en vue d'assurer la continuité et l'affirmation de l'identité culturelle, le Gouvernement du Mali a mis en place un programme d'éducation au patrimoine, pour la transmission du patrimoine culturel aux jeunes générations. En termes de représentativité de la région Afrique au patrimoine mondial, le Mali soutient toutes les initiatives tendant à doter le continent d'une expertise locale à la hauteur des défis de l'inscription et de la gestion. À ce titre, de nombreux ateliers de formation sont organisés par la Direction nationale du patrimoine culturel, aussi bien à l'intention des gestionnaires directs des sites que d'autres acteurs non négligeables du patrimoine. Nous estimons que cela contribuera certainement à l'atteinte de l'objectif d'une Liste équilibrée, d'où notre appel à davantage de soutien pour poursuivre cette volonté.

C'est donc avec engagement et solidarité que le Mali, depuis 2019, membre du Comité, a montré toute sa disponibilité pour la protection, la préservation et la promotion des sites, aussi bien du continent africain que ceux du reste du monde. Cela s'est illustré, entre autres, par le soutien d'un ensemble de projets d'amendements au cours des différentes sessions ordinaires et extraordinaires de notre Comité.

Soulignons enfin que 50 ans, c'est déjà un âge honorable, et la Convention a réalisé un parcours remarquable durant ce demi-siècle d'existence, ce demi-siècle nous a révélé l'importance du patrimoine, mais aussi et surtout la nécessité de renforcer la coopération pour mutualiser les efforts en vue d'obtenir pour chaque État la visibilité qu'il mérite sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We would like to thank and congratulate the organization for all of its work done for this 50th anniversary. Argentina was honoured to take part in the 50th anniversary celebrations, and at the age of 50, we can look back and say that the protection of natural and cultural heritage has become a cornerstone of sustainable development initiatives, and we think that this pays tribute to the commitment of the international community when it comes to preserving not only their natural and cultural heritage, but in ensuring synergies with the sustainable development initiatives.

Over the last five decades, Argentina has borne witness to the developments and changes over time, and we have seen how culture itself has been valorised, its role has been understood in terms of creating sites of memory and in terms of development initiatives. There are new categories that, I think, have enriched the diversity and balance of the site. In Argentina, we have recently seen how our sustainable development policies have been able to mainstream cultural and send local initiatives of a cultural nature into our policies. Intangible cultural heritage is sometimes very closely related with the natural and cultural heritage paying tribute to the diversity of the people in our country, both past, present and in the future.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much Chair for giving us this opportunity.

India would like to thank the Director of the World Heritage Centre and his team for presenting the activities held within the framework of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the World Heritage Convention.

India has examined the report, and we note with great satisfaction the huge contribution that this Convention has made in the identification of the world's iconic cultural, natural and mixed heritage. It indeed has united the world with the ratification of Convention by 195 States Parties in identifying and celebrating the heritage for humanity, besides being an effective watchdog. We have gone through a number of activities and events undertaken by UNESCO, Category 2 Centres and States Parties, including India, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Convention during the period of November 21 to May 23.

In the "Bhopal Vision Statement" that emerged out of a three-day international event celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Convention, the South Asian countries, notably from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, discussed the prevalent challenges of the conservation and management of the World

Heritage properties in the region. The declaration gave us an opportunity for a call of action on matters such as aligning with the SDGs, impact of climate change, intrinsic connect between the tangible and intangible heritage, and connecting communities with their heritage.

Mr. Chair, these events across the world celebrating the 50th year of the Convention gives us an impression how heritage is both a cause of concern as well as a reason for celebration. How it gives us a moment to introspect but gives us an opportunity to expand our vision of World Heritage in future. We would urge the World Heritage Centre to compile the outcome of these events and prepare and publish a detailed report for the benefit of the Member States. As we speak, there are 1,157 properties on the World Heritage List, and nearly 1,768 on the Tentative List. While the List seems impressive on one hand, it also gives us an idea of what lies ahead and what efforts need to be made in order to make this list larger, more inclusive and geographically balanced than it is right now. These statistics, that are provided on the World Heritage Centre website, alarmingly remind us of the shortcomings that still exist. It tells us, as the DG UNESCO pointed out in her opening remarks, that 27 States Parties yet do not have a single site, and nearly 135 States Parties have less than ten properties on the World Heritage List. It also tells us that the gap between the first 20 and the rest, 175 States Parties, is still large. The report, while reminding us of the existing gaps, gives us an opportunity to reflect on the issues of imbalance, whether geographic or typological. It is also a concern about what the Convention could not achieve in the past 50 years, despite its best intentions, and makes us resolute on addressing this issue. Surely, we should not take next 50 years to address this issue.

India, to conclude, confirms its commitment toward making the World Heritage List of outstanding properties cultural, natural and mixed more inclusive and balanced, and work towards providing opportunities to those States Parties with lesser number of World Heritage properties to ensure adequate representation. We congratulate the World Heritage I and the Advisory Bodies for their continuing efforts in this regard.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. The Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

The Russian Federation has also actively participated in commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1972 Convention. In December of last year, in Kazan, we held an International Forum dedicated to the Convention anniversary, which saw the participation of representatives from 56 different countries. We would like to thank the Secretariat and personally the Director of the World Heritage Centre, our friend, Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo, for taking part and the video statement sent to the International Forum.

A declaration was adopted at the Kazan Forum and, specifically, it notes the need to achieve a representative, geographically balanced, credible and equitable List of World Heritage, which would represent all regions of the world, including African countries as well as Small Island Developing States. Participants of the Forum also called for enhancing international solidarity in the face of various threats, challenges to the integrity of humanities, cultural and natural heritage related to climate change, natural disasters and also anthropogenic disasters.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. *Dawlat Qatar*.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Allow me, in turn, to extend my thanks to Mr. Lazare Eloundou, and to the World Heritage Centre, for his intervention on the 50th anniversary of the Convention. Qatar is absolutely convinced of the need to bolster the Convention, which has a true added value to offer to the values of UNESCO.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Greece and the Greek Government for their outstanding event that they organized last year for this 50th anniversary. That event resonated around the world, raising people's awareness as to the importance of strengthening the 1972 Convention on World Heritage. The University of Qatar and Qatar took part in the event organized with the aim of raising awareness among our partners, particularly our national partners, so as to further enhance the rollout and implementation of the World Heritage Convention nationally and internationally, and also to raise awareness as to the importance of adopting mechanisms for safeguarding World Heritage. We are continuing to work towards the aim of strengthening the Convention, because we do think it's one of THE strongest international instruments enabling to safeguard heritage.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I have a request from one Observer. Ukraine, have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, ADG for Culture, Director of the World Heritage Centre, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, taking this opportunity, let us congratulate the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the excellent organization of the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee. I would like also to congratulate Mr. Chairman on your election. We'd like to congratulate Director of the World Heritage Centre for the report and assistance for Ukraine. For us. It's very helpful.

We'd like also to express our solidarity and the deepest condolences to the people of Morocco, to the King and Government of Morocco, because of the terrible earthquake which claimed thousands of human lives, many people injured.

When we talk about the World Heritage Convention, the 50th anniversary, let's recall this year, 2022. It was the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. It was the year when Member State of the World Heritage Committee, Russia, brutally invaded Ukraine, started war of aggression against our country. It was the year when the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee in Kazan was cancelled because of this brutal war of aggression by Russia, against our country, Ukraine. It was the year of the terrible shelling by missiles and rockets, by Russia, of all cities and regions of Ukraine. It was the year when Russia, as the country, brutally violated the Article no. 6 of the World Heritage Convention...

The Chairperson:

Excuse me. Unfortunately, I have to interrupt you because we are not discussing any matters related to the item. So, I'm sorry. Please, conclude your statement.

[The Observer Delegation of Ukraine keeps speaking while the Chairperson is speaking. Inaudible]

The Observer Delegation of Ukraine:

In Odesa, in L'viv and Kyiv, and many other...

The Chairperson:

Sorry, I have to interrupt you.

The Observer Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you very much for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see no more questions and comments.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to proceed with the adoption of Draft Decision **45 COM 13**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed. The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for this Draft Decision **45 COM 13**. The Distinguished Delegation of South Africa mentioned an amendment on Annex 3, which can be included in the Summary Proceedings of the session.

The Chairperson:

Okay, Mr. Director. You want to clarify on this?

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

No. Thank you.

I would like, first of all, of course, to confirm the information mentioned by the Delegation of South Africa. I think there has been a mistake on the exact month of the event, it was about the event which was organized in May. Absolutely.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

May I ask the Rapporteur to place the draft decision on the screen?

The Rapporteur:

The draft decision can be placed on the screen for adoption. I think we are just facing a technical glitch. Just be patient. The draft decision is on screen for adoption.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Madam Rapporteur. So, shall we adopt the decision as amended? Any comment or objections? So, I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 13** adopted. *[gavel]*

5B. REPORTS OF THE ADVISORY BODIES // RAPPORT DES ORGANISATIONS CONSULTATIVES

The Chairperson:

Our next item is the reports of the three Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee on their activities. These reports are presented in Document 45.COM/5B. The reports of the Advisory Bodies span over a two-year period and are therefore very comprehensive.

Furthermore, as you will remember, in line with Decision **18 EXT.COM 3** and Annex 2 of Document 18EXT.COM/3, this Agenda item will be adopted without debate. Therefore, before going to the examination of the relevant draft decision, I would like to invite the Representative of ICCROM to briefly present its report.

Please, you have the floor.

ICCROM:

Shukran, Chairperson.

First of all, let me thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the excellent organization of this Committee, and also, I thank the Committee members and States Parties of the World Heritage Convention for the continued support in the protection and management of World Heritage sites, and also providing ICCROM the chance to present our report. As the capacity-building Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee, ICCROM is deeply committed to provide technical management and policy capacity-building to sites and States Parties, to ensure that the content shared in the activities is in keeping with the procedures and requirements needed by the World Heritage. ICCROM coordinates these productions of various manuals and guidelines in collaboration with ICOMOS and IUCN, and shares the content of these resources through the design and implementation of learning activities such as courses, forums and workshops. ICCROM works to enable both the individual heritage practitioners and responsible institutions to become change agencies for management of World Heritage places and would like to request all States Parties to the Convention to provide the necessary means to site managers to attend these activities. ICCROM strives to be the connecting hub of practitioners participating in these activities, through which we are also able to provide a roster of professionals who can contribute to the various working processes of the Convention. This year, ICCROM continues to coordinate with partners of the fifth edition of the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum, running parallel to this session of the Committee, where we provide the chances of the World Heritage Site Managers to become part of the system and be more active and substantially be active in the process.

ICCROM collaborates with our Member States' Governments to build sustainable learning activities that are focused on specific themes and knowledge areas to fulfil our role and mandate. Through pages 2 to 5 of Document 5B, we have provided a list of activities of capacity-building that we have implemented independently and those which we have collaborated with the IUCN, ICOMOS and UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and also with various World Heritage Category 2 Centres. The activities cover both in-person and online modalities. ICCROM work on World Heritage is primarily coordinated through the Joint Programme of World Heritage Leadership, fully coordinated with IUCN and ICOMOS. Allow me to emphasize that the World Heritage Leadership Programme is fully extrabudgetary programme that operates outside the scope of the World Heritage Fund. We are sincerely thankful to all the countries who have funded this programme, particularly the Government of Norway, who continues to support this programme and have indicated that they will continue supporting the programme for the next six years, 2023 to 2028. This allows the programme to operate fully. We also thank the Government of the Republic of Korea for renewing the funding for the World Heritage Management Course and Impact Assessment Courses for the next five years, the Government of Switzerland for the revision of the *Enhancing Our Heritage Kit 2.0*, and most recently, the new funding from the Australian Government for the development of a *Climate Action Toolkit*, which will be jointly delivered by the three Advisory Bodies and UNESCO.

ICCROM will be hosting a number of side events during the Committee session, that will showcase the content of the new resource manuals and the various different learning activities that all States Parties can take part in. During

lunch today, we already covered the *Guidance and Toolkit on the Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context* together with the *Wind Energy Guidance*, in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre.

ICCROM's capacity-building activities can be tailor-made to different durations, modalities, specific needs, spanning across multiple languages. The content mainly focuses on themes such as World Heritage Management, Management Effectiveness Assessment, World Heritage Impact Assessment, Disaster Risk Management, and Climate Action. ICCROM is also actively contributing to capacity-building activities of other partners, such as the African Heritage Professionals Mentorship Programme, through our Youth Heritage Africa Programme, which is funded by Italy and the French Government. We also have the joint Project with UNESCO in the Heritage Recovery Programme in Mosul, Iraq, which is funded by the United Arab Emirates. We have just finalized its two-year programme of building capacity for professional development and building and upgrading crafts in that place. ICCROM's long-standing course on conservation of built heritage was implemented this year from March to June, where the curriculum has been revised to strengthen more sustainable conservation approaches. Ensuring diversity in resource people to coordinate and implement our activities is one of our underlying principles, and for this, we continue to implement training of trainer activities, especially in collaboration with Category 2 Centres, with notable partnership ongoing with ARC-WH and AWHF.

ICCROM continues to participate and contribute to the numerous statutory meetings and activities that take place within the scope of the Convention: the World Heritage Committee meetings, both ordinary and extraordinary, Ad-hoc Working Groups meetings, and the General Assembly. ICCROM has been part of the state conservation discussions and draft processes between the Secretariat with the Advisory Bodies and has been reviewing and advising on the International Assistance requests. By invitation, ICCROM also attends the two sessions of the ICOMOS Panel for evaluation of nominations as a non-voting member. ICCROM has also been part of a joint Reactive and Advisory Mission to specific World Heritage properties. Continued contributions are made to the drafting processes of the Climate Change Policy documents and other Policy discussions, to the regional Periodic Reporting activities that are ongoing on the Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in Europe and North America regions. The details of the capacity-building strategy evaluation will be shared with you in Item 6, but I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the importance and the great need for continuous capacity-building for site managers and also decision makers. With this, that can only help us to improve the management of World Heritage sites. And for us, to be able to do that, we need your support and your actions. And this could be through financial, personal, technical and in-kind assistance with capacity-building.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for this presentation.

I now invite the Representative of ICOMOS to briefly present its report. Please, you have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je vous prie d'accepter les remerciements de l'Organisation consultative au Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour l'organisation de la session du Comité. J'ai aussi le plaisir de donner cette intervention de la part de Mme Teresa Patrício, Présidente de l'ICOMOS, qui voyage en ce moment après l'Assemblée générale de l'ICOMOS pour rejoindre la session du Comité.

M. le Président, Mmes les Ambassadrices, MM. les Ambassadeurs, chers collègues et amis du patrimoine,

C'est un honneur de vous présenter le travail mené par l'ICOMOS pour la Convention du patrimoine mondial au cours des deux dernières années et un plaisir de le faire enfin de vive voix.

Avant tout, permettez-moi d'adresser nos condoléances et nos amitiés à nos collègues marocains. Nos comités de la région sont mobilisés depuis dimanche pour leur apporter un appui.

Sans entrer dans le détail, puisque le rapport complet des activités de l'ICOMOS figure dans les documents diffusés par le Secrétariat, je voudrais commencer par remercier les États parties avec lesquels nous avons été amenés à travailler en 2022 et 2023 pour leur coopération et leur flexibilité. Que ce soit pour l'organisation de missions d'évaluation ou l'élaboration de Rapports d'état de conservation souhaité dans des situations perturbées par la pandémie ou des conflits, ou encore pour l'évaluation tardive de sites de mémoires associés à des conflits récents, il nous a fallu nous adapter ensemble à des circonstances inédites. Et malgré les aléas, les délais réduits et les difficultés, nous y sommes parvenus.

Je voudrais également souligner l'importance et les effets bénéfiques des nouveaux espaces d'échange et de dialogue entre États parties et Organisations consultatives. Vous aurez peut-être constaté à la lecture de notre rapport que les activités de conseil, qu'il s'agisse de conseil en amont sur les nominations en cours de préparation, d'ateliers de travail sur les Listes indicatives ou des missions consultatives en lien avec des projets de conservation et de développement, se sont significativement développées au cours des dernières années. Dans la mesure où ils facilitent le dialogue entre experts nationaux et experts internationaux et permettent, le cas échéant, de mieux anticiper les difficultés, ces échanges sont extrêmement fructueux. Le retour d'expérience en atteste clairement.

Enfin, il serait impossible de conclure sans partager avec vous nos craintes concernant l'insuffisance des ressources allouées à la mise en œuvre de la Convention par le biais du Fonds du patrimoine mondial. Pour une organisation comme la nôtre, qui a inscrit cet engagement au cœur de ses missions, c'est une inquiétude profonde, car il nous semble que désormais, la pérennité de la Convention est directement menacée. En vous remerciant, M. le Président, pour ce temps de parole, nous sommes prêts à répondre à d'éventuelles questions.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for this fruitful presentation.

I will now invite the Representative of IUCN to take the floor on this subject. Please, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Since we are taking the floor for the first time, we should like to, on behalf of the IUCN, thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for having organized this 45th extended session of the World Heritage Committee.

We should like to state that we stand side by side with our brotherly nation, Morocco, to whom we express our condolences.

It is very important for us to continue playing our role when it comes to the advisory services concerning more than 100 World Heritage properties. We've been able to provide the advisory services, take part in capacity-building exercises, and we've been able to take part in various different sectors, which means that we were able to offer direct support to all of the efforts deployed on the ground. We are being faced with an increasing workload and I'm sure that you all know that the Advisory Bodies also have their concerns when it comes to available financial resources, and we did wish to underscore that.

The World Congress for the Protection of Nature had underscored the need to underscore the efforts towards the 2030 Program, and the Congress held in Rwanda for the protection of nature is another milestone in this regard. Hand in hand with ICCROM, we are lending our support to this initiative and doing everything possible to ensure that the protection and safeguarding of World Heritage sites continue. In 2022, when celebrating the 50th anniversary of the 1972 Convention, we had a role to play in the celebrations and we were able to set up a new Strategy for the protection and safeguarding of nature. We, in this regard, therefore, are able to contribute to the safeguarding of heritage natural heritage sites through this Strategy. As a priority, there is a need to implement the programs enabling the safeguarding of nature and World Heritage, and we have a whole series of action plans, coordinated through our bureaus that work hand in hand with the World Heritage Centre. We are very aware of the need to work in tandem with our partners, particularly when it comes to the Advisory Bodies.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Have you received any amendment on the draft decision proposed?

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa, supported by the Distinguished Delegation of Qatar.

The amendment proposes to rephrase Para 3, and there is an additional Para 4 to be added. If we can get both the paras on the screen, I'm just going to read out the text for Para 3 and Para 4.

The revised Para 3 now reads as: "Mindful of the efforts undertaken by the Advisory Bodies (ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN) to respond to the exceptional situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the efforts of ICOMOS to improve the geographical balance of its evaluation panels;"

The new Para 4 reads as: "Reiterating the importance of transparency and publishing principles and criteria for selection of experts to missions, evaluations and panels, as well as the strengthening efforts to enhance dialogue and provision of early advice to States Parties, and to achieve better regional representation, and take into consideration the divergence of the expertise views based on profession, geographical and cultural perspectives;"

Rest of the paras stay as they are.

So, this is the amendment proposed.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

My Delegation would like to thank the Delegation from South Africa for this amendment. I would like to add its name as the coauthor of this amendment.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair for giving us the floor.

Ethiopia would also like to coauthor this amendment and thank the Delegations of South Africa and Qatar for making pertinent amendment that we really support.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to thank South Africa and Qatar for these amendments, and we would like to join as one of the coauthors.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like also to add our name there. We support this amendment, and we would like to thank South Africa, Qatar, Egypt and Ethiopia and Russian Federation.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Mali soutient l'amendement en se portant coauteur.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Chair.

I would like to join Qatar, Egypt, Ethiopia, Russian Republic and all others to add our support on this particular Item.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would like to add our support to this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

We would like to support this amendment and we would like to add our name, Saudi Arabia.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Rwanda would also like to add its voice and support the proposed amendment.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, please add India's name as well.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would also like to support this amendment. It is in line with other suggestions that we are making under Item 7.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico:

Thank you, Chair. We would also like to be added as a coauthor. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Since there is a consensus and agreement on...

Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Chair.

We would also like to support this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina:

We would like to support also.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Bulgaria also wants to support this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Chair, Zambia would like to support the amendment as well.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, thank you, Chair.

We'd also like to support. I think there's a consensus on the DR.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Italy too wants to support the amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also would like to support the two paragraphs.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. So, since there is a consensus on it, and I propose that we adopt the draft decision as amended. If there is no comment or objection. So, I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 5A** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

I apologize.

So, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 5B** adopted as amended. *[gavel]* Sorry.

5C. PRIORITY AFRICA: A STRATEGY FOR WORLD HERITAGE // PRIORITÉ AFRIQUE : UNE STRATÉGIE POUR LE PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

We will move now to the next item, which concerns Priority Africa and World Heritage, contained in Document 45.COM/5C.

Allow me in this regard to give the floor to Mr. Muhammad Juma (Chief of the Africa Unit of the World Heritage Centre), to present to us this crucial document for the future implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the African region.

Please, Sir, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished members of the Committee, good afternoon.

At its 42nd session in Manama, Bahrain, in 2018, the World Heritage Committee requested the Secretariat, for the first time, to report on Priority Africa, sustainable development and World Heritage. In 2021, by its Decision **44 COM 5C**, the Committee further requested the Secretariat to present a Progress report on Priority Africa, sustainable development and World Heritage in line with the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 and Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 at its 46th session. In response to the request from the Committee, but also the Vision crafted by Director-General of UNESCO, Madam Audrey Azoulay, in 2021 during the 44th session (Fuzhou, China), I would like to present a Strategy for World Heritage in Africa in line with Decision **12** of its Executive Board and the 41st session of UNESCO General Conference in 2021.

To facilitate this presentation, Mr. Chair, I have prepared a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee,

I believe that the first question that comes to our mind is: Why a Strategy for Africa? At its 44th session in Fuzhou, China, and in preparing the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, the Director-General expressed her vision of World Heritage in Africa. She invited all of us to engage in reflection on the universality of the 1972 Convention. In addition, she promised to initiate a shared analysis of the situation in Africa and propose to bridge new ideas for your support in this regard. As you recall, Mr. Chair and Distinguished members, in parallel to her vision, the Executive Board at its 2012 session was discussing the revision of the first Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2014-2019. Shortly after, the General Conference adopted the new Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029 with five Flagships. The Flagship 3 "Fostering cultural heritage and capacity development" had two main objectives: the first objective, "Supporting the African Member States in World Heritage capacity-building"; and the second objective, "Supporting Africa Member States in fighting against illicit trafficking in cultural property and facilitating return and restitution of cultural property". The World Heritage Centre, in implementing the first main objective of Flagship 3 prepared the Strategy. The discussion during the Executive Board, Mr. Chair and Distinguished members, and General Conference in 2021 were conducted as a background of this Strategy that we are preparing, namely, [the 2030 Agenda for] Sustainable Development and Agenda [2063]: The Africa We Want, and of course, it was a big ground of Strategy 14 and Inspiration 5.

Mr. Chair and Distinguished members. How do we develop this strategy? I could not find a better image to present our work than this image from Djenné. You can see, Mr. Chair, this young man is passionate, concentrating, struggling and taking risks to stretch the maximum of his capacity to reach the objective, plastering the magnificent masque of Djenné. This is particular. This is what our Assistant Director-General requests us in innovating to reach our objective to develop a strategy for World Heritage in Africa.

In a nutshell, I can say that the developing Strategy had three phases:

- In the first phase, from November 2021, ADG CLT launched the process of selecting experts, creating teams to facilitate process. I want to thank Professor Dawson Munjeri, a veteran practitioner and senior expert from Zimbabwe, for accepting the call of our ADG to lead the expert team, supported by the World Heritage Centre and all the UNESCO field offices in Africa. This team worked in very close collaboration with the African Water Fund and all Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN).
- The consultation process was the second phase. More than 200 stakeholders were consulted. On site, and online meetings were organized in Kenya, Ethiopia, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa. We also had the privilege to engage eight Ambassadors from Egypt, Gabon, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- The final phase consisted in finalizing the documents and also integrating elements from new reflections during the MONDIACULT Conference and the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the 1972 Convention. For Africa, the most output outcome within this reflection is the Yaoundé Call to Action signed by the Ministers in charge of Culture and Cultural Heritage from Central Africa, who met in Yaoundé in 2022.

Mr. Chair and Distinguished members. What was our target for this Strategy? Before going to the target, let me say that it took us very short time to prepare the Strategy because the background information was already available. You recall that in 2021, Committee members, in Decision **44 COM 10C.2** and **10C.3** approved Regional Action Plans for both Africa and Arab States, following the third Periodic Reporting exercise. That is to say that, during the process, we had information regarding the African continent and its challenge. Our consultation came up with an extra information which will sum up into seven issues related to heritage in Africa.

These seven issues, Mr. Chair, were:

- Representativity of African heritage in World Heritage List.
- Removing African sites from Danger Listing.
- Empowering African experts.
- Enabling socioeconomic development vis a vis heritage.
- Engaging youth and women.
- Promoting the use of digital innovation and technology.
- Involving local community and civil society.

Following this intense discussion, Mr. Chair and Distinguished members, we came up with a vision, three Guiding Principles, five Pillars and seven Priorities. I don't want to go through the Guiding Principles, but the idea was to have a bottom-up approach and a collaborative approach and, of course, an inclusive process. This is what we did. So, the priorities, Mr. Chair, were:

- Priority 1: Ensure the representativity of Africa on the World Heritage List to foster its rich identity and diversity.
- Priority 2: Develop and reinforce capacity of institutions, universities and experts in Africa, in partnership with African World Heritage Fund.
- Priority 3: Empower local stewardship to forge lasting coalition with communities to strengthen the implementation of the Convention.
- Priority 4: Champion inclusive and synergetic, safeguarding, planning and protecting heritage in face of multiple risks.
- Priority 5: Establish strong linkage between all Culture Conventions and Programmes to foster inter-African cooperation on heritage.
- Priority 6: Harness good conservation for socioeconomic development and sustainable livelihoods.
- Priority 7: Support the use of innovative technology in safeguarding and promoting African heritage.

Following these Priorities, Mr. Chair, the strategy has now a total of 25 activities, but each one of these activities has different target. In front of you, Mr. Chair and Distinguished members, is some of the priorities that we have started to work on. For example, here are some of the targets which we have already started to implement:

- As it has been said today by our ADG, the idea of supporting countries, 12 African countries don't have sites, is very important for us. The target is: by 2025, 12 countries with no site have to develop their nomination dossier. Increasing the number of African sites is a very important priority for us. By 2029, we want to make sure that 20% of African sites are inscribed on the World Heritage List.
- For capacity-building also. This morning, our ADG also mentioned the idea of Danger Listing. So, our target is: by 2025, 100% of African properties have established their Corrective Measures that will allow them to take out of Danger Listing. Capacity-building of experts, as it has been said also this morning, by 2025, we want to groom 50 African water experts, 25 should be women and 25 will be men. We have also the idea of establishing a Pan-African network to support site managers from Africa to help each other's. That was an important target which we have corrected.

Mr. Chair, I want just to go through a few examples to see the achievements when it comes to these targets:

- As per today, regarding nominations, UNESCO is supporting 12 countries which have no site on the World Heritage List. We are working with Burundi. We are working with Comoros, Djibouti, Guinea Equatorial, Eswatini, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Rwanda, Sao Tomé and Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan. All of these countries today, we are working with them to support nomination this year.
- Regarding capacity-building, we have already engaged 40 mentees, 20 women and 20 men, to make sure that they are part of World Heritage System. We are supporting the establishment of five UNESCO Chairs in Africa. Two of them have already been established, one in Malawi and one in Egypt.
- Regarding youth, UNESCO has engaged in fundraising, and we have now US\$22.5 million from Saudi Arabia, I thank the Government of Saudi Arabia, to create a project for innovative entrepreneurship, employment, cultural industry, cultural education, and this will target particularly youth and women, in six countries, with which we are now working on this Pilot Project: Comoros, Ghana, Gabon, Namibia, Mauritania, United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Chair, we estimated that nearly US\$25 million will be required to implement this Strategy for the next seven years. UNESCO has already started to implement activities: Strategy for Flagship 3, mobilize funds from different

countries, we mobilized fund from China, France, Japan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Netherlands, Norway, Sultanate of Oman and World Heritage Fund.

Finally, Mr. Chair, before closing my presentation, I want to take this opportunity to thank our Assistant Director-General, Mr. Ottone, and our Director, Mr. Lazare Eloundou for their confidence on me and my colleague May, for giving me and my colleague May a chance to lead this process for developing this important Strategy for Africa. Thanks to my colleagues in Africa field offices, who are working very closely in this process. I want to thank also all our experts, Professor Munjeri, our expert, also from Tanzania, James Wakibara, and another expert from Senegal, Madam Alyssa Barry, for their work on this project. My gratitude to my colleagues may be shared, as I say, to our colleagues and our teams, who are working together to develop this Strategy. The Strategy was finalized because our Administration Unit and our Executive Office at the ADG Office are also very close to us. Finally, all merits of this strategy, Mr. Chair, is going to my team, the Africa Unit, who works very closely with me to support me, to lead this process and create this.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Distinguished members of the Committee. Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for this very clear presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments on this Agenda item.

Japan, the floor is yours.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

As we said earlier, Priority Africa is one of the major items when we consider our cooperation for UNESCO in terms of the World Heritage Protection. In this context, I would like to touch on three aspects of our cooperation for Africa.

First, let me touch on Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi. This property has a profound impact by the fire in 2010, but as a result of strenuous efforts by the Government of Uganda as well as UNESCO to rebuild and preserve parts of this property. This Committee is currently in a position to consider the removal of this property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. Japan shares a common tradition of what is called "thatching" with Uganda, which has made it possible for us to cooperate both in terms of supply of technology and of supply of finance at the same time. This experience was a very meaningful one for us as well.

Another project I wish to touch on now is the Capacity-Building Programme for the nomination of World Heritage Sites in the African region. This project is a part of the project which was introduced by the Director of the African Section of the World Heritage Centre earlier. This is designed to assist ten countries who are among the 12 countries without any inscription so far in the World Heritage List. We believe that this is a timely and necessary project designed to enhance the representativeness of African properties in the World Heritage List. Since its inception in 2021, this project has produced steady progress which has led to the nomination by Rwanda of Nyungwe National Park, as well as submission of a Tentative List by Sao Tomé and Príncipe. We are grateful to the World Heritage Centre for those achievements, and we would like to see further achievements in relation to other Member States preparing for their nomination.

Finally, we have a project in Cabo Verde which is planned to protect the World Heritage Site by promoting tourism and regional revitalization. All in all, Japan has made contribution to Priority Africa through a series of UNESCO projects, and we will continue to do so.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like, at the outset, to thank Mr. Muhammad Juma for his presentation and to commend the Culture Sector and the World Heritage Centre for preparing this important document as part of the implementation process of the Flagship Programme on Culture in the new Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029, adopted by the Member States in the 41st General Conference in November 2021, and in particular, the first main objective of this Flagship Programme, which focuses on supporting the African Member States in the 1972 World Heritage Convention. The implementation of this Strategy is crucial to address the challenges facing the implementation of the Convention in Africa, which represents around 40% of the sites inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. In addition to the contemporary challenges facing most of our Heritage sites in terms of development needs, population increase, climate change and lack of management system, we request the World Heritage Centre to continue fund raising the required resources for the implementation process, in collaboration with the Group of

friends for Priority Africa, and to report on its progress on regular basis annually. My Delegation coauthored the amendments presented by Rwanda on the draft decision of this Agenda item, and requests the Committee members to adopt it, as amended.

One last request, Mr. Chair, I would like to address, in the context of the Priority Africa's Flagship Programme on Culture, with regard to the second main objective of this Flagship, focusing on supporting the African Member States in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property, return and restitution requests, in line with the 1970 Convention and the ICPRCP, we request the Culture Sector Secretariat to develop a Strategy for this objective as well, and to present it to Member States. Unfortunately, Mr. Ottone just left; I really wished he could listen to this. We request the Culture Sector to develop a Strategy for this objective as well, and to present it to Member States at the earliest convenience, in order to allow Member States to keep track and following up on the achieved results and the implementation of the whole Flagship Programme on Culture with its two objectives, which represent together a Priority as identified and drafted by the African Member States and adopted by the General Conference.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor.

May I thank once again the World Heritage Centre for the report on Priority Africa as a Strategy for World Heritage. The report indeed provides ample information on what has been done and the way forward on the Flagship Programme 3 on Culture in the framework of the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029.

Our Delegation has the following observations to make.

It's been close to two years since the adoption of the Operational Strategy. This invariably means that implementation should already be at top gear. However, the report before us basically provides analysis of challenges, recommendations and proposals of ways forward. We, therefore, urge the World Heritage Centre to improve on its approach, and Nigeria would like to see progress in its report on the subject, in the next session of the Committee.

Secondly, it will be helpful to ensure that the Operational Strategy is implemented in complementarity with the Regional Action Plan for Africa, following the Third cycle of Reporting exercise. In this regard, African stakeholders, pioneers of the Action Plan, will be very useful in carrying forward this complementary approach to ensure efficiency and delivery as one, rather than duplicating efforts and strategies that may hamper coherent success in achieving the landmark objectives. We underscore the need for the Strategy for the World Heritage in Africa to be fully funded. While recognizing and thanking the Government of countries who are financially supporting activities contributing to the targets, we draw attention to the crucial role of the African World Heritage Fund in the implementation of the Strategy and call for a wider international support for the Fund. The Fund remains a pivot for a better coordination mechanism to improve Africa's stake in World Heritage and sustainable development matters. We subscribe also to the notion that efforts to strike an adequate balance between conservation and socio-economic transformation is presently limited, and to all the promotion of targeted Programmes to balance conservation needs with socio-economic development in developing economies of Africa. This view is essential for the sake of equity and varying development trajectories. Finally, Nigeria aligned itself with the amendments proposed by Rwanda to the draft decision on this item.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much.

We would like to welcome the efforts of the Secretariat for having come up with this Strategy for World Heritage and Priority Africa. The efforts have been undertaken in consultation with the States, and we hope that they have taken due consideration of the interests of the African States and also take into consideration the Global Priority of 2022-2029 Priority Africa of UNESCO.

We place particular importance on the humanitarian aspects of the work done with African nations. In particular, at the second Russia-Africa summit, which was held in July, in our declaration, there was a particular emphasis on the Russian Federation's and Africans' desire to strengthen cooperation, be it scientific, technical cooperation, for reforestation and safeguarding of heritage, be it natural or cultural heritage in Africa. Naturally, we stand ready to share our experience when it comes to this Strategy and the national potential that is as yet untapped. The Russian

Federation would also like to add its name as a coauthor of the proposed amendment presented by South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia and Rwanda.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for giving South Africa the floor.

The African continent is endowed with some of the most spectacular sites on Earth. These natural and cultural heritage sites are reaching their diversity, each possessing their own Outstanding Universal Value and unique qualities. We are well aware, however, that Africa currently only has 141 properties that are inscribed on the World Heritage List, and unfortunately, many of these sites face significant challenges. As a collective, African Member States are therefore pleased to have the Flagship Programme 3 fostering cultural heritage and capacity development included in UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029. Since its adoption during the General Conference in 2021, the African Member States have been eagerly awaiting the implementation of Flagship Programme 3. We, therefore, wish to thank the Centre for now releasing its planned Strategy to implement this Cultural Programme of Priority Africa, with its specific and clearly identified goals and targets to implement the five key Objectives of Flagship Programme 3. Although this implementation plan only focuses on Objective 1 of the Flagship Programme, we are pleased to see that the targets have been set out for 2025 and 2029 respectively, with an estimated budget for each output. However, the targets set by the Centre are highly ambitious, and they will require adequate human and financial resources to ensure that they are realized. The African Group has often received information on the financial expenditure allocated to Priority Africa. However, we all recognize that financial expenditure does not necessarily equate to targets being met. We are, therefore, pleased to see that the strategic talks to the important role that the Category 2 Centres play in supporting African States in preserving their cultural and natural heritage. Mr. Chair, as you are aware, the African World Heritage Fund is a Category 2 Centre with a mission to support the effective conservation and protection of natural and cultural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value in Africa. In this regard, South Africa also aligns itself with the statement made specifically by Nigeria, and also by Egypt, going forward and to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts, but that all activities are impactful. South Africa proposes that the Centre clearly define and indicate to the Committee how it intends to practically work together with the African World Heritage Fund and the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage to achieve the targets set in the Strategy. Further that the Centre clarify how they foresee the role to be of its stakeholders to best assist these countries most in need of assistance and to ensure that resources are made available to Africa.

Finally, South Africa fully supports the amendment proposed by Rwanda to the DR.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We wish to confirm our deepest appreciation to the Secretariat for the attention given to the African continent within the framework of a global Strategy, which recognizes Africa as a priority for the whole UNESCO membership. However, the 50th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, as highlighted already by several Member States, tells us that African regions are still heavily underrepresented in the World Heritage List. And Italy, as a member of the World Heritage Committee, would like to take this opportunity to renew its commitment to be more active on this sensitive matter. We are pleased to have already started the discussions with the World Heritage Centre, and I want to thank Director Lazare Eloundou, on the perspective of establishing a Funds-in-Trust with the allocation of voluntary Italian financial resources. I would like to take this opportunity to renew the commitment to increase our efforts to finalize this perspective, because only through joint effective actions of capacity-building and technical assistance, we can ensure a greater number of inscriptions, especially in favour of African countries with non-inscribed sites.

There is a collateral aspect that I want also to raise that can look like a secondary aspect, but it matters also. In our opinion, we are confident that the enhancement of African cultural heritage will also strengthen the dialogue with peoples of the African diaspora in our societies and can therefore act as an actor of further integration, inclusion, recognition. To this regard, we are glad to recall a recent initiative of our National Commission for UNESCO planned on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of 1972 Convention, a photographic exhibition devoted to cultural and natural heritage of the native countries of the immigrant communities settled in Italy, realized with photos taken by the immigrants themselves, an exhibition that, after Rome and Bologna, I hope to take soon at Fontenoy.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the World Heritage Centre and particularly the Director of the African Unit, Mr. Muhammad Juma, and his staff for the comprehensive report. Following the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the 1972 Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, consecutive Strategies for the World Heritage in Africa have been developed, including the aspiration to harness good heritage conservation practice for the economic transformation within the African region. The current second Strategy clearly stipulates decisive three Principles, five Pillars and seven Priorities, which are indeed all in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Agenda 2063. However, its implementation leaves much to be desired. As I have tried to reflect this morning, despite States Parties' repetitive call to reverse the structural imbalances, under-representation of African properties in the World Heritage List, at various General Assemblies and meetings of the Committee, we're still a long way from achieving it. I would like to thank the European Union, the Governments of China, Belgium, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman for the financial support they extended to implement the activities of the Strategy in Africa. However, having 12 States Parties with no inscription in the World Heritage List, despite their rich Outstanding Universal Values and, in contrast, a huge percentage in the Endangered List is not honourable. In my native Ethiopia, there is a proverb which goes like this "*Caleb Calikusu by Katibim*", which more or less translates as "A tear will not be a big deal if it doesn't emanate from the bottom of one's heart". Let us put special emphasis on this. Our African very rich, diversified and outstanding cultural and natural properties should be preserved as part of the World Heritage of mankind.

Finally, Ethiopia supports the amendments presented by our African colleagues.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Next, Oman.

The Delegation of Oman: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

First of all, I should like to thank Mr. Muhammad Juma and the other members of the World Heritage Centre for this report, and I should like to echo what was said by my colleagues from Nigeria, Japan, Ethiopia and Egypt when they took the floor. Everything that we can do for the African continent is all very well, but there will always be shortcomings if we have not supported their candidacies for inscriptions on the List. You heard what Mr. Juma was saying about capacity-building, and I really hope that the Unit, and the Centre more broadly, will continue to do everything within their remit to make sure that high quality dossiers for inscription on the World Heritage List can be put forward in the future from African countries. What's more, the very initial stages of file preparation also require assistance.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

The Director, about the list of Committee members who requested the floor.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you for giving me the floor.

The Chairperson:

Qatar requested the floor. I am not sure. Yes, I think we were just going to read the list of speakers if we may.

Thank you.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Les derniers membres du Comité qui doivent s'exprimer sont la Zambie, le Mali, la Belgique et le Qatar. Ensuite, des États observateurs ont demandé la parole, il s'agit de l'Arménie et du Royaume-Uni.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Director.

I would like to ask if any other Committee members or States Parties would like to take the floor so that we can close the List.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Zambia is a State Party to the Convention and would like to join the rest of the members of the Committee in congratulating...

The Chairperson:

Excuse me. I would like to ask you to resume your intervention tomorrow.

We are counting the list to close all interventions. We will start tomorrow.

Director, can you inform us about the list of the Observers?

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

La liste des observateurs, nous avons l'Arménie, le Royaume-Uni et l'Ukraine. Et nous avons un autre pays qui demande la parole, au fond à gauche. Je n'arrive pas à voir la plaque à partir d'ici.

Vous pouvez prendre la parole pour dire le nom de votre pays, s'il vous plaît ?

The Observer Delegation of Paraguay: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Yes, Mr. President, it's Paraguay.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Alors, nous rajoutons le Paraguay.

The Chairperson:

So, we can say that the list is closed.

Dear colleagues,

Considering the delays encountered in our first day of the discussions, I would like to inform you that we will resume our work tomorrow morning while examining the following Items: 5C, the continuation of this item, also, 5D and 6. Then, Item 7 as scheduled already for tomorrow.

Thank you very much and I wish you a pleasant and lovely evening.

Thank you all.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Before you leave, just to remind you, Distinguished members of the Committee, that the Bureau meeting will take place tomorrow at 9:30 am.

Thank you.

The meeting rose at 6:16 pm. // La séance a été levée à 18h16.

SECOND DAY
Tuesday, 12 September 2023
THIRD PLENARY MEETING
10:17 am – 1:14 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

DEUXIÈME JOUR
Mardi 12 septembre 2023
TROISIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h17 – 13h14
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

5C. PRIORITY AFRICA: A STRATEGY FOR WORLD HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PRIORITÉ AFRIQUE : UNE STRATÉGIE POUR LE PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We are now resuming our examination of Item 5C.

As you surely remember, several Committee members had requested the floor before we adjourned the meeting yesterday evening.

I will ask the Secretariat to read the list of Committee members that had requested the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Good morning to everyone. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Maybe before I recall the list of the Committee members who are supposed to intervene this morning, I'm asking my team to put on the screen the information which I would like to share with you regarding the Wi-Fi connection in the room. Starting from today, you will be provided also in your desk with the information regarding the new Wi-Fi, which actually is very simple as you can see on the screen, with a very simple passcode. The team will also be distributing this new Wi-Fi in the room. We apologize for some of the technicalities, but we are trying to solve them. Thank you.

Now coming back to the list, I wish to recall that the following should take the floor this morning as agreed and decided by the Chairperson yesterday: Zambia, Mali, Belgium and Qatar. And then they will be followed by Observers: Armenia, United Kingdom, Ukraine and Paraguay. I wish to recall that the list was closed yesterday.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Director.

Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Chair, the issue which Zambia wanted clarification on was just on the budget, which was put there, and it was said that it was starting in 2022, but the issue was overtaken by events. I think the clarification was done. So, Zambia is okay.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, Mali, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Ma Délégation tient à féliciter très chaleureusement le présentateur, M. Muhammad Juma, pour la qualité du rapport. Nous tenons également à rappeler que l'Appel à l'action de Yaoundé et les conclusions de la Rencontre de Delphes nous invitent tous à intensifier nos efforts pour assurer la représentativité du patrimoine africain sur la Liste. Bien sûr, il est à déplorer la sous-représentativité de l'Afrique et, a contrario, le grand nombre de ses biens sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril. Ce constat rend plus pressant le besoin de former les experts africains et surtout d'innover en matière de financement du processus d'inscription pour le rendre soutenable financièrement, s'entend pour les États africains. Soulignons qu'il est important de tenir compte de la particularité du patrimoine africain dans le choix des experts des Organes consultatifs pour les analyses préliminaires ou d'évaluation. Pour inverser la tendance, assez élevée du reste, de propositions africaines différées ou non recommandées, il serait

bon que les Organes consultatifs aient, en leur sein, des experts africains suffisants et bien outillés afin qu'ils soient à même de mieux comprendre les réalités endogènes liées au patrimoine africain.

Je terminerai en ajoutant que le numérique peut se révéler un outil précieux pour la coopération et la mise en réseau des États, des experts africains, aussi bien ceux du réseau des gestionnaires de site que ceux qui sont dans l'enseignement et la recherche.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. With the help of God, we do hope that this day would be a fruitful one. My country would like to thank the Secretariat and Mr. Muhammad Juma for the report related to the Africa Priority.

It is well known that there are numerous challenges facing the heritage in Africa, and we would like to endorse all initiatives to implement this Strategy in favour of Africa. As was said by some colleagues, we believe that we do need a coordination, a proper coordination with our brothers in Africa. I believe that such coordination cooperation would boost the implementation of this Strategy in favour of the World Heritage at large. Africa needs empowerment in order to devise proper and adequate strategies. Thus, we believe that we need emergency plans for the protection of African heritage.

As for the Heritage Fund established for that purpose, I believe that 24 countries have already supported it, and we believe that such a mechanism can be replicated in order to train young people from Africa in this field. We would like to support the increase of the number of files and nominations from Africa to be included in the World Heritage List. We hope to see these steps that would empower Africa and would enhance the protection of the African heritage. Thus, we would be able to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and boost stability in the African continent. Thank you.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Belgium.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

M. le Président, chers collègues,

La Belgique et ses Gouvernements de Wallonie, de Bruxelles et de la Flandre remercient le Secrétariat pour ce rapport et pour le processus de consultation qui a été mené afin d'aboutir aux recommandations qui nous ont été soumises.

La Priorité Afrique est une véritable boussole guidant les travaux de l'UNESCO. Dans ce sens, la protection et la préservation et la promotion du patrimoine africain est une priorité absolue pour ce Comité. Cette thématique a ainsi occupé une place privilégiée lors des célébrations qui ont marqué le 50^e anniversaire de la Convention, l'année dernière à Delphes et à Yaoundé. Nous nous réjouissons des grands nombres de candidatures africaines que nous allons examiner pendant cette séance. Nous remercions les États qui ont apporté leur soutien technique et financier pour la mise en œuvre de la Priorité Afrique. Malgré les obstacles qui nous restent à surmonter, nous devons maintenir le cap sur notre objectif. La Belgique et ses régions sont fermement convaincues de la nécessité de renforcer la représentativité africaine sur la Liste. Cette formidable diversité culturelle et naturelle est une source d'enrichissement pour tous, car elle favorisera une meilleure compréhension et appréciation de l'Afrique. La préservation de ce patrimoine pourra également ouvrir des opportunités pour les populations locales, avec l'appui des femmes et des jeunes. Nous sommes particulièrement favorables à l'objectif de renforcer les capacités des institutions, des universités et des experts africains pour que la sauvegarde du patrimoine africain repose de plus en plus sur l'expertise africaine. La Belgique peut témoigner de la valeur inestimable de cette collaboration. Depuis de nombreuses années, nos Gouvernements ont fortement soutenu la coopération dans les domaines culturel, scientifique et académique avec de nombreux pays africains. Ensemble, poursuivons nos efforts pour que l'Afrique puisse jouir pleinement de son riche patrimoine culturel et naturel tout en renforçant son identité et en offrant des perspectives positives à ces populations.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, we exhausted the list of Committee members, and we are going to give the floor to the States Parties. Armenia, you have the floor. No one.

Next, United Kingdom.

The Observer Delegation of the United Kingdom:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

As this is the first time the UK is taking the floor, please allow me to congratulate you on the excellent hosting of the Committee meeting.

I would also like to convey my deep condolences and those of the British Government and the British people to the Kingdom of Morocco for the tragic loss of life in Friday's devastating earthquake. We stand ready to provide support to Morocco as it assesses the extent of damage to the World Heritage sites, Medina of Marrakesh, the Ksar and the High Atlas and other important historic sites.

The UK welcomes and congratulates UNESCO, its Member States and experts on the creation of a new Strategy for World Heritage in Africa. This Strategy is a step forward in identifying and addressing the interconnected challenges facing the nomination, conservation and protection of Africa's globally significant heritage. Alongside the inclusion of African experts across the World Heritage processes, the UK has long supported many of the outputs in the Strategy in partnership with African Member States, as well as inter World Heritage site collaboration between the United Kingdom and African site managers and communities. We therefore welcome the people-centred approach at the core of this Strategy. This reflects the approach that the UK has taken in partnership with the Ugandan World Heritage sites and communities in the Rwenzori Mountains through the UK Government's Cultural Protection Fund. The UK is keen to offer assistance to African States Parties not yet represented on the World Heritage List in developing a World Heritage site nomination, and we look forward to continuing collaboration between the UK and African Member States on shared challenges and supporting the fulfilment of this important strategy.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ukraine, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Ukraine:

Shukran jazeelan. Thank you very much.

Dear Mr. Chairman, dear Mr. ADG for Culture, Director of the World Heritage Centre, Excellencies, Ladies And Gentlemen.

Ukraine thanks the Secretariat for this report. Ukraine would like to stress the importance of our cooperation with the countries of Africa. During the last ten months, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Dmytro Kuleba, paid many visits to the countries of Africa in order to enlarge and deepen Ukraine-Africa cooperation. This year, Ukraine also joined the Group of friends for Priority Africa in UNESCO. I would like also to emphasize the importance for Ukraine of the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029 in order to enlarge our cooperation. Taking into consideration that the African cultural heritage sites are underrepresented on the World Heritage List, we support the need to enlarge the inscriptions of more African properties, more nominations on the World Heritage List.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Next, Paraguay. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Paraguay: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much. Chair.

On behalf of my country, I would like to congratulate the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the excellent organization of this very important session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. I congratulate you on your election to the Chairmanship of this meeting, and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, Her Excellency Haifa Al-Mogrin, for her excellent work at UNESCO and the organization of the work.

We would also like to extend our condolences to the brotherly people of Morocco.

This Strategy for Africa is a source of encouragement, and it leads us to think about the importance of promoting in all Member States the inscription of these properties on the World Heritage List. My country has just one property. These are the Jesuit Missions of Trinidad and Jesús de Tavarangue. If we take a look at what is happening in different countries, we can see that the gap is still immense. The unequal world order is being reproduced on the World Heritage List, and that is why it is more important than ever to have a more balanced World Heritage List. In the hearts of people, we must plant the seeds of real devotion to their heritage. This is both urgent and necessary.

This is why we need an educational policy in all of our countries to this end. And this is why Africa must remain a priority. It is also just for the Latin American region and the Caribbean to also remain a priority for UNESCO.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to ask the Secretariat to answer some questions that have been addressed and clarifications during the discussion. Mr. ADG.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

I would like to remind you that when we speak of Priority Africa, the World Heritage Committee is a key player in this work, which is being carried out both at UNESCO and in the various divisions at UNESCO. As for Culture, and this was mentioned yesterday, work as part of the Priority Africa Programme, which was presented to you by Muhammad's team, was conducted in complete synergy with the second Pillar of this Flagship Programme, that is, the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural properties and the return of cultural properties to their countries of origin. That is why it is so important to work in synergy, and this is what we are doing, as the Ambassador of Egypt said. This is also what we are doing at UNESCO. In other words, Priority Africa is a true asset for us.

The work being done on heritage is also reflected in other Conventions. For example, this year in Botswana, we will see 12 inscriptions of elements on the List of Immaterial Heritage in Africa, whereas the number normally is much lower. So, we have done a lot of work over the past four or five years, supported by ICCROM on capacity-building. I also wanted to mention that Priority Africa permeates the entire Culture Sector. Over the last two years, we have been already working on the audiovisual arts in Africa during the COVID pandemic, now, we are currently working out on the graphic and editorial sector in Africa. It permeates the entire Sector, as I say, and we just wanted to reassure you that it's also thanks to the Group of friends of Priority Africa that we've been able to sit down these key milestone dates. In other words, when we talk about 2025 and the expected results by then, and then we look forward to 2029, there are certain dates that are already set down. We have challenges to meet, we have deadlines to respect, and we are able to work on those objectives and that way. By 2025, we know exactly what we expect to achieve. We are relying on each and every one of you for your support. I just wanted to thank you for what you've said and, above all, for the question posed by Egypt because it's an absolute relevance.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for the clarifications.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to proceed with the adoption of Draft Decision **45 COM 5C**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Rwanda, which is supported by the Distinguished Delegations of Egypt, South Africa and Ethiopia. We also noted that a number of Committee members from the floor expressed co-authorship for this amendment. The names of the Committee members, as we recorded, are Nigeria, Russian Federation, South Africa, Ethiopia and Oman.

The proposed amendment is for changes to Para 2, Para 3, Para 6 and Para 11, along with inclusion of an additional Para 9. We will be showing the amended decision on screen parawise for adoption.

You can see Para 1 to 4. I'm going to read out those.

Para 1: "Having examined Document WHC/23/45.COM/5C,".

Para 2: "Recalling Decision **44 COM 5C**". As per standard, we have added the phrase: "adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021)", in which the World Heritage Centre was requested to present a Progress report on Priority Africa in line with the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 and Programme and Budget for 2022 - 2025,".

Para 3 reads as: "Also recalling Decisions **44 COM 10A** and **44 COM 10B** adopted at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021);".

Para 4 and Para 5 stay as they are.

Para 6 is amended, and the revised para states: "Endorses the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa as an implementation plan of Objective 1 of Flagship Programme 3 of the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029, composed of three Guiding Principles, five Pillars and seven Priorities identified by the States Parties

following a broader consultation process that involved African States Parties, national focal points, World Heritage site managers and experts;".

Para 7 and Para 8 stay as they are.

There is inclusion of a new Para 9 which reads as: "Recognizes that the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa needs to be fully funded and requests the Secretariat to fundraise resources required for the implementation of the Strategy;".

Para 10, with all its points a) to e), stays as it is.

Para 11 is revised and reads as: "Requests the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with IUCN, ICOMOS, the World Heritage Centre". We would like to change "the World Heritage Centre" to replace it by "ICCROM", which is an Advisory Body not mentioned whereas "World Heritage Centre" is already mentioned in the initial statement. Following that, it's: "the UNESCO Chairs and UNESCO Category 2 Centres related to World Heritage and other capacity-building partners, to implement the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa and the implementation of Main Objective 1 of Flagship Programme 3 and prepare a Progress report towards this end in line with the Medium-Term Strategy 2022 -2029 and Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 for examination by the Committee at its 46th session."

End of the revised amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Japan supports the amendment presented, and we want our name to be included as one of the co-sponsors.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

We also confirm our support for the suggested amendments and would like to be coauthors as well.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Chair, Zambia wants to be included as well. We are supporting.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

India would also like to align with other States Parties in supporting this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Italy supports to the amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines supports the amendments.

The Chairperson:

Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair.

We were among the countries that supported the amendment. For some reason, we just got deleted. Could you please add us back in?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Bulgaria also supports.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

We would also like to lend our support.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Le Mali appuie les amendement proposés, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

We'd like to support the decision.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thailand would like to support as well.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Since it's the first time I'm taking the floor, allow me to first congratulate you, Sir, on your Chairmanship and wish you all the best and a great success in your activities.

I would also like to add my voice and join other countries in expressing our solidarity and deepest condolences to the people of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Finally, we wish to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for assuming the leadership and our Committee for the warm welcome to your beautiful country. Mr. Chair, let me also add thank all the countries, all the Member States, for adding their voices to the proposed amendments. One minor adjustment on Para 6. We are proposing to add the "Main objective", not just "Objective 1".

I thank you, Sir.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico:

Thank you, Chairman.

We would like to be also in the list of countries supporting no. 2, Paragraph 2.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Are there any comments or interventions?

So, I propose that we proceed with adopting the amended draft decision para by para.

So, the First Paragraph. There is no amendment. Do you agree? Any objections? Then, adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 2. Do you agree with the amended paragraph? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3. Do you agree with the amended paragraph? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraphs 4 and 5. There is no amendment. Do you agree with the paragraphs? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6. Do you agree with the amended draft paragraph? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraphs 7 and 8. There are no amendments. Any concern? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9. Do you agree with the amended draft paragraph? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 10. No amendments. Agree on the paragraph? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 11. Do you agree with the amended draft paragraph? Adopted. *[gavel]*

So many thanks. And now we proceed with the decision and adopt the whole amended draft entirely. If there are no comments or interventions. Adopted. *[gavel]*

So, I declare that the Draft Decision **45 COM 5C** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

5D. THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT // LA CONVENTION DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL ET LE DEVELOPPEMENT DURABLE

The Chairperson:

Dear Committee members,

We will move now to the next item concerning the World Heritage Convention and Sustainable Development. Please refer to Document 45.COM/5D in this regard.

Allow me to give the floor to Ms. Jyoti Hosagrahar (Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre) to present to us this document on an essential matter for the future implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Please, Ms. Hosagrahar, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Following the adoption of the Policy Document for the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention, by the 20th General Assembly, this document reports on the follow up activities since the last reporting two years ago as well as follow up to previous decisions. My presentation follows the structure of the document where I will first address general efforts of the Centre and the Advisory Bodies and then highlight them by themes identified by the Policy, with a view to align the World Heritage Sustainable

Development Policy with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the themes also identify relevant SDGs to which those activities contribute.

- The general activities and mainstreaming:

In the current reporting period, sustainable development has been mainstreamed into the processes of the World Heritage Convention. For instance, in the framework of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, almost all States Parties so far recognize that the inscription of a property on the World Heritage List contributes to the 2030 Agenda including protecting biological and cultural diversity, human rights, disasters, resilience and climate change.

Following the ongoing reporting exercise, Regional Action Plans have been developed for the Arab States, Africa, and Asia and the Pacific regions to include Strategic Objectives related to sustainable development.

The 2022 MONDIACULT Declaration highlights safeguarding cultural heritage against climate change and conflicts, aligning with the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy (WH-SDP). It also stresses combining efforts with intangible heritage and other Cultural Conventions.

With regards to guidance and tools for supporting the implementation of the World Heritage Policy, it includes the World Heritage Canopy platform for good practices and innovative solutions, showcasing over 65 cases integrating heritage conservation with sustainable development at the local level, including a new thematic area on climate change launched at COP 27 with the support of the Netherlands.

- Enhancing environmental resilience, contributing to SDG 14 and 15:

The significant steps forward are the World Heritage Centre contribution to the post 2020 Biodiversity Framework via Biodiversity-related Conventions Liaison Group, which includes all the biodiversity-related Conventions, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the cooperation between UNESCO, the Advisory bodies and the corporate sector to further the protection of World Heritage.

With generous support from Norway, UNESCO has embarked on a range of ambitious conservation activities in Africa and 14 properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

UNESCO and IUCN's 2021 study shows World Heritage sites lost 3.5 million ha of forest from 2001 to 2010, hindering carbon storage, providing and supporting UNESCO's commitment to the protection of global forests as vital for SDGs.

The World Heritage Centre, recognizing nature-culture connections, acts as the Secretariat for the UNESCO-Greece Melina Mercouri International Prize, rewarding exceptional efforts in protecting and improving cultural landscapes.

- Disaster risk reduction:

The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies have acted quickly to provide support to World Heritage properties affected by disasters due to natural causes, for example, flooding in Yemen, Sudan and Pakistan, earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria, to name a few, which are particularly acute also for the SIDS.

The World Heritage Centre also provided technical and financial support for properties to minimize the risks of disasters as well as their impact, particularly for sites on the List of World Heritage in Danger, including enhancing resilience in, for example, World Heritage cities in Yemen facing climate-related flooding, in Pakistan, and Sudan.

- Furthering Climate Action with World Heritage, relating to SDG 13:

Regarding Climate Action and SDG 13, more information regarding the conservation of Marine properties and the protection of glaciers will be provided in Documents 7, 7A and 7B.

The Centre has made great efforts to integrate culture and cultural and natural heritage into international climate efforts. For example:

- Offering key recommendations in the Global Research and Action Agenda (published in December 2022) that resulted from the first-ever international meeting on culture, heritage and Climate Change organized in 2021, in collaboration with IPCC and ICOMOS.
- Offering guidance in an online tool, *Guidance for Wind Energy Projects in a World Heritage Context*, for States properties in the Europe and North America region, launched in 2023 with the support of the Government of the Netherlands.
- A new study was carried out by UNESCO and IUCN on World Heritage Glaciers was launched in the framework of COP 27.
- The Flexible Mechanism, involving Greece, UNESCO, UNFCCC, and WMO is also important to note here.

- Enabling poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods for local communities, SDG 1, 8 and 12:

The potential of World Heritage properties to alleviate poverty and enhance sustainable livelihoods of local communities, by engaging these local communities in the conservation and management of heritage properties and sites is emphasized. Just to touch on quickly on:

- The ongoing Periodic Reporting shows that increasing number of properties have management plans that include a strategy to manage tourism activity-derived economic, sociocultural, and environmental aspects as well as formalized processes for engaging with local communities.
- In Africa, the World Heritage Centre prioritizes enhancing local communities' involvement and property management.

Aligned with UNESCO's World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme and WH-SDP, various initiatives by the World Heritage Centre and UNESCO field offices promote locally driven sustainable tourism around World Heritage properties, aiding economic diversification and community resilience. Some examples would be:

- The partnership between Airbnb and Mexico City's Government for sustainable tourism in WH Sites of Xochimilco and Tláhuac;
- The UNESCO Sustainable Travel Pledge with Expedia Group;
- Sustainable cities and settlements, SDG 1.

As more than 70% of Cultural World Heritage properties are located in urban areas and face a pressure of urbanization, the 2011 Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) has been aligned with the WH-SDP, the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda.

The third Member States Consultation on HUL Recommendation and its implementation (2022-2023) produced 187 reports from 69 countries, and 125 cities. 80% of the reporting cities had properties on the World Heritage List or the national Tentative Lists. The reports emphasized the significance of implementing the Recommendation as a tool for managing urban World Heritage properties integrating heritage conservation with urban development plans and processes. In the framework of sustainable development supported by additional digital tools such as the Urban Heritage Atlas for cultural mapping of attributes. The 2011 Recommendation is being applied to safeguard World Heritage in African urban contexts, including properties like Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda), Royal Palaces of Abomey (Benin), among others.

- Promoting social inclusion and empowering local communities including youth, women and indigenous peoples, SDG 5 and 10:

The World Heritage Centre actively supports UNESCO's Intersectoral Programme Promoting Indigenous Knowledge, Culture, and Languages for Inclusion and has contributed to the development of the International Decade of Indigenous Languages Global Action Plan.

The World Heritage Committee specifically urges equitable participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in decision-making, monitoring, and managing World Heritage properties, emphasizing indigenous rights and free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of indigenous peoples.

Revised formats for nomination, effective from February 2023, require demonstrated free, prior, and informed consent prior to submission of nomination dossiers. The Advisory Bodies are ensuring appropriate procedures are in place to incorporate inputs from indigenous peoples in their evaluation processes.

Regarding allegations of human rights violations and abuses towards indigenous peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in and around World Heritage properties, in each case, the World Heritage Centre has followed up with States Parties to clarify positions and facts, ensuring adherence to Convention's principles.

The October 2022 report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples outlines four recommendations to UNESCO. In parallel, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies have intensified their cooperation with the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage and with UN Special Rapporteurs in relevant fields through several meetings to discuss and reflect upon a more effective recognition of the rights and values of indigenous peoples in the processes of the World Heritage Convention.

UNESCO is collaborating with the Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage together with the Advisory Bodies for an international expert workshop on recognizing and respecting indigenous peoples' heritage values in World Heritage sites in January 2024

Other activities related to World Heritage and Youth, like the World Heritage Volunteers or the *Young Hands Kit* have been discussed in Document 5A, that was reported yesterday.

The World Heritage Centre promotes gender-balanced participation in property management, and the ongoing Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting indicates that most properties with formalized management systems include a framework for the participation of women.

- Promoting peace and security and facilitating international cooperation, SDG 16 and 17:

The historic MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration affirms the imperative of protecting cultural heritage from the risk of destruction or damage in the context of armed conflicts. This topic is extensively discussed in Document 7.

The World Heritage Convention has continuously proved to be a powerful tool for mobilizing international cooperation for the establishment of common priorities and strategies to face heritage conservation and preservation challenges. Some examples are the Pacific Regional World Heritage Action Plan for World Heritage 2021-2025 and the International Coordinating Committee for Angkor.

- Measurement and monitoring of culture in the 2030 Agenda:

Data collected by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics in relation to the monitoring of SDG 11.4.1 on the amount of expenditure on the protection of cultural and natural heritage, shows that developing nations are investing less than developed ones and that local governments take the lead in safeguarding heritage in some countries.

UNESCO has successfully completed the pilot implementation of the UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators. The Thematic Indicators for Culture in the 2030 Agenda, in 13 countries and 17 cities, highlighting culture's role in sustainable development, including several indicators for cultural and natural heritage.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for this presentation. I would like to know whether there are any comments on this Agenda item. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Oman would like to thank the Secretariat, represented by the World Heritage Centre, for all the efforts and excellent work during the period presented at this report, as well as their cooperation and coordination with the Advisory Bodies to enable culture and heritage in sustainable development. Oman will be supporting the debate and discussions in New York for this month regarding the culture as one of the key elements for Sustainable Development Goals, and our Ambassador and Permanent Delegate is informed accordingly.

Oman would like also to acknowledge the importance of the online platform World Heritage Canopy, as I mentioned it also yesterday, as a relevant tool to support the operationalization of the World Heritage Sustainable Development Programme. It is also clear from the report that this platform is used for capacity-building. Oman is also in discussion with the World Heritage Centre on how to cooperate and utilize this platform. I strongly invite States Parties to contribute to this initiative and to support such efforts to enable the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies to gather, analyse and share information on good practices and innovative solutions that integrate heritage conservation with sustainable development, which we will be all benefiting from. Such information sharing and experiences and practices of each other will enable States Parties for more cooperation. Again, many thanks for all the efforts.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. India.

The Delegation of India:

Mr. Chair, thank you for giving India the floor.

India would like to thank the Deputy Director of the Centre in presenting us the report regarding the progress made in implementing the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy since the extended 44th session of the Committee. Goal 11 of these seven SDGs is most pertinent for the WH Convention. We do not need to remind ourselves of the relevance of the Goal 11.4: "Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage". This goal, though, clearly shows its concern for the World Heritage properties. However, this cannot be viewed in isolation. Many other SDGs also get interlinked with this Goal 11, as the document presented by the Secretariat indicates. The Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise, that India participated in 2021, gave us an opportunity to integrate aspects of heritage conservation and management with sustainable development practices. Almost each site manager of our 40 WH properties, be it cultural, natural or mixed, gave us indicators regarding sustainable development practices, getting mainstreamed in conservation and buffer management of our properties. The Secretariat has provided us with pertinent insights on various SDG goals being mainstreamed into the World Heritage processes, be it enhancing environmental resilience or disaster risk reduction of furthering climate action with World Heritage, or enabling poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods for local communities or sustainable cities and settlements, or promoting social inclusion and empowering local communities including youth, women and indigenous peoples, or promoting peace and security and facilitating international cooperation. India notes with concern various actions and activities in the last two years. Clearly, this is a work in progress and India will stand in full support of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies in continuing with these efforts.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, we commend the work of the World Heritage Centre explained by the Deputy Director of the Centre. This clearly shows that the protection of our heritage can make contributions to many of the SDG goals. In this context, let me make short remarks regarding SIDS.

SIDS is a Priority Group in the context of UNESCO. However, in reality, despite richness in nature and culture in SIDS, the number of inscribed properties of SIDS is not sufficient at this moment. With a view to increasing awareness of the need to preserve existing heritages, one of the projects that Japan is supporting, in terms of UNESCO project, is to address this issue. It is actually a capacity-building activity through the promotion of sustainable tourism in collaboration with World Heritage Sustainable Development Programme, which Japan is also supporting as well. Also, from the point of view of conservation and management, we have made financial contributions to UNESCO to enhance response to disaster, making use of participatory resources management. In fact, in East Rennell of the Solomon Islands, which is one of the items in the World Heritage in Danger, we have a JFIT project there. By the way, in Delphi, thanks to Greece, we had a wonderful conference in Delphi, and in that particular conference we heard presentation by a Representative from the Solomon Islands, and we shared the sense of crisis in their natural heritage. We need to be aware of those issues in the SIDS.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for giving me the floor.

Ethiopia is grateful for the World Heritage Centre Deputy Director for her detailed presentation on the Progress reports on the implementation of the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy since the 44th online session of the World Heritage Committee in Fuzhou, in 2021. Ethiopia would like to commend the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration, which has unanimously been adopted at the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development, MONDIACULT 2022, held in UNESCO, Mexico City in September 2022.

The role of the World Heritage properties is of paramount importance to alleviate poverty and enhance sustainable livelihoods of local communities, to meet SDG 1.8.12, particularly for African countries, to promote sustainable tourism, create jobs and promote local culture and products. On SDG 5 and 10, Ethiopia seeks further clarification from the Secretariat on achievements, particularly on promoting social inclusion and empowering local communities including youth, women and indigenous peoples in developing countries in general, and Africa in particular.

Finally, Mr. Chairperson, as it is Ethiopia's New Year today, I would like to say: "Happy New Year to you", to us, here, as we are seven years younger, today in Ethiopia is 2016.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, we would like to thank the Secretariat for this detailed report giving us an overview of the various aspects of World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy. In the context of this discussion, we would like to make the following comments in relation to Section 5 of this document in order to highlight the significant impact of climate change on heritage, and to share with you our recent experience. As the Director-General and many Delegations have already mentioned, it is widely recognized that climate change is one of the most critical challenges of our time, with serious impact on both cultural and natural heritage being evident and amplified over time. In the State of Conservation document to be examined later, it is highlighted that, and I quote, "the state of conservation of more than one third of all properties and 70% of Marine properties have negative impacts related to climate change". However, it is only recently that the impact of climate change on cultural heritage has been included in the Climate Change Agenda. From the outset, Greece has played an active role in bringing to the fore this multi-dimensional issue, developing an innovative initiative endorsed by more than 100 UN Member States, the Flexible Mechanism mentioned in Para 23 of this document. However, it must be stressed that the impact of climate change on cultural heritage is a very complex scientific issue which has not been yet fully explored. More research is needed in order

to assess the climate related risks, both temporally and spatially, as well as to define critical parameters such as exposure, sensitivity, adaptive capacity, and vulnerability. In the meantime, it is crucial that proactive action for safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage is taken. Greece has prioritized this goal and implements a multi-level Programme for the development of adaptation plans and the improvement of resilience to climate change for its cultural heritage, using, inter alia, the European Union Recovery Fund.

Dear colleagues,

This summer, we all experienced an unprecedented climate crisis and multiple wildfires have broken out amid our countries hot and dry conditions. In a summer of mega fires across the Northern Hemisphere, the Mediterranean region confronted a toxic mix of extreme heat and drought, with summer temperatures in southern Europe warming at a rate three times faster than the global average. In Greece, a period of severe weather phenomena and flooding followed. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'm sorry for exceeding the time allocated, but it is due to the urgency of the issue.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Italy would like to commend the World Heritage Centre for the implementation of those crucial activities with regard to sustainable development. We are fully convinced of the importance of ensuring that the Sustainable Development Objectives should be at the core of the conservation actions for the World Heritage properties and of the other UNESCO natural sites. In this context, it is my pleasure to stress the importance for all the membership of the agreement between UNESCO and Italy on UNESCO International Environmental Expert Network. This agreement is a great opportunity in this framework, under the aegis of UNESCO and with the Minister of Environment of Italy as a founding partner and first major donor to the initiative for a total amount of €3.8 million. The programme established a network of international environmental experts with the aim of providing assistance and training for conservation and sustainable management of ecosystems in protected areas. This programme is part of a UNESCO Multi-partner Trust Fund with an expected value of US\$20 million. I would like to underline that this action is open to other donors and partners who intend to join this Programme and contribute to the protection of the global ecosystems, and to the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecological restoration of ecosystems. The Programme will contribute also to the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement and to the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as to the UNESCO Biodiversity Strategy. Some countries, like Saint Kitts and Nevis, Bulgaria and Madagascar for their biosphere reserves, and soon a World Heritage property in Ghana, already take advantage from the Programme. We are sure that many other countries could benefit from it and thus enrich and strengthen the Programme. So, I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that on 26 September, at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, there will be a special information meeting to present the programme to the Permanent Delegation.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Mr. Chairperson, all protocols observed, Zambia would like to thank and appreciate the Centre for a well-presented report on sustainable development and, therefore, wishes to make a contribution to the same as a new member on the World Heritage Committee.

Mr. Chairman, my Delegation of Zambia, as a new member of the Committee, would like to appreciate the warm welcome of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We would also like to thank the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, as well as the African World Heritage Fund and the African Region States Parties to the wonderful work that they are already doing. We would also like to thank the World Heritage Committee for its great work in protecting our various natural and cultural World Heritage properties. Considering that most of the African States Parties are grappling with the issues of development within and around their World Heritage sites, my Delegation would like to support the Convention by championing a Pilot Project, if not a Programme, on sustainable development within the World Heritage context, using the case study of the Mosi-oa-Tunya/Victoria Falls World Heritage Site, which we are managing jointly with the State Party of Zimbabwe. We hope to use it as a model for implementing the policy on sustainable development, which has been adopted by the UNESCO General Assembly, for implementation in our various World Heritage properties. As a State Party, we would like to commit ourselves to pilot projects within the Mosi-oa-Tunya/Victoria Falls through supporting a Capacity-Building Programme for Africa, using practical examples for African site managers and policy makers. This programme is also intended to support aspects of job creation for the communities around the World Heritage sites in question. We hope to work hand in hand with the

Africa World Heritage Fund, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies and the States Parties, noting that we are going to deal with properties which belong to the entire universe, we would like other well-wishers to join Zambia in championing this good cause that is aimed at protecting the Outstanding Universal Values for our World Heritage properties whilst promoting sustainable development. As Zambia would like to put it on record that African cities and urban centres are growing rapidly, and Zambia is not an exception, the legacy of poverty, inequality and increased people's vulnerability must come to an end or reduce drastically, especially in rural communities that live within a near World Heritage sites, like the Mosi-oa-Tunya/Victoria Falls and many other sites in Zambia and other African countries. We need interventions to improve livelihoods of our people, even as we prioritize protection of the World Heritage sites and sustainable development. This is why States Parties to this UNESCO World Heritage Convention need continuous engagement and dialogue to find common grounds for the socioeconomic benefit of the local people and world communities. We must move people's mindsets from negative thinking that efforts to protect World Heritage sites do not improve their livelihoods just because they are not seeing the derivable benefits. This can be achieved when sustainable development of the World Heritage sites is seen to be delivering benefits to the communities in terms of job creation and improved socioeconomic impact and development. Mr. Chairman, I submit, and I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I would like first of all, to express, on behalf of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, our solidarity with the Kingdom of Morocco and its people and our sympathy to the families of the victims.

This tragedy leads us to think deeply about how to prevent, respond to, and recover from disaster. And in Saint Vincent, we have lived this strategy when we have the eruption of the La Soufriere volcano in April 2021. To this end, the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy is an ideal tool that evolves around the three dimensions of sustainable development, complemented by the promotion of peace and security. We congratulate the Secretariat and the States Parties for all the activities undertaken in the implementation of this policy and the progress made, and we should underline the MONDIACULT Declaration 2022, which highlights the importance of the protection of cultural heritage to face the challenges of climate change and armed conflicts. Supporting the efforts of the Centre, which is implementing this policy, as well as strengthening synergies with safeguarding of Intangible Heritage and other Cultural Conventions, we welcome the activities to integrate disaster risk preparedness and response mechanisms into management plans in the Caribbean region, as noted in Paragraphs 16 and 17, as well as in the Pacific, and we encourage the Centre to continue providing Small Island Developing States with the means and the tools necessary to implement this policy. This policy, which covers the main Sustainable Development Goals, involves communities, indigenous peoples, cities and all stakeholders, relevant stakeholders. We are looking forward to working with the Centre to further develop this policy in Latin America and Caribbean region in terms of capacity-building and raise awareness. Mr. Chairman, this policy opens the opportunity to adopt a new state of mind, a political and social commitment to increase the exchange of knowledge and best practices, to enhance cooperation and understanding with respect for the highest scientific standards to safeguard heritage assets. We count on common and shared responsibilities to better preserve and conserve the heritage from climate action threats and to ensure the contribution of this Convention in synergies with other relevant UNESCO Recommendations and Convention to the Sustainable Development Goals clearly mentioned in the Policy.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor.

Qatar would like to thank the World Heritage Committee for the informative report and taking into consideration the sustainable development that has been mainstreamed into the process of the World Heritage Convention by integrating related concept actions in the framework of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting 2018-2024. We appreciate the World Heritage Committee for highlighting the importance of promoting social inclusion and empowering local communities, including youth, women and indigenous people, that aligned with the United Nations SDG and Qatar National Vision 2030. The State of Qatar also believes that we need to find balance between the sustainable project and efforts of the cultural protection.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

Mexico would like to echo the other members of the Committee in appreciating the quality of the report and thanking the Secretariat for that. We have had the privilege of hosting MONDIACULT in 2022, with an ample and very broad participation from countries from around the world, and I think this highlighted the contribution that culture can make to sustainable development. All of the initiatives presented in this report, the platforms, the tools and initiatives are very, very important for the operationalization of our grand ideals on sustainable development and World Heritage. That is why we would like to submit an amendment when the time comes. I'd just like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to Spain for the interpretation services. It's wonderful to be able to use the Spanish language here. And we wanted to thank again, Ethiopia.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor.

First of all, my thanks to the Centre and to the ADG for all of the updates that we've had in this very thorough report. We can fully support the Centre in all of its work on sustainable development. We think that safeguarding World Heritage, as defined in the Convention, is very closely interrelated with the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, in the global context of major upheaval and climate change. We are facing multifaceted crises and cultural and natural sites are under jeopardy, greater threats than ever. That is why coastal and marine heritage sites are particularly under threat, and that is why so much more needs to be done to protect fauna and flora in these areas. We also need to ensure the dovetailing of economic development and conservation initiatives, and that is why we would like to extend our recognition and acknowledgment of all of the work done by the Centre, and the importance of maintaining all of our monitoring efforts to ensure that these efforts are *[inaudible]*. In Argentina, we are sustainable. Development issues are being mainstreamed into all different aspects of our work across Government.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Lebanon.

La Délégation du Liban (Observateur) :

Merci, M. le Président, permettez-moi de vous féliciter pour la manière dont vous menez nos débats.

M. le Président,

Les points que nous examinons comme la Priorité Afrique, le renforcement des capacités et, évidemment, le développement durable sont également importants. Nous avons choisi de faire une intervention sur ce thème-là, parce que notre expérience, à l'égal de ce qu'a dit le Délégué de la Zambie, nous a appris que, sans correctement impliquer les communautés locales, ces communautés locales se retournent contre les biens qui sont inscrits au patrimoine mondial et, tant qu'elles ne sont pas convaincues de leur inscription et des conséquences de cette inscription, elles ne voient pas l'intérêt du développement durable et préfèrent des projets économiques à court terme. C'est pour cela que nous pensons qu'une réflexion devrait être menée au sein du Comité, peut-être le prochain, et nous serons ravis d'y prendre part pour convaincre et pour permettre aux communautés locales de se réapproprier les biens inscrits au patrimoine mondial et de les protéger et de les conserver.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. The United Kingdom.

The Observer Delegation of the United Kingdom:

Thank you, Chair, and Happy New Year to Ethiopia.

Following the UK's participation in MONDIACULT, the UK strongly supports integrating sustainable development into the World Heritage Convention, and we welcome and commend the progress outlined in the document. We were delighted to partner with UNESCO and the Canadian Delegation and Commission for UNESCO to launch the

UNESCO sites for Sustainable Development Report at COP 15, last year. The report provides a framework for how UNESCO sites can be at the forefront of tackling challenges by bringing people, communities, businesses and organizations together to mobilize solutions. We also welcome the emphasis on climate change impacts on cultural and natural World Heritage sites, as well as the ongoing work of the Open-ended Working Group to finalize the policy documents on climate action for World Heritage. The UK Government is commencing a Pilot Project to test innovative ways to tackle the impacts of climate on the UK's cultural and natural heritage in three UNESCO designated sites. The projects will bring together economic, environmental and socioeconomic data from a range of private and public sector bodies with the aim of creating new data tools and models to help sites understand and develop solutions to threats from climate change. These tools will be open and accessible to all to support World Heritage sites worldwide. We look forward to working with other Member States and organizations to understand and help tackle the climate challenges we all face, and we support the Centre's work on sustainable development.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Germany, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Germany:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Since it's the first time that Germany takes the floor, we would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the hospitality extended to us and thank you to the Secretariat for this report. With regard to sustainable development, we would like to point to the following. Climate change, and this has been mentioned by several speakers before, is at the heart of sustainable development. Therefore, we would like to highlight the importance of the Climate Policy Document, which is under development, and the Ad-hoc Working Group, as rightly said by the UK delegate, is working and trying to achieve a good consensus in this regard. We would like to stress how important this is to us as well, and we would like to encourage all to work jointly to a later adoption at this year of this Climate Policy Document.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Australia, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Australia:

Honourable Chair, Australia would like to thank you and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for your hospitality and hosting this 45th session of the World Heritage Committee. Australia commends the work of the World Heritage Centre in its efforts to support the World Heritage Convention and sustainable development. In particular, Australia supports the statements made by the Honourable Delegate of Japan with regard to Small Island Developing States.

Australia also commends the Centre and UNESCO for its work to recognize and promote the important interrelationships between tangible and intangible heritage and its support of indigenous peoples. The Australian Government is committed to improving the lives of First Nations people, including supporting their aspirations for the cultural heritage. We are demonstrating this commitment through recognition of First Nations heritage values at Australia's heritage places. We are supporting the First Nations-led Murujuga Cultural Landscape nomination, and we have included, in our Delegation to 45 COM, a First Nations representative, Aimee Stevens, a Darug woman from Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation. Australia is concerned that there is currently no formal mechanism that enables indigenous peoples, including First Nations people from Australia, to directly participate in decision making under the World Heritage Convention. In that regard, Chair, we understand the Chair of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum is with us today and we look forward to hearing the Forum's statement to the Committee. Australia looks forward to continuing close collaboration with UNESCO and States Parties on this deeply important aspect of World Heritage Convention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Jamaica, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair.

As this is Jamaica's first time taking the floor, we would like to congratulate you on your able leadership of this meeting. We also express our thanks to our host, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for the warm welcome we have received.

Jamaica thanks the World Heritage Centre for this report and notes the work done with reference to SDGs 3, 13, 14 and 15, in relation to disaster resilience and climate change. As other Caribbean States, we are in extremely

vulnerable spaces and face negative impacts to our cultural and natural heritage, especially now as we're in hurricane season. Jamaica has benefited significantly from the 2021 projects on building disaster resilience in the Culture Sector and the integration of disaster-risk preparedness into management plans of Caribbean World Heritage sites. These projects have enabled us to build networks with disaster management stakeholders, carry out vulnerability assessments of national cultural repositories, and develop the National Strategy and Action Plan for disaster resilience and recovery in the sector. We express our thanks to the Secretariat for their support. We look forward to the Caribbean Plan of Action for Disaster Resilience and Recovery of the Cultural Sector, which will provide us with greater guidance on incorporating these issues into national development plans.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I see no other interventions. So, I think there was one question raised by the representatives of Ethiopia. I would like to give the Secretariat the floor to elaborate on that and give them feedback.

The Secretariat:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson, and many, many thanks to all of the States Parties who have taken the floor to express their support and confirm the importance that they assign to the Sustainable Development Goals with regard to World Heritage.

I wanted, with regard to Ethiopia's question in particular, regarding youth and Africa and how some of these issues are being addressed with them, I wanted to highlight a few different activities:

- One is the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative: 74 projects this year, of which 20 were in Africa, nine countries were participating. These are hands on. They provide hands on conservation skills for youth.
- Also, the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum, that happened on the margins of this session, and we saw the youth, yesterday, had the most representation from Africa with nine participants out of 34.
- UNESCO is also co-implementing the Youth Heritage Africa Initiative in close collaboration with the Advisory Bodies.
- And I would also like to mention here some of the activities or Programmes, that were mentioned yesterday by the presentation of the Chief of our Africa Unit, Mr. Muhammad Juma, relating to the mentorship as well as higher education. University education for young African, for African professionals are young professionals who are at university, are all already starting. I mean, there's already activities happening in this regard and the Mentorship Programme is already in place.

So, all of these are examples of some of the activities particularly aimed at youth, and we certainly hope that going forward, we will be able to do more in this regard.

Mr. Chairperson, if you would allow me, I think there was also some comments regarding community participation from the local from Zambia, and also there were several others who mentioned the importance of working with local communities and seeing how they could receive benefits of the World Heritage properties. We would certainly be very happy to go forward and discuss with Zambia. You proposed the property of Victoria Falls to be looked at in terms of sustainable development, to use it as a Pilot, to look at strengthening the capacities and the benefits to local communities so that they are able to have greater sense of ownership and engagement with the conservation activities, and this is absolutely essential that their livelihoods are benefited. So, we will be very happy to discuss, together with the Africa Unit on how this could be taken forward and, of course, with the Advisory Bodies.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. There are many other points that were raised that I could respond to, but in the interest of time, I really just want to thank all the very positive statements that have been made and the commitments of the States Parties to support this, and the confirmation that you have provided of the importance of sustainable development for cultural heritage.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, now we move and invite you to proceed with the adoption of the Draft Decision **45 COM 5D**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Mexico, which was also supported by the Distinguished Delegation of Oman. However, the Distinguished Delegation of Mexico has submitted a revised

amendment, and that is what we are showing on screen, and we request the Distinguished Delegation of Oman to confirm their support to this.

So, the amendment is to add a new Para 6, as seen on the screen, which reads as: "Acknowledges the importance of practical strategies and best practices to support the operationalization of the WH-SDP as well as capacity-building for it, and invites States Parties to support the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies' efforts to gather, analyse and share information on good practices and innovative solutions integrating heritage conservation with sustainable development;".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, I'd like to ask my dear colleagues if they agree with this paragraph, as amended.

The Delegation of Oman:

Yes, we do confirm. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I see no other comment, and I propose to declare the entire draft decision, as amended, as approved.

Okay, declared as adopted. *[gavel]* And now, I declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 5D** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*
Thank you.

So, we have two requests from the floor: The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum. They would like to take the floor.

The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage (Observer):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm over here. I am speaking on behalf of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage to provide further information on the International Expert Workshop on recognizing and respecting indigenous peoples' heritage values in World Heritage sites, which we are holding in January in Geneva. The Expert Workshop will follow a similar format as the Workshop on the World Heritage Convention and Indigenous Peoples in Copenhagen in 2012 and will involve indigenous experts from the different regions as well as experts from UNESCO, the Advisory Bodies and three UN mechanisms on the rights of indigenous peoples. The Workshop responds to concerns expressed by the UN mechanisms on indigenous peoples about the nature/culture divide in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the classification of World Heritage sites in indigenous peoples' territories as purely natural sites, without recognizing their relationship to the land and our cultural values in the OUV. This has in many cases led to or reinforced management frameworks that undermine our customary rights to our ancestral lands and resources, our livelihoods, and the protection of our cultural heritage. The Workshop also responds to Committee Decision **37 COM 8B.19**, which noted that there are fundamental questions in terms of how the indissoluble bonds that exist in some places between culture and nature can be recognized on the World Heritage List, and requested the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to examine options for changes to the criteria to address this issue. The aim of the Expert Workshop is to raise awareness about the concerns of indigenous peoples and make recommendations on measures to facilitate the recognition of interconnections between culture and nature on the World Heritage List and enable a more consistent and adequate recognition of indigenous peoples' values in the OUV and management of sites.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. We have also another intervention from the World Heritage Watch Forum.

The World Heritage Watch Forum (Observer):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Since we're taking the floor for the first time during the session, I would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for your warm welcome and congratulate you to the professional organization of this session. I would like to make two points. The 20th session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention has adopted the Policy for the Integration of Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention. The decision, among others, requests the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to elaborate and submit, for consideration of the Committee, proposals for: a) the necessary changes to the Operational Guidelines, which would translate the principles of the Policy Document on Sustainable Development into specific operational procedures; and b) indicators for measuring the progress of the Policy's implementation. Can the Committee enlighten us as to the present state of implementation of these two requests? We haven't been able to find anything in the Operational Guidelines.

Two, the World Heritage Convention is built on the promise that the international community will come to the support of those countries who cannot safeguard their World Heritage with their own means alone. This promise has overall not sufficiently been fulfilled, in spite of the positive examples that we have heard from Japan and other countries today. SIDS need more assistance and financial support from international donors to realize sustainable development on the ground, and I'm not talking about seminars and workshops, but real economic investments in the sustainable use of natural resources, sustainable tourism and the like.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Your statement is well noted.

6. FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD HERITAGE CAPACITY-BUILDING STRATEGY AND PROGRESS REPORT ON THE WORLD HERITAGE-RELATED CATEGORY 2 CENTRES // SUIVI DE LA STRATÉGIE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL POUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITÉS ET RAPPORT D'AVANCEMENT SUR LES CENTRES DE CATÉGORIE 2 ASSOCIÉS AU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

Our next Agenda Item 6 is the Follow-up to the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy and the Progress report on the World Heritage-related Category 2 Centres. Considering their close links, these two reports are presented together within the same Document 45.COM/6.

As the others, these reports span over a 2-year period.

Dear colleagues,

Allow me to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr. Eloundou Assomo, who will present to us the main elements of this Document, including second part of this document, including the outcomes of the requested external evaluation of the World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I will be presenting this item together with ICCROM. You recall that in Decision **44 COM 6**, the World Heritage Committee requested the World Heritage Centre and ICCROM to provide a Progress report on the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy (WHCBS), to be examined at this session. They also sought an independent results-based evaluation of this Strategy, which the World Heritage Centre and ICCROM were able to commission thanks to the generous support of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which I would again really like to thank here in this room.

The substantive Progress report covers progress from August 2021 to May 2023 and highlights key achievements and areas for improvement in capacity-building efforts for World Heritage conservation.

Just quickly, to remind you, this WHCBS was established in 2011 and provides a framework for the collaborative efforts between the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies (ICCROM, IUCN, ICOMOS), but also with all the key stakeholders at all levels, from all the regions. The goal of this WHCBS is to enhance the capacity of States Parties to preserve and manage their heritage properties while maintaining a balanced World Heritage List.

Let me also highlight that ICCROM has been instrumental in updating training opportunities, notably through the World Heritage Leadership Programme, together with IUCN, and while my colleague Mr. Joe King, from ICCROM, will provide some insights into the work of ICCROM in a moment, let me just express our real satisfaction on the successful conclusion of Phase 1 of the Leadership Programme and its renewal for a second phase until 2028, during which we hope to deepen our close collaboration in the service of our States Parties.

I also wish to highlight two key joint contributions of the Leadership Programme: the development and revision of essential resources, such as the *Integrated Manual for Managing World Heritage*, the *Enhancing our Heritage Toolkit 2.0.*, and the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*. All these tools are available in our website, and you can access them. They are extremely important publications that have already proven to be of great value to World Heritage practitioners at all levels and reached a new audience even beyond the audience of specialist circles.

A substantive part of the report submitted to the Committee discusses regional and thematic capacity-building initiatives. For example, in the Asia-Pacific region, efforts included improving livelihood strategies at heritage sites and promoting innovative products and tourism opportunities. In Latin America and the Caribbean, we focused on sustainable tourism and conservation, while key capacity-building activities in Europe and North America addressed renewable energy transition and heritage conservation. In the spirit of Priority Africa, many capacity-building efforts targeted the region, building ever-growing capacities for heritage management, conservation, and development. In

the Arab States, it focused on defining several Desired State of Conservation for Removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR), Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs), and sustainable development policies. With regard to natural heritage in particular, our unit on Natural Heritage enhanced capacities for resilience and climate adaptation at natural World Heritage sites, while the World Heritage Cities Programme promoted the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) Recommendation, and one of our Programme, the World Heritage Marine Programme, offered dedicated capacity-building for the management of marine heritage.

An entire section of the report also provides progress updates on the ten Category 2 Centres in the field of World Heritage, and you know that Category 2 Centres are really key partners in the implementation of the WHCBS and whose role will only increase in the decade to come, especially as we embark on a new Capacity-Building Strategy for a new decade.

As requested by the Committee, the report concludes with a summary of the evaluation of the WHCBS conducted by the E.C.O. Institute for Ecology, thanks to the financial support made available to UNESCO by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in February 2022. The Evaluation Report was made available to you in July, alongside a very useful video presentation from the Evaluators, which remains available on our website.

The Evaluators assessed the strategy's outcomes, relevance, and effectiveness. The evaluation process involved a total of 20 in-depth interviews with stakeholders from all regions, including with many capacity-building partners, along with a desk review of the background and key outcomes of the Capacity-Building Programme since 2011.

There was a close consultation with an Evaluation Reference Group, composed of interested Committee members, States Parties and other key capacity-building actors, and I would really like to thank the Committee members, States Parties who participated in this Reference Group. Their role was to ensure that inputs from the main actors and beneficiaries of capacity-building were considered during the independent evaluation process and guide us for how the report will be finalized, in particular, the highlight of main outcomes of this work.

This Evaluation highlights many successes but it also identifies challenges, notably, for example, the lack of standardized criteria and approaches, the lack of global coordination, and difficulty engaging what we call non-traditional stakeholders.

The Evaluators also formulated a number of recommendations for the revision of the WHCBS, which was already requested by the Committee as a follow-up of the evaluation. I would like to summarize very briefly some of the key recommendations:

- The Evaluation recommends to define capacity-building as coordinating an "evidence-based policy cycle" to address shared challenges.
- It also recommends to utilize the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting for capacity assessment and project management elements.
- The Evaluation recommends to enhance global coordination for capacity-building initiatives.
- It also recommends target multipliers, decision makers, and practitioners as direct beneficiaries of the WHCBS, with States Parties and communities as indirect targets.
- The same Evaluation recommends to focus the new WHCBS vision on "change agents using World Heritage for sustainable development-related policy solutions."
- Of course, you will not be surprised that it recommends to ensure that the WHCBS contributes effectively to the 5 Cs, that you have already adopted.
- The Strategy also recommends that key results should include policy guidance, effective coordination, and relevant resources.
- Finally, the Strategy recommends to develop a budget with funding sources, which is not a surprise, of course, for you. It needs to have a long-term funding source from the World Heritage Fund and UNESCO budgets, medium-term through Programmes, and short-term for Strategic Projects.

Mr. Chairman, I can go over, but what I'd like to say is that everything is in the report and the World Heritage Centre fully supports the Evaluators' call.

We propose that a Progress report on the implementation of the WHCBS and the development of a new WHCBS for 2025-2035 be presented at the next session of the World Heritage Committee, and that a final draft of the revised Strategy be made available at the 47th session, subject to funding availability.

All this is reflected in draft decision that you will have to examine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Director.

Dear colleagues,

I would now like to give the floor to the Representative of ICCROM to provide further information on the implementation of the current Strategy and of the World Heritage Leadership Programme.

You may have the floor.

ICCROM:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Let me also indicate how pleased we are to be making this presentation jointly with the Director of World Heritage. I think this shows the importance that the World Heritage Centre is giving to capacity-building now, and we are very much interested in continuing to work together and we would like to emphasize partnership with the World Heritage Centre with the two other Advisory Bodies, IUCN and ICOMOS, on capacity-building issues. In fact, I would say that many or most of the capacity-building activities that are delivered in the World Heritage Leadership Programme and more generally are delivered jointly with IUCN, with ICOMOS, with the World Heritage Centre, and very importantly, with diverse Category 2 Centres, which serve regional needs that are identified. As has been mentioned, the World Heritage Leadership Programme is one of the keys, let's call them flagships, of this Capacity Building Strategy.

I would like to highlight also, at this point, the generous support that we have received from the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment for this programme. The first phase of World Heritage Leadership concluded this past year in 2022 and I'm very happy to say that we have moved forward now with a new phase of World Heritage Leadership for the coming years. But through this Leadership Programme and through the first phase, we were able to create a strong foundation for capacity development.

The World Heritage Leadership Programme works to provide a baseline to reconcile World Heritage requirements with national and local heritage protection systems that are in place. The Programme adopts an integrated approach to linking nature and culture, focusing on governance arrangements and promoting in particular people-centred approaches to conservation, and in addition, it aims to improve management practices for both heritage and sustainable development, which we just had a long discussion in the previous Agenda item. The Programme operates in a structure where one part focuses on producing guidance and toolkits, addressing on the ground challenges which are then developed into learning content and curricula, which then can be used for capacity-building activities to share and apply this content in the wider World Heritage community. As has already been shown already and discussed a little bit, we have developed a series of manuals, or we're in the process of developing a series of manuals. One of them, you all will recall that there was a separate *Manual For Managing Cultural Heritage* and a separate *Manual For Managing Natural Heritage*. One of the aims of this Programme has been to join those together because of the linkages between cultural and natural heritage. So, we're in the process of finalizing that. We are also working on the *Disaster Risk Management Manual*, also with the same idea of creating a stronger link between cultural heritage and natural heritage. It's important for me to emphasize here, as I've already been emphasizing partnership, that all of these resource materials are being developed jointly and being produced jointly with three Advisory Bodies and UNESCO.

In addition to these manuals, we also have a series of toolkits, the first being our *Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0*, which is a management effectiveness assessment toolkit, and it's to help States Parties to provide a self-assessment method to evaluate the current management status and to provide concrete direction for the next cycle of management planning. This will be released in the coming weeks. There is also going to be a side event during this meeting on 17 September, that's Sunday at lunchtime, to help explain more this toolkit. I would actually encourage all of you to come to this side event to learn more about this *Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit*. There is also a second *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in the World Heritage Context*, and this provides a step-by-step process for conducting impact assessments for World Heritage properties. That's for large and small developments, to ensure that we can adopt informed decisions about various development projects. I know you are all aware of the fact that the World Heritage Committee is asking for more and more Heritage Impact Assessments, and the fact is that we have tried to respond to that by providing tools and by providing this toolkit specifically to help all of you, as States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, to actually be able to carry out those Heritage Impact Assessments that are being required from you. There was also a side event on this. Had this presentation been made yesterday, I would have said, please go to the side event today. But it took place already yesterday, along with the *Wind Energy Guidance* side event. But again, the idea is that we can disseminate this information to you, the States Parties.

These manuals are then paired with courses of varying durations, varying audiences and modalities, where we work directly with sites utilizing site specific contexts for our learning. I would also like to point out that I'm very pleased that we are working in diverse languages for our capacity-building activities, and we have actually carried out courses and other capacity-building in English, in Spanish, in Arabic, in French and in Portuguese, and in some cases also at the national level, we've been working where possible with local languages, where it is useful and where it is necessary. We have activities that are also designed to bring together academia and heritage practice, and we're doing that through something called the Heritage Place Lab, to record and document site management practices through something that we call the Panorama platform, where we are listing solutions on that platform. It's another place to look to see various case studies and solutions to some of the problems.

Collaboration with Category 2 Centres and World Heritage Leadership is also something that's been very important for us in the World Heritage Leadership Programme. You will see in Document 6 that all of the Category 2 Centres have their own independent activities, addressing specific needs in the region and particular themes, but that also we've been working jointly between the Category 2 Centres and the Leadership Programme on a number of capacity-building activities. This allows us to find a more diverse group of resource people to allow us to, as I mentioned already, give capacity-building activities in wider language coverage and also to find more relevant case studies at a regional level. This provides us with better content and better integrity for our activities. Capacity-building needs to happen continuously close to the site and in local contexts with connection to the participants. This is why Category 2 Centres have been established in all of the regions of the world. Although I won't be able to give you the long list of activities found in Document 6, I do just briefly want to mention some of the activities that the Category 2 Centres have been carrying out over this last several years. I would also like to highlight that, yes, there will be another side event on the 16 September, that's Saturday, where the Category 2 Centres will jointly be able to present some of their activities more in depth than what I'm going to be able to tell you now. In addition, some of the Category 2 Centres also will have separate side events, so you can look out for them. But to just mention a few:

- The Wildlife Institute of India is operating a Centre in Asia, and it's specifically focusing on natural heritage sites and promoting the nature culture linkages through research and training.
- The Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, based in Bahrain, is also implementing activities on management planning, on nominations, on impact assessments and also on linkages with underwater cultural heritage, as well as multiple projects to better involve the wider public with competitions and awareness raising campaigns.
- WHITRAP, the World Heritage Institute for Training and Research for Asia and the Pacific, located in China, has established a network called HeritAP within the region and they have activities focused on urban and rural sustainable development and Heritage Impact Assessment.
- The African World Heritage Fund, which is based in South Africa, has been providing upstream support to States Parties, including nomination training, conservation grants and the pursuit of Sustainable Development Agenda.
- The Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas, Mexico, has been focusing on disaster risk management, sustainable tourism and management courses.
- The International Centre for Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage in China, its short name is HIST, has been developing and promoting space technology applications to the monitoring and management of World Heritage sites.
- The most recently established Category 2 Centre is the International Centre for Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites, WHIPIC. They've been organizing a number of webinars and conferences on interpretation and presentation.

You can see details of this in Document 6. And again, you can pay attention to some of the side events that are going to be taking place by these Category 2 Centres in the coming days.

As the Director of the World Heritage Centre has already briefed the Committee, ICCROM looks very much forward to working with UNESCO on taking the results of the Evaluation of the Capacity-Building Strategy and working forward with UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies on the development of a new Capacity-Building Strategy, taking into account these recommendations that you've heard already outlined by the Director of World Heritage. As the capacity-building Advisory Body, ICCROM stands ready to design, implement and improve all aspects of activities on capacity-building and collaborate with global and regional partners. ICCROM size and flexibility allows us to be agile and adaptable to local contexts and needs, and we are fully committed to serve the specific needs of different sites, States Parties and regional Centres in the conservation and management of World Heritage.

The second phase of the World Heritage Leadership has now begun. It was actually based on another evaluation that was carried out specifically for the World Heritage Leadership Programme. The second phase is now underway, and we plan to work on the development of guidance for strategic environmental assessments, costed action plans and a climate action toolkit. We would like to encourage States Parties to partner with us and to provide more capacity-building activities to support and assist our heritage practitioners and site managers.

Finally, just to conclude, I would, once again, like to thank the Government of Norway for its support of World Heritage Leadership over this time and to also thank the Republic of Korea, thank Switzerland and actually, most recently, thank Australia, who are now providing financial resources for us within Leadership to continue our work on some of these various aspects, such as climate change. It's one of the things that Australia has been coming in with. So again, I would really like to thank all of you for your support and we really do look forward to working more closely with States Parties, with Committee members, with States Parties on capacity-building activities in the years to come. So, with that, I would like to turn the floor back over.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving us the floor.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for the informative presentation.

Now, I would like to ask the Committee members, States Parties, if there are any comments.

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you. Chair.

I should like to thank the Secretariat for their organization and the World Heritage Centre. Our thanks also go to all of the different stakeholders that have taken part and contributed to the rollout of this World Heritage Leadership Programme. I should also like to take this opportunity to say how very much the role of Category 2 Centres is important. They are the ones who really have their finger on the pulse of the requirements at the local level in different countries. We have heard, just a short while ago, about the importance of the activities of capacity-building. I should also like to insist once again on the importance of cooperation with all of the relevant stakeholders and States Parties to the Convention, in particular developing countries, so as to be able to provide all of the monitoring and evaluation support that they require. Our Committee, in its 44th extended session, took a very important decision in this regard, that is, providing the necessary support for capacity-building initiatives, particularly when it comes to running training courses. Very obviously, this is under the egis of the relevant Expert Bodies, and at this juncture, I should like to thank them for all the efforts deployed by Bahrain, when it comes to running training courses in the region. I also wanted to mention that all of these, all of this experience, really ought to be documented and made available to one and all. It's important to learn from these experiences. They're vital to be carried forward.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa would like to take this opportunity to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for making available financial resources to enable the Centre to appoint an independent evaluator for the implementation of the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy, in line with the request made by the Committee in its previous session. The independent evaluator, amongst others, recommended the revision of the Strategy to take into consideration the themes identified during the Third Cycle of Periodic Report. While this is important, we strongly believe, Chairperson, that the revision of the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy should take into consideration the recommendations made by the States Parties during the reflection period pertaining to the 50th anniversary. Key recommendations were made, which can strengthen the implementation of the Convention through the Strategy going forward. Mr. Chair, South Africa, in collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund, hosted a capacity training course in Maloti-Drakensberg World Heritage site, for young African experts, and one of these young experts from Botswana accompanied ICOMOS expert on the recent technical evaluation visit to South Africa. More of these opportunities need to be created for African experts to participate in Advisory Body missions. Besides workshops and training sessions, continued efforts need to be made to utilize African experts on a more regular basis to increase their exposure and experience to the work of UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies.

Mr. Chair, we cannot overemphasize the role and participation of African experts in developing African nomination dossiers from inception. A bottom-up approach, and not a top-down approach, should be utilized in our strategies and solutions to advance the promotion and protection of African heritage for future generations. Africa is very rich in natural heritage and cultural heritage, and it is important that we have experts from Africa. Dossiers should be developed at a national level to secure sustainable long term conservation efforts. The work of the AWHF and other heritage-related Category 2 Centres in implementing Regional Plan is where the Convention is tangibly felt at grassroots level. The Africa Group, therefore, propose amendments to the DR, one of which recommends the return to the practice of Committee work. Category 2 Centres, as implementing partners of the Strategy, present to the Committee a combined Progress report of all the activities in implementing the Convention.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, similar to those countries who have contributed to the Centre, we wish to express our appreciation to Member States who have contributed to the Fund, AWHF, in its continuous efforts to provide support to African nations and build capacity. The language acknowledging the State has subsequently been included in the DR.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Permettez-moi tout d'abord de saluer les progrès réalisés par le Centre du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO, les Organisations consultatives, les États parties, les Centres de catégorie 2 placés sous l'égide de l'UNESCO associés au patrimoine mondial ainsi que les chaires UNESCO dans la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie du patrimoine mondial pour le renforcement des capacités.

Je voudrais ensuite noter avec intérêt l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre de toutes les initiatives régionales et thématiques de renforcement des capacités, notamment dans la région Afrique. Pour le Mali, cela a permis la mise en œuvre d'un projet d'État de conservation souhaité en vue du retrait de trois de nos biens de la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril, par le biais du Fonds du patrimoine mondial.

Concernant l'avancement des activités des Centres de catégorie 2 placés sous l'égide de l'UNESCO, nous reconnaissons les progrès réalisés, notamment ceux du Fonds pour le patrimoine mondial africain, qui, bien qu'il soit encore confronté à des défis de soutien budgétaire, a pu mener des activités importantes dans les trois volets cruciaux pour la région Afrique, à savoir contribuer à une meilleure représentation des États africains sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, contribuer à améliorer la gestion et la conservation des sites du patrimoine mondial en Afrique, inclure les biens du patrimoine mondial dans la croissance durable pour nos communautés locales.

Je souhaite également exprimer toute notre gratitude à l'Arabie saoudite, dont la contribution a permis d'effectuer finalement une évaluation indépendante de la Stratégie, répondant ainsi à la Décision **43 COM 6** (Bakou, 2019) du Comité.

S'agissant de la conception de la nouvelle Stratégie du patrimoine mondial pour le renforcement des capacités. Je demeure convaincu que chaque partie a sa place dans l'équipe spéciale internationale conduite par le Centre du patrimoine mondial, avec l'ICCROM en sa qualité de conseiller principal, pour établir des groupes de travail régionaux, tel que recommandé par l'évaluation de la Stratégie du patrimoine mondial pour le renforcement des capacités.

Au regard de la Stratégie proprement dite, il serait nécessaire qu'on mette l'accent sur l'implication des jeunes et des femmes, comme cela a été recommandé à maintes reprises. À cet effet, il conviendrait d'encourager les États à multiplier les filières de formation spécialisées et à renforcer la collaboration entre les établissements d'enseignement et de recherche. Le Mali en appelle donc vivement au renforcement des moyens en vue de fournir un soutien aux États concernés par les États de conservation souhaités pour le retrait de leurs biens de la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: [interpretation from Arabic]

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I should like to thank the World Heritage Centre, as well as ICCROM, for this most important report.

Here, in Saudi Arabia, we have rolled out numerous initiatives and implemented several Programmes. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been very active when it comes to capacity-building for the protection of World Heritage Sites as there were 20 programmes launched by Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports UNESCO through the Saudi Fund for Culture with a total budget of US\$25 million with projects such as the Dive into Heritage platform which has already trained 35 site managers. In the context of this projects, there will be announcement of a series of raining for site managers in the Arab States and Africa and the launching of the platform which will include 10 pilot sites in the Arab States. We shall continue to contribute wherever assistance is needed, particularly when it comes to capacity-building in the Arab region and throughout Africa. We have also established a Programme aimed at supporting at least ten properties currently listed on the Danger List. We also wanted to underscore all of the initiatives that we have undertaken when it comes to capacity-building and keep it up.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair, for giving India the floor.

India has noted with its satisfaction the report, presented jointly by the Directorate of World Heritage Centre and ICCROM regarding the World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy and the range of activities under various

Category 2 Centres. India appreciates the efforts of the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the Category 2 Centres and urges them to continue their efforts.

India would like to emphasize the dire need for the capacity-building, one of the crucial pillars among the five Strategic Objectives, the 5 Cs. We believe that capacity-building should be a continuous initiative and be a long-term vision or strategy of the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the Category 2 Centres.

We have been repeatedly hearing about the concerns of many States Parties that they are unable to submit the Tentative List or nomination dossiers just because they do not have the internal capacity in terms of trained human resource to be able to take up the arduous task of preparing such voluminous documents and articulating the information as per the desired format. We also realized that once a property is declared World Heritage, there is still a huge requirement for the capacity-building of site managers and their stakeholders who are intrinsically connected to the property. If one evaluates the state of conservation reports minutely, perhaps one of the fundamental reasons that most reports are short are from the point of view of their lack of capacity that dwindles the situation out of hand. By situation, one refers to conservation or management challenges faced by a property and the inability of the site manager or associated stakeholders to effectively mitigate their challenge. Various Programmes presented by Director of the World Heritage today and the role of the three Advisory Bodies, in particular ICCROM, is very much appreciated. We would also like to thank the States Parties who have funded various initiatives in this regard. Category 2 Centres are also to be thanked for their contribution. I would in particular like to mention here the Wildlife Institute of India, in Dehradun, India, the only Category 2 Centre for natural World Heritage properties that is running professional Programmes for site managers in the region. Archaeological Survey of India, the nodal agency for World Heritage properties in India, through its own Pandit Deendayal Institute of Archaeology, similarly is organizing courses for site managers of Indian cultural properties for conservation and management. We are in dialogue with and hopeful for a partnership with one of the Advisory Bodies to augment our continuing initiatives towards capacity-building in India and the South Asia.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I give the floor to Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico:

Thank you, Chairman. We don't have any intervention.

The Chairperson:

Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor.

State of Qatar values World Heritage, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN efforts for submitting the Progress report on the implementation of the World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy at this 45th session, which covered the period from August 2021 to May 2023, State of Qatar appreciates the World Heritage implementation of the World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy, and the World Heritage Leadership Programme which aims to build the skills for the practitioners working through the World Heritage Convention. State of Qatar would like to thank and commend the Arab Regional Centre of World Heritage in Bahrain for all their efforts and capacity-building Programmes, but also thanks the World Heritage Committee and ICCROM in highlighting that clear understanding of capacity-building is recommended to define capacity-building as the ability to manage and coordinate in the cultural level whereby stakeholders engage in an evidence-based process to identify solutions for jointly perceive challenges, test the solutions and transfer them into shared policies, norms and standards.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor.

Nigeria would like to appreciate the World Heritage Centre for yet another comprehensive report.

Let me start by relating the report to those presented to us earlier on Item 5D on World Heritage Convention and Sustainable Development. In this UN Decade of Action for the Agenda 2030, Nigeria believes in multi-sectoral approaches, particularly within the scope of cultural and natural heritage sites and cultural and biodiversity conservation. And, as stated yesterday by my Delegation, a balance between economic development and ecological consideration is needed for equity in favour of States that are still being in development. While therefore

commending the Centre for the remarkable achievement as reported, we urge the training and Capacity-Building Strategies should target integrated and coherent approaches for both the experts for building submission files, as well as State managers in charge of management and conservation of the sites.

On this note, I recall nomination dossier for the Lake Chad Cultural Landscape by Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad. This submission, emanating from the UNESCO BIOPALT Project, emphasizes cultural preservation, sustainable livelihood, economic development, cultural conservation, social cohesion, and peace and security. While we are hopeful and striving for a quick resolve of this issue around the Lake Chad submission, Nigeria encourages the World Heritage Centre to increase efforts for capacity-building initiative that will see an augmentation in mixed submissions and that will also foster the spirit of Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I give the floor to Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also believe that training is the key to have more experts in Africa, as well as in Asia, and also in SIDS. And in this context, I would like to express our appreciation to ICCROM for the joint presentation today, and also for the activities that they have been conducting in conjunction with other Evaluation Bodies and also the Centre. And also, we would like to express our appreciation to Saudi Arabia for financing very important schemes already mentioned in this regard. And also, we would like to express our support for the statements made in this connection, particularly those from Oman, Saudi Arabia, Mali and also Nigeria.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I think we exhausted the States..., the requests from the Committee members.

We will go to the Observers. Ireland.

The Observer Delegation of Ireland:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Ireland welcomes the report presented to us today and congratulates the Secretariat for all its excellent work undertaken as part of Decision **44 COM 6**. Ireland supports the ambition to develop a new World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy for the decade 2025-2035.

Over the past two years, Ireland has focused on building capacity at national level and has also increased our support to the World Heritage Centre. We have been working on a national World Heritage Strategy, specific to Ireland, which we hope to launch in the first quarter of 2024. This 10-year Strategy includes a set of capacity-building objectives and actions at local and international level.

Recognizing the constant efforts made by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to keep all resource manuals up to date, Ireland welcomes this opportunity to reiterate our willingness to offer both technical and financial support to help update the World Heritage Manual on *Preparing World Heritage nominations*.

Recognizing the importance of Periodic Reporting, Ireland made two voluntary contributions earlier this year to help the World Heritage Centre prepare for both a subregional and Focal Point meetings to help ensure the development of an effective Regional Action Plan and support its implementation.

Finally, recognizing the unique challenges faced by SIDS, Ireland is actively looking at how we could collaborate further with SIDS on capacity-building initiatives, climate change and on the protection of their cultural, natural and mixed properties.

I thank you for your attention, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Switzerland.

La Délégation de la Suisse (Observateur) :

M. le Président,

Je souhaite remercier chaleureusement le Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour son accueil et tout le personnel qui travaille ici pour sa gentillesse.

Laissez-moi tout d'abord présenter nos condoléances attristées au peuple marocain dans ces moments tragiques suite au tremblement de terre. Nous présentons aussi nos condoléances au peuple libyen pour la terrible catastrophe naturelle qui a frappé l'est du pays.

La Suisse remercie l'ICCROM, l'UICN et l'ICOMOS ainsi que le Centre du patrimoine mondial pour l'excellente qualité du travail fourni en faveur du renforcement des capacités pour le patrimoine mondial grâce à des cours de formation, des forums des gestionnaires de sites et des manuels sur la gestion des biens du patrimoine mondial. Je remercie aussi la Norvège, la République de Corée et, bien sûr, le Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour leur énorme soutien sans lequel rien de ce qui nous a été présenté n'aurait été possible.

La Suisse est particulièrement fière d'avoir contribué à l'élaboration de la *Boîte à outils de valorisation du patrimoine*. Cette boîte à outils est le fruit d'un travail très vaste de recueil de bonnes pratiques dans la gouvernance et la gestion des biens du patrimoine mondial, naturel et culturel de toutes les régions du monde. Plus de 160 professionnels travaillant dans les sites ont participé activement à ce projet. Je saisis donc l'occasion de vous inviter tous à l'événement de lancement qui aura lieu ce dimanche 17 septembre à 13 h 30 dans la salle appelée Hegra Room. Venez nombreux découvrir cette boîte à outils très utile.

C'est seulement en nous appuyant sur le savoir-faire présent sur le terrain, avec l'expertise des Organisations consultatives, que nous pourrions vraiment être le phare de la conservation du patrimoine. Cela est encore plus important face à la perspective des crises globales auxquelles nous faisons face maintenant. Les pays qui contribuent à ces efforts sont encore trop peu nombreux. Nous souhaitons donc inviter les États membres et les partenaires à fournir des ressources financières volontaires pour le renforcement des capacités.

Je vous remercie de votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the Capacity-Building Strategy of World Heritage, which seeks to build capacity in the various regions of the world in relation to the World Heritage sites and prospective sites. We, in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and certainly in other small States like ours, particularly welcome this Strategy Document as we proceed to have sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. Training and technical assistance are certainly required to assist Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in preparing our Upstream Process, preliminary assessment and eventual dossier for our sites, which are now on the World Heritage List. We certainly welcome this strategy.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I see no comments or questions, so I invite you to examination of the draft decision. But before that, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa, which is supported by the Distinguished Delegations of Oman and Qatar.

There are some revisions to few paras, starting with Para 4 that you see on the screen: "Takes note of the progress made with the implementation of the regional and thematic capacity-building strategies and initiatives, the role of the regional Category 2 Centres in supporting the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for Africa 2021-2027 and calls upon States Parties and all concerned partners and stakeholders including the Advisory Bodies (ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN) to support and follow up on the implementation of the strategies and initiatives developed for each regional and thematic area;"

Para 5 stays the same. Sorry, Para 5 is actually divided into two paras. So, Para 6 is coming out of the previous Para 5, and I will read both the paras.

Para 5 says: "Thanks the Governments of Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Switzerland for the continued financial support they extended to the WHCBS and the World Heritage Leadership Programme, also thanks the Governments", we would like to change this term "the Governments" to make it to "States Parties" as per standard, "also thanks the States Parties of the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, France and the Sultanate of Oman for supporting World Heritage capacity-building activities, notably in the African region, and further thanks those States Parties who have contributed to the African World Heritage Fund, including Norway, South Africa, Uganda, Mauritius, Namibia, Germany, Burkina Faso, Azerbaijan, Serbia, France, United Arab Emirates and Rwanda;"

Para 6 now reads as: "Encourages States Parties and other stakeholders to continue supporting the implementation of the WHCBS by providing financial support and/or reinforcing the human resources of the institutions involved;"

After that, Para 7 to Para 12 stay as they are.

Para 13 is revised: "Reiterates its appeal to States Parties to contribute financial resources for the update of the WHCBS through earmarked contributions to the World Heritage Fund or by providing extra-budgetary support to the World Heritage Centre and the World Heritage-related Category 2 Centres for this purpose;"

Para 14 remains the same.

Para 15 is revised: "Further requests the World Heritage Centre and ICCROM to submit a Progress report on the World Heritage-related capacity-building activities and the revision of the WHCBS for examination at its 46th session;"

There is an addition of the last para, Para 16: "Mindful that contributions by Category 2 Centres to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention are not confined to capacity-building, finally, requests the Category 2 Centres to submit a Progress report on all the activities concerning the implementation of the World Heritage Convention by the World Heritage-related Category 2 Centres, presented as a specific Agenda item during the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair. Yes, we just wanted to say that the Zacatecas Regional Institute for World Heritage had requested the floor as an Observer, but they weren't actually given the floor. We're just wondering if they could be given the floor as an Observer, Sir.

It's a Category 2 Centre of UNESCO and apparently its request to take the floor did not actually get registered.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Since we are examining the draft decision, we will give them the floor after the decision is adopted.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Chair.

Nigeria is supporting this draft amendment. I don't know why our name is missing. Actually, we are part of it.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Can you please clarify which amendment?

The Delegation of Nigeria:

We are supporting the whole amendment.

The Chairperson:

Well noted. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

I have an impression that we can probably support all of the amendments, but if you don't mind, if you can go by paragraph by paragraph to make sure that we understand the entire context. Particularly on Paragraph 4, I would like to understand the reason why they want to delete the one in red and propose the new one instead.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Ethiopia, also, would like to be registered as supporting all the amendments.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So now, we will move to examine the draft decision, paragraph by paragraph. We can go to the top.

So, Paragraph 1, we don't have any amendment to the paragraph. Can we adopt it as it is? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 2. We don't have any amendment to the paragraph. Can we adopt it as it is?

Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

C'est juste pour préciser que le Mali soutient le Paragraphe 4.

The Chairperson:

So, Paragraph 2 adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3. We don't have any amendments to the paragraph. Can we adopt it as it is? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4. We have amendments to the paragraph. Do we agree with the proposal?

Egypt. You would like to clarify?

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to add my country's name to the list of countries supporting amendments, not only on Paragraph 4, but to other amendments as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, in reference to Japan's requests for additional clarifications for Paragraph 4, South Africa or Oman, or... would like to clarify this.

The Delegation of South Africa:

South Africa can clarify that. We can make reference to a strategy that we just adopted earlier on, Chairperson. That is why we are proposing the deletion.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Japan, does that answer your inquiry?

The Delegation of Japan:

Sorry. I'm sorry that I am a bit slow, but so what? The proposal from South Africa essentially is that since we have already mentioned a strategy earlier, we don't need to repeat it again. But South Africa wants to introduce a new element in the suggested amendment into this paragraph. Is that the right understanding?

The Chairperson:

South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Chair.

If one reads the paragraph, it says "Takes note of the progress made with the implementation". And our clarification is that the Strategy has just been adopted and there hasn't been progress that we have noted. Hence, we are saying that it needs to be deleted.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Okay, I understand. We have no problem. We support this paragraph.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So now, we can adopt that paragraph as amended. Adopted. *[gavel]*

So, we have Paragraph 5. We have a proposal, and we have amendments to the paragraph. Do we agree to this proposal? So, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6. We have a proposal. Do we agree to this proposal?

Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Salam Aleykum. We'd like to add our name to Paragraph 6.

The Chairperson:

So, we adopt the paragraph as amended. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, there is no amendment. Can we adopt it as it is? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8, there is no amendment. Can we adopt it as it is? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, we don't have any amendments. Can we adopt that paragraph as it is? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph [10], there is no amendment. Can we adopt the paragraph as it is? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 11 or...? 11, there is no amendment. Can we adopt that paragraph as it is? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 12, there is no amendment. Can we adopt the paragraph as it is? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 13, we have a proposal. Do we agree with this proposal?

Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Our name should figure in all..., in the previous one, I think, is missing. Technical for the Rapporteurs.

The Chairperson:

So, we adopt that paragraph as amended. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 14. There is no amendment. Can we adopt a paragraph as it is? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 15. There is a proposal for minor changes. Do we adopt this proposal? Then, we will adopt the paragraph as amended. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 16. We have a proposal.

Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to add the name of our country to the support of this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

We'd like to add our name to this Paragraph 16, please.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Then Paragraph 16 is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Now, dear colleagues, we have adopted the Draft Decision **45 COM 6** as a whole. Is there any objection?

So, since there is no objection, then we declare Draft Decision **45 COM 6** is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

We have a request from the floor and giving it to the Category 2 Centre Zacatecas.

Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas (Observer): *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

On behalf of the Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas, which is a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO in Mexico, for the Central America and the Caribbean, we wanted to thank you for the invitation to take part in this session of the World Heritage Committee, and our thanks also go to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the magnificent organization and hospitality shown to us.

Dear participants,

It's a pleasure to be able to share with you the positive outcome of the evaluation that our C2C has undergone.

We're currently in a 2022-2026 Transition Plan as part of our overarching Sub-Regional Action Plan and, in cooperation with ICCROM, we've come up with an Action Plan for the implementation of a Capacity-Building Initiative in the region for 2024 on various issues of interest, for example, disaster risk management, Heritage Impact Assessment, and ESAs. We have been reaching out and creating agreements to secure funding and resources for executing our mandate. Throughout 2023, we were able to update some of our cooperation strategies for our Action Plan when it comes to capacity-building initiatives in Central America and the Caribbean.

And finally, I should like to be able to see it in the eighth Coordination Meeting for C2Cs, which was held in the Republic of Korea. We were able to come to agree to hold the ninth session in Zacatecas itself so that we can really ensure the leadership of our country when it comes to the World Heritage Leadership Programme and, hopefully, this will only strengthen future capacity-building initiatives.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, dear Committee members, before we start examining our Item 7, as you all know, the fifth edition of the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum has started through a series of three online sessions as from 19 June until 13 of July and was followed by an in-person component, here in Riyadh, for the past few days and until the 15 September. This capacity-building event has gathered nearly 100 site managers from all over the world. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, represented by the National Commission for Education, Culture and Science and the Heritage Commission, and to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and to the ICCROM-IUCN World Heritage Leadership Programme for organizing, with such a great enthusiasm and success, this Forum. Thank you very much also to the ICOMOS, as a partner of this event, and to all who have made this event possible. I am practically pleased that this year again, both of the participants of the Young Professionals Forum, whom we heard from yesterday, and of the Site Managers' Forum were able to meet and exchange during a full working session dedicated to the nature/culture interlinkages. So now, I would like to give the floor to Ms. Chantal Shalukoma from the [Democratic] Republic of the Congo.

Please, you may have the floor.

Forum des gestionnaires de sites du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Excellences, membres du Comité du patrimoine mondial, la cinquième édition du Forum des gestionnaires des sites du patrimoine mondial a réuni 105 professionnels impliqués dans la gestion de 92 biens du patrimoine mondial situés dans 65 pays.

Les participants au Forum remercient le Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour avoir généreusement accueilli et facilité le Forum en collaboration avec l'UNESCO, ainsi que pour son généreux soutien financier apporté à la composante en présentiel de 40 gestionnaires des sites du patrimoine mondial.

La Convention du patrimoine mondial concernant la protection du patrimoine culturel et naturel ayant récemment célébré son 50^e anniversaire a permis de rassembler les communautés et les peuples qui protègent le patrimoine culturel et naturel d'importance universelle. Il a également permis de célébrer notre diversité commune, mais également de partager les messages du patrimoine mondial pour l'humanité. Face aux multiples défis de notre époque, du changement climatique et de la perte de la biodiversité, en passant par l'urbanisation incontrôlée, les conflits armés et le surtourisme, les gestionnaires des sites du patrimoine mondial sont convaincus que le patrimoine mondial a plus que jamais un rôle essentiel à jouer en tant que vecteur de la paix, de durabilité, de dialogue et de stabilité, tout en défendant les principes de droits humains.

Unis par des valeurs, une responsabilité et une fierté communes, les gestionnaires des sites du patrimoine mondial sont déterminés à travailler ensemble pour assurer l'inclusion et l'accès, pour développer et partager des stratégies innovantes et des expériences afin de conserver, protéger et mettre en valeur les sites du patrimoine mondial et d'en assurer la transmission aux générations futures. Le rôle central des gestionnaires des sites du patrimoine mondial sera déterminant pour la protection et la gestion des biens du patrimoine dans les 50 années à venir.

The Chairperson:

Now, I give the floor to Mr. Andrew Bolly, from Papua New Guinea.

The World Heritage Site Managers' Forum:

For the achievements over the last past half century, including on the World Heritage List, has proved to be a substantial improvement within States Parties in the protection of heritage, with a better coordination in territorial planning that has strengthened the management systems, enabling the effective implementation of management plans through increased connectivity and collaboration between various stakeholders.

Some site managers have been able to secure additional financial resources and receive assistance in implementing cultural exchange and education Programmes, conducting research and documentation.

World Heritage site managers continuously endeavoured to incorporate traditional knowledge and involve local residents and communities in decision-making processes for conservation and management strategies.

A significant achievement of the Convention has been the successful conservation and restoration efforts to safeguard cultural and natural heritage in a sustainable manner. Several World Heritage site managers have also made strides in promoting sustainable-tourism practices by managing visitor numbers, implementing eco-friendly initiatives and raising awareness about responsible tourism, aiming at minimizing the impact on the environment, social residents and communities. Significant research and documentation have contributed to a deeper understanding of the World Heritage property, which has created the base for best practice transfer that goes beyond World Heritage.

Several States Parties and site managers have initiated multi-level cooperation, notably at transboundary properties.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. The floor is for Christopher Waters, from Antigua and Barbuda.

The World Heritage Site Managers' Forum:

Current challenges. However, participants would like to emphasize that many of the challenges that have been addressed to the Committee from previous editions of the Forums are persisting and affecting many World Heritage properties, and necessitates action at the Committee level to address impending consequences.

Climate change impacts are becoming increasingly alarming at a global level, with World Heritage sites bearing the brunt of disasters and extreme events. Despite earnest efforts of States Parties to implement measures and enact policies for climate mitigation and adaptation, localized measures alone will not suffice. Careful consideration is needed to ensure that the developments for climate action do not pose a negative impact on World Heritage, and a coordinated global effort is essential to yield substantial outcomes.

Armed conflict threatens communities and remains a worrying concern. As these become increasingly complex, it is vital to build effective synergies with other Conventions, such as the 1954 Hague Convention and its two Protocols.

World Heritage site managers need more capacities for emergency responses and recovery measures. Unplanned development and encroachment, incompatible with the conservation of the OUV, continues to threaten the integrity and cohesiveness of World Heritage sites, directly impacting their values and associated local communities' ways of life.

Digital technologies have become a pivotal component in the conservation and management of World Heritage properties, offering innovative solutions, not only for monitoring but also data analysis and predictive modelling. While some countries have embraced cutting edge technologies, many lack access to such digital resources. This disparity in technological capabilities is resulting in unequal levels of preparedness, and responses to threats.

Overtourism poses a rising concern for numerous World Heritage sites, resulting in overcrowding, environmental harm and degradation. To ensure the integrity and enduring sustainability of our World Heritage properties, it is imperative that we collectively address the challenges brought about by overtourism.

Reduced political will and financial support to protect cultural and natural heritage, multiplied with the limitations and establishing the appropriate authority of site managers within the management systems governance, has increased the vulnerability of World Heritage sites to respond effectively to the compounding negative impacts posed by the current challenges.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Ms. Alhanouf Al-Rassan, Saudi Arabia.

The World Heritage Site Manager's Forum: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen.

As participants in the Site Managers' Forum, we would like to stress the importance of the Convention. We also call upon all of us to shoulder our responsibility in order to protect our properties for the sake of the World Heritage. We would like to call upon countries collectively and individuals to do everything possible in to protect their own heritage and the World Heritage. We believe that World Heritage should be one element to be taken into account when policies are set out. We do need to be part of the decision making when it comes to cultural and natural heritage. We would like to say that every single site faces a specific challenge, and these factors affecting the sites and properties differ from one country to another, and therefore solutions should be tailored to their needs.

We do need a channel or a network that secures regular meeting of site managers. We do believe that dialogue and discussion amongst site managers is not only useful, but it will be a strong impetus to strengthen the chances of peace throughout the world. We believe that such a principle should be upheld when it comes to the work undertaken within the Committee, and we believe that we need appropriate and adequate resources to help us manage properly the different sites. We hope to take advantage of the technologies and tools which would help us manage our sites properly. We believe that site managers and stakeholders, when they can command such techniques and can use them, then their management would be adequate. We believe that the protection and safeguarding of cultural sites do require a great deal of support and coordination.

As for intensive tourism and other factors that are nefarious to World Heritage, these factors need proper policies to establish rules that protect the World Heritage sites. We believe that specific solutions submitted by managers sites should be looked into and should be supported by the countries concerned with additional financial resources.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for the first guard when it comes to heritage conservation and management on their messages that they delivered on behalf of all site managers. So, let's give them a big round of applause. *[applause]* So, I saw that there is an Observer who wants to take the floor, but we will resume after our break at 3:00 pm.

So, dear colleagues, now the session is over. See you after noon. *[gavel]*

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Just to quickly make some announcements regarding side events to start now:

- We will have the opening of the exhibition and panel on "Dive Into Heritage" and this will be in Jeddah Historic Room. This project is supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- And then, we will have the "Space technologies for the preservation of World Heritage", which is organized by Copernicus – Joint Research Centre, in Al Ahsa Oasis Room, which will start also at 1:30 pm, so in half an hour, I mean 15 minutes.
- Then, we have IUCN, the third event, IUCN in the Arab States region: Supporting natural World Heritage and the Green List in West Asia, organized by IUCN. This is going to be in the Advisory Bodies Space, Hegra Room, and it will start now.

We would like to remind you that the calendar of events is online on the web page of the session, accessible to all, so feel free to consult it to attend the events.

The Host Country has emphasized information on the way to access the side event space by passing by the lobby of Al-Faisaliah tower and the footway leading there. So, we hope you can all find your way to the side events. Thank you.

The meeting rose at 1:14 pm. // La séance a été levée à 13h14.

SECOND DAY
Tuesday, 12 September 2023
FOURTH PLENARY MEETING
3:14 pm – 6:04 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

DEUXIÈME JOUR
Mardi 12 septembre 2023
QUATRIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h14 – 18h04
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

7. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES [opening of the item] // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL [ouverture du point]

The Chairperson:

Good afternoon, dear colleagues.

So, dear colleagues, we will start the examination of Item 7 related to the state of conservation of World Heritage properties.

Before we hear the presentation of the Document 45COM/7 by the Secretariat, I would like to inform you that, as discussed and agreed during the Bureau meeting this morning, we will immediately start with the adoption of the draft decisions of three reports related to Item 7A.

These reports are:

- 7A.31: The Old City of Jerusalem and its walls (site proposed by Jordan).
- 7A.38: Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town (Palestine).
- 7A.9: Palestine: the land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Judaism, Battir (Palestine).

Please note that these draft decisions were the subject of intense negotiations and have been agreed upon by all the Parties concerned.

Furthermore, I would like to inform you that the consensus implies that no statement or declaration be made after the adoption of the draft decisions.

Dear Committee members,

Are there any comments or concerns on this matter? Anyone?

So, I see no objection, Draft Decisions **7A.31**, **7A.38** and **7A.39** are, therefore, adopted. *[gavel]*

So also, I would like to announce that we have received several requests to open a new state of conservation report for discussion and one was withdrawn as follows:

- 7B.35: Rock-Hewn Churches in Lalibela (Ethiopia),
- 7A.55: The Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria),
- [7]B.3: W-Arly-Pendjari Complex (Benin), which is withdrawn.

The Secretariat will therefore circulate Document INF.7.Rev.5, with the final list of SOC reports for discussion.

As the request for Vienna came at a late stage, it will only be discussed tomorrow.

Now we shall proceed with the examination of Item 7.

Dear colleagues,

According to the Paragraph 190 of the Operational Guidelines, the Committee shall review annually the state of conservation of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger. We have now reached this crucial part of our Agenda, which is at the heart of the Convention.

Before we start with the examination of individual state of conservation reports, I would like to give the floor to Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo, the Director of the World Heritage Centre, to introduce this item.

Mr. Director, you have the floor.

So, Ms. Deputy Director, you may take the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson,

The World Heritage Convention is one of the most successful international instruments for the conservation of natural and cultural heritage properties.

This session, you will examine the reports on the state of conservation of 260 World Heritage properties, including the 55 properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The Convention's unique Reactive Monitoring process contributes greatly to the efficient monitoring and mitigation of threats affecting the properties. This document also identifies some global World Heritage conservation issues emerging from the state of conservation reports.

I'm very pleased to say that this year, we have a very high response rate, with 96% of all reports requested by the Committee to States Parties submitted.

In response to the Committee's concerns regarding improving the perception of the List of World Heritage in Danger, at the request of the Committee, the World Heritage Centre launched a study to overcome the negative perception around the List of World Heritage in Danger. With Norway's generous support, the World Heritage Centre commissioned the international communications agency Beyond Borders Media to carry out a study that was published in May 2022. A series of interviews, as well as an online survey, were conducted to collect inputs from all stakeholders of the Convention. The study concluded that the recommendations, calling for a fresh perspective on the List of World Heritage in Danger, emphasizing that the List can be a powerful lever for change, encouraging action, promoting dialogue, and identifying networks of resources that can greatly benefit the property.

A second matter of statutory concern is on climate action for World Heritage to continue to respond effectively to the evolving need for action relating to climate change. The World Heritage Committee launched a process to update its 2007 Document on climate action for World Heritage, World Heritage and Climate Policy. A draft updated Policy Document which includes specific goals for climate risk assessment, adaptation, mitigation as well as knowledge sharing, capacity-building and awareness, was prepared in 2020 and 2021 by the World Heritage Centre with the assistance of a technical Advisory Group of experts. It was further revised at the request of the World Heritage Committee by a panel of experts in March of 2022. An Open-ended Working Group of States Parties met seven times to consider the text, in view of its final adoption by the General Assembly in November 2023.

I will now move to address some of the global conservation issues that have emerged and seem most significant this year.

With regard to emergency situations resulting from conflicts, conflicts continue to be a major threat to World Heritage properties and remain as one of the main reasons for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This also underscores the tragic loss of human life, as well as the destruction and damage to cultural and natural heritage.

UNESCO's actions to mobilize the international community for the protection of endangered cultural and natural heritage sites include some World Heritage properties in the African countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Niger and Sudan that were particularly affected by conflict during the last year. In Mali, for instance, local communities living in the vicinity of the Bandiagara Cliffs are abandoning their villages to take refuge in more secure parts of the country.

Other threats, such as poaching and illegal logging, are often closely linked to conflicts and the presence of armed groups such as the World Heritage properties of Okavango Delta in Botswana and the Zimbabwean Mana Pools National Park, where there is substantial poaching of elephants. Further efforts are needed to eradicate illegal wildlife trade, including through cooperation with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, CITES. A new MoU between UNESCO and CITES was signed in June of 2023.

UNESCO is working with the International Alliance for Heritage Protection in Conflict Zones to strengthen the protection of the site of the Tomb of Askia in Mali. Work with ALIPH, this is the same International Alliance for Heritage Protection in Conflict Zones, is also being carried out in Afghanistan on the archaeological remains of Jam, and in Iraq on the House of Prayer, in Mosul. An emergency operation has also been set up in the town of Lalibela, which is home to the World Heritage site of the Rock-Hewn Churches in Ethiopia.

A rapid assessment of the eight sites comprising the property, as well as other relevant heritage sites within Bamiyan, was also conducted to assess their preservation status and in the case of the sites within the heritage property, the maintenance of their OUV.

UNESCO continues its efforts to support the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine in order to coordinate international activities and initiatives, including for the urgent securing and stabilization of immovable cultural heritage. UNESCO has established Thematic Working Groups, including the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee, among others, to facilitate the next steps in safeguarding Ukraine's cultural heritage, in particular through a joint Action Plan for culture in Ukraine.

With regard to recovery and reconstruction. Sorry, I think that was the previous one. Can we go back to the previous slide. Thank you. With regard to recovery and reconstruction, the website dedicated to post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction and recovery created by the World Heritage Centre and various initiatives and projects noted new unforeseen resources and publications and serves as information source following disasters or conflicts. UNESCO has led several activities to help practitioners, national and local authorities, and international organizations integrate culture into all phases of reconstruction and rehabilitation processes in urban crisis

situations following conflict or natural disaster. Several projects have been implemented by UNESCO to ensure the safeguarding of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

For example, following the launch of the Flagship Initiative "Reviving the Spirit of Mosul", in February 2018, UNESCO continued its action in favour of the rehabilitation and recovery of Iraqi cultural heritage. Along the same lines after a decade of work, the reconstruction of the Mazibu-Azaala-Mpanga on the site of the Tombs of the King of Buganda in Kasubi, Uganda, is nearing completion. While recovery and reconstruction activities are recognized as important to the conservation of attributes that sustain the Outstanding Universal Value of some heritage properties, it is critical that the integrity of the World Heritage properties that the reconstruction only occur in such exceptional circumstances and be well informed based on thorough documentation.

As we heard about the presentation of the Director on the Document 5A, the 15th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, COP 15, reached a landmark agreement in December 2022, called the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which sets out an ambitious pathway to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. The framework includes several targets which are highly relevant to the World Heritage Convention. Many processes and policy goals of the World Heritage Convention can therefore support States Parties in implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework and their respective National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, which are the main instruments for implementing the framework at the national level.

The COP 15 explicitly recognized the importance of cooperation and synergies between different Conventions, as well as specific contributions of the biodiversity-related Conventions in achieving the aims of the framework and by its Decision 15/13, it also invited them to formally endorse the GBF, the Global Biodiversity Framework, to support its operationalization. A related effort was the launch of the report in August 2023, entitled "World Heritage: A unique contribution for biodiversity conservation", which includes specific guidance to States Parties on ways to integrate World Heritage priorities in their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies recommend that coordinated action be identified and developed on World Heritage and Global Biodiversity Framework, subject to the availability of resources to better harness the World Heritage Convention in supporting the Biodiversity Agenda. I would like also to flag that UNESCO and IUCN will organize a side event on this topic on Friday evening. COP 15 also renewed the mandate of the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Biological and Cultural Diversity.

Urban pressures resulting from inadequately planned and rapid urban development, as well as mass tourism, remains a significant threat for World Heritage cities. It is essential to have integrated approaches that strengthen holistic governance, improve conservation outcomes and contribute to sustainable development, and implement more systematically the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape as a tool to manage urban heritage and integrate heritage conservation with urban development plans and processes in the framework of sustainable development.

Development proposals, in particular for large infrastructure development, present a major threat to attributes which support the OUV. Following Committee's decisions encouraging the World Heritage Centre to continue its engagement with the private sector, in December 2022, UNESCO launched the World Heritage Specific Standards on Corporate Sustainability, developed with financial support of the Government of Flanders and in consultation with the Advisory Bodies and private sector companies. The UNESCO guidance encourages companies to apply these standards across natural and mixed and cultural properties, and it is based on global principles on corporate sustainability, including the UN Global Compact, the UN Principles for Sustainable Insurance, among others.

The International Hydropower Association, which collectively manages around a third of worldwide installed hydropower capacity, announced, in September 2021, a commitment on World Heritage. It stipulates that no new hydropower projects should be developed in World Heritage properties and proposes a Duty of Care Commitment to implement high standards of performance and transparency when affecting protected areas as well as candidate protected areas. UNESCO will organize a side event on corporate sustainability on Sunday 17 September, during the lunchtime.

The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies highlight the fundamental importance of ensuring a rights-based approach to the protection and management of World Heritage properties. States Parties are reminded of the need to ensure that programmes and activities related to the World Heritage Convention follow a human rights based approach, and promote the full participation of all rights holders and stakeholders, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities, in accordance with the 2015 Policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development, the UNESCO policy on engagement with indigenous peoples, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the international human rights standards.

Finally, on several occasions, the World Heritage Committee has advocated to make full use of Earth observation, satellite technologies, spatial data and analysis tools, remote sensing technologies for early detection of activities potentially harmful to the OUV of World Heritage properties. The World Heritage Centre has therefore developed spatial data tools as a means to support the monitoring of state of World Heritage sites, such as the World Heritage Online Mapping Platform and the Urban Heritage Atlas Platform. The World Heritage Centre has also strengthened collaborative partnerships with many relevant institutions, which led to the publication of Flagship Studies on the state of World Heritage forests in October 2021, and glaciers in November 2022, and biodiversity in August 2023. As you indicated, Mr. Chairperson, Draft Decisions **45 COM 7.1** and **7.2** will only be adopted at the end of the session to take any further reflections into account which you may have during the state of conservation reports for 7A and 7B. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Deputy Director.

So, dear colleagues, as you know, this year, there are two draft decisions proposed for adoption within the related Document 45.COM/7:

- Decision **45 COM 7.1** on statutory matters related to the Reactive Monitoring process
- Decision **45 COM 7.2** on conservation issues

This report spans over a two-year period and is therefore very detailed. In addition, I would like to inform you that, as for the past years, this item will remain open to possibly take into account the debate held under Agenda Items 7A and 7B. The Draft Decisions **7.1** and **7.2** will therefore only be adopted on the 24 September once we have completed the examination of Items 7A and 7B.

Dear colleagues,

Before we proceed with this Item, I would like to inform you that since our last session in July 2021, the World Heritage Committee at large was saddened again by the loss of human lives, including devoted staff tragically lost their lives while on duty protecting our heritage against illegal activities within World Heritage sites. And I would like, in the name of the Committee, to pay tribute to each one of them for their contribution to preservation of our precious heritage. Thank you very much.

Now, I would like to give the floor to the Advisory Bodies for additional statements on this item.

You have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Members of the World Heritage Committee, ICOMOS continues to monitor the range of threats and pressures on the Outstanding Universal Value of cultural World Heritage properties. Many of these threats have increased in their consequences, particularly including the impact of climate change, which calls for greater climate action, but also for climate change mitigation.

Damage to cultural heritage and impact on the communities that inhabited them continues in many parts of the world due to conflict resulting in large scale destruction of monuments, housing precincts and infrastructures. Conflict also gives rise to illicit trafficking of cultural objects. Protection, mitigation, and recovery of illicit trafficked cultural objects require international inter-institutional collaboration coupled with educational and advocacy targeting local experts and communities.

Natural disasters have, over the past years, inflicted substantial damage on the built fabric of cultural properties and greatly impacting their resident communities, as recent sad events remind the international community. Disaster response by UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies has contributed to limiting further consequent impacts on cultural heritage. Protection and conservation efforts are being undertaken by the concerned States Parties at World Heritage properties in response to conflicts. States Parties are progressively proceeding with the development of corrective measures and the definition of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of properties from the List of the World Heritage in Danger. A collaborative process to define the Desired state of conservation and corrective measures has been instigated at some cultural properties subject to security concerns. This process is based on close collaboration between States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, and has shown itself to be of great value.

Cultural and mixed World Heritage properties in urban areas continue to face challenges to the conservation of Outstanding Universal Value, while attending to the needs of contemporary communities and responding to issues that arise from urban development projects, including those for new infrastructures and transport.

The state of conservation reports to this Committee session highlight that, as conservation and management plans and documents are prepared, there are considerable benefits arising from technical review to allow for dialogue and accommodation of external expert advice.

The 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape remains an important tool for managing heritage in urban areas and settlements, as it calls for the integration of heritage conservation with urban development plans and process, and is implemented within the overall framework of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

With a view to promoting good practices and heritage-based solutions for sustainable development, the online platform World Heritage Canopy: Heritage Solutions for Sustainable Futures has been developed to share case studies and complement the solutions platform PANORAMA Cities and Nature-Culture, coordinated by IUCN, ICCROM and ICOMOS, and partners, which integrates World Heritage-linked nature-based solutions across a range of themes.

Infrastructure development, including renewable energy projects, remain a threat. The new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context*, developed jointly by UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN, in collaboration with the International Association for Impact Assessment, and the specialized *Guidance for Wind Energy Projects in a World Heritage Context* provide assistance to States Parties and industries on means of developing projects which preserve the attributes which support the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties.

ICOMOS, too, is pleased to continue its role in supporting States Parties in ensuring the safeguard of World cultural Heritage throughout concerted and proactive conservation efforts embedded in a right-based approach.

Thank you very much.

IUCN:

Shukran and thank you, Mr. Chair.

In 2023, we continue to see a range of threats and pressures on the Outstanding Universal Value of natural World Heritage around the world, from the impacts of climate change, pollution and invasive species to the importance of ensuring sustainable tourism recovery following the global COVID-19 pandemic. Inappropriate infrastructure developments such as dams, mining or tourism continues to place pressure on World Heritage sites and their OUV.

IUCN takes this opportunity to, as others have in the past sessions, highlight the importance of impact assessment processes and draw attention to the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, which was published in 2022 in order to support World Heritage planners and decision makers around World Heritage. To also support the continued achievement of private sector No-Go commitments in relation to World Heritage, the new *No-Go Commitment Guidance: Global Standards for Corporate Sustainability* were also published. Security and armed conflict not only impact management capacity and several natural properties, but have resulted in the further tragic loss of life of staff on the ground, as outlined by the Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre. Ensuring a clear rights-based approach to World Heritage, one which follows international standards and norms, including the recognition of indigenous peoples and local communities and which ensures free, prior and informed consent in decision making, remains a clear priority.

Since the last Committee session, as others have noted, we have seen major global conservation commitments, including the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in 2022, which sets the Global Biodiversity Agenda to 2030, and also provides a framework for the nature-culture linkages that clearly exist between the biological and cultural diversity, which are central to the World Heritage Convention. And we invite you all to join the side event on Friday, the Deputy Director referred to, in order to discuss the unique contribution that World Heritage provides to the implementation of the GBF. Coordinated actions are needed between this Convention and the GBF, as well as with the other biodiversity-related Conventions such as Ramsar, CITES and CMS. Furthermore, the strengthening and scaling up of global action on climate change remains vital, including through the finalization of the updating of the Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage.

In closing, IUCN is pleased to continue its role in supporting States Parties and decision makers in ensuring a healthy and productive state of conservation for our shared natural World Heritage as we move forward into the next 50 years.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Many thanks for your informative presentations.

Now we'd like to know whether there are any comments on the entire Document 45.COM/7 on the general state of conservation issues.

Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

At the outset, I would like to begin by thanking the Secretariat for this detailed presentation which summarized our activities which we have been conducting together with UNESCO since 2014.

Since the 38th session of the World Heritage Committee, which took place in Doha, the World Heritage Centre has established a large number of partnerships. For example, we have the Emergency Fund, which was set up together with Qatar, and it contributed as much as US\$10 million to support this Fund. We would like to thank UNESCO, and the UNESCO Secretariat as well, for their efforts to this end.

We also supported this Emergency Fund through 31 Rapid Response Operations in various countries around the world. A large number of people have benefited from its actions. In 2022, there were 84 countries that benefited from the work of this Fund and a large number of them are in Africa. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

By US\$500 for safeguarding cultural in emergency situations, this Fund has been used for activities related to conflicts in the region, in the world, in Arabic world, in Yemen and Iraq, Syria and earthquakes in Ecuador, Myanmar, Nepal and Iran, and, of course, Haiti, and in Lebanon, after Beirut port explosion, under the initiative LiBeirut.

I would confirm you, Mr. Chair, Qatar continues to support all activities and efforts of UNESCO to safeguard the cultural variety in the world.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. I would like to see if there are any comments from the Committee members. I see Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

The concept of conservation and safeguarding of World Heritage is well known to all the members of this Committee, and currently it encompasses such vital aspects as sustainability, as we saw in the report that we have just seen, quality of life and all of the different processes related to the ecosystems, social aspects, IT, economic development, biodiversity and cultural diversity. When it comes to implementation, here we are picking up on something that was said before, the Recommendations are of great importance and we, particularly when it comes to the 2011 Recommendation, remember, there are four different landscape-related criteria that we think of are of vital importance and we see this in the Andalusian Historical and Heritage Institute. But when it comes to the HUL, it's important to bear in mind the functions of traditional institutions and structures, and build these into an updated landscape and historic urban landscape policies.

When it comes to sustainability, we have noticed the trend in UNESCO, in its declarations, and how these need to build on synergies with other international instruments, be they culture-related or others, so as to ensure the better protection and promotion of culture in all of its aspects. We also see this in the documents that were minted, and we can recommend the 2011 Recommendation that really stands out in this regard. When it comes to historic urban landscapes, Mexico is one of the leaders when it comes to the implementation of this Recommendation. And also, it does a lot to promote within our region all of the synergies with the other culture-related heritage.

By way of conclusion, I would just like to mention to all the members of the Committee, the proposed amendment that we have put forward so as to incorporate the tools and concepts of the Recommendation, both in terms of the nomination processes and also in the integrated management plans, as well as the tools, the heritage toolkits that we think have been ably developed by the Advisory Bodies to whom we would like to extend our thanks. We do think that if we're going to have effective heritage management policies, then we need to have even more resources, in particular human resources, put at the service of protecting and promoting World Heritage.

Thank you. I'm sorry I've run out of time.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to get your guidance on this particular point, because we have submitted amendments to the Decision 7.1, and I understand that you will..., for the sake of accurate understanding, are we going to debate the decisions after the general debate now, or are you going to do later? Because I want to explain why we submit those amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Your Excellency, I've mentioned that it will be examined on 24 September.

The Delegation of Japan:

Okay. May I, Mr. Chair?

The Chairperson:

Yes.

The Delegation of Japan:

In that case, shall I explain the general background for these amendments now, or do we have to do it when the decisions are discussed?

The Chairperson:

Russian Federation. Point of order.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson, and thank you to the Head of the Delegation of Japan for his question.

In this situation, we have a proposal since the draft decision, as we understand it, will be discussed after all of the reports on SOC's. Perhaps, the general debate on this item could also be postponed to this time. And now we could move on to looking at the specific SOC's.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Yes, Your Excellency. So, since everyone is like, in agreement, then we have to open the discussion on the 24th.

Your Excellency of Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Well, to be honest, I was leaving before 24, but I have to reconsider my schedule.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

It's good to have you.

So, are there any Committee members who would like to address their questions?

Then...

So, our understanding now, the discussion will be open 24 September. So, if there is any objection so we can address it now.

Then, there should be no objection and there is no intervention or questions about this certain item from the Committee members.

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Only I would like to inquire and ask what is the rationale from postponing it to 24 September? It is only for information.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Your Excellency, I will give the floor to the Secretariat to elaborate more on this.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Just, on this particular issue.

What you, the Committee, has always been doing is, of course, that you open the item following the presentation by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies. You can have general debate and discussion, knowing that this item remains open until the examination of all the state of conservation reports. And that's the reason why the Chairperson has informed you that the two draft decisions, not the debate but the two draft decisions, will be examined on 24 September. So, usually, the Committee can decide to have the debate now and then after the debate, as you usually do, is that you start examining the draft decision, and you can then decide to explain the reasoning behind your different amendments that you have proposed on the 24th. But it doesn't stop you from having a debate. If you wish to have a debate on the different important subjects that have been addressed in the

Working Document that you have before you, so it it's up to you to tell us if you wish to postpone the debate on 24 September also.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Director.

So now, since there is no objection or comment from the Committee members, we will take the floor from the Observers.

Switzerland requested the floor.

La Délégation de la Suisse (Observateur) :

M. le Président, je vous remercie de nous donner la parole.

En effet, nous sommes heureux de pouvoir contribuer, en tant que non-membre, à ce débat général sur ce point extrêmement important. Comme vous l'avez très bien dit au début, M. le Président, avec la discussion des états de conservation des biens, nous arrivons au cœur même de la Convention du patrimoine mondial.

En général, ce sont les inscriptions de biens sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial qui suscite le plus d'intérêt. Les inscriptions ne sont toutefois que le début, le début de l'engagement des États parties de tout mettre en œuvre pour conserver la valeur universelle exceptionnelle des biens. Cet engagement est pris pour la durée. Ce n'est pas toujours simple et cela demande des efforts, des efforts parfois importants et des décisions qui sont difficiles à prendre. Oui, quelquefois, il faut aussi renoncer à des projets ou limiter d'autres intérêts afin de transmettre le patrimoine aux générations futures. Les rapports sur l'état de conservation des biens sont ainsi le résultat d'un grand travail d'analyse scientifique et de coopération. Les États attendent du Comité des indications claires et efficaces pour le suivi de leurs biens. C'est pour cela qu'il ne faut pas inutilement affaiblir les projets de décision.

Pour ce qui est de la Liste des biens en péril, cette année, nous pouvons célébrer le retrait des tombes des rois du Buganda à Kasubi, en Ouganda, de cette liste. Ceci est un grand succès qui prouve la validité et l'utilité du système. Nous sommes conscients que peu de pays souhaitent voir des biens figurer sur cette liste, mais nous devons arrêter de considérer l'inscription sur la Liste en péril comme une punition. C'est au contraire un outil puissant que nous avons pour alerter les sociétés sur les dangers auxquels est confronté le patrimoine mondial, que ce soit à cause de l'activité humaine ou du changement climatique qui en résulte.

La Suisse appelle, par conséquent, le Comité à donner suite aux inscriptions pour la Liste en péril proposée.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Kuwait.

The Observer Delegation of Kuwait:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you, M. Chairman. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

Mr. Chair, I have two points.

First of all, usually in this item, when we have the general debate, Member States of the Committee, they can also discuss the rationale for their amendments. We don't need to have to look at or listen to the discussion of the draft resolution, but we need to listen to their rationale when they submit the amendments. So, usually this is the general debate who is important to have it now.

My second point, Mr. Chair, like you know, on the 24th, most likely a lot of Member States will be left. So, I think it will be more practical and efficient once we finished 7B, so, still the information is still fresh without specifying the dates. Then you go back to this item once you're done from 7A and 7B. We don't need to wait at the end of the Convention, so at least you will have majority of the Committee members and the Observers, which is important for us to see what the debate is and what the final decision.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much. Iraq, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Iraq: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I should like to extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to our brethren in Saudi Arabia for their hospitality, and we beseech God Almighty to help this country prosper even more.

We would like to express our sorrow to the people of Morocco and Libya for the earthquake and flood, respectively. We wish them every assistance to be received in order to help them.

We have three cities, Erbil, Babylon and other sites who are inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger. Ashur and Samarra were listed in this category after the war, in addition to other sites listed in 2015, and this is because of the Daesh and their terrorist activities. We would like to seek the deletion of these sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger once we have finished with the conservation and restoration efforts, with the help of ICOMOS. We indeed were able to facilitate the mission of Reactive Monitoring, they visited Ashur and Samarra, and we were able to establish the OUV for Haider and Assur thanks to the workshop organized with the help of UNESCO.

As for Al-Ahwar, we were able to make a survey in this waterlogged city where we have a water-flooded area which has a historical significance. We also cooperate with the World Heritage Centre to update the data with respect to these sites.

Here, we would like to reaffirm once again that we have witnessed a number of hydraulic projects carried out by the upstream countries, which had a nefarious effect on the downstream countries such as Iraq.

Thank you. Thank you, Sir.

The Chairperson:

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was somewhat inspired by what the Distinguished Ambassador of Kuwait mentioned. That was exactly what I was expecting. Now, if you have no problem, I would like to suggest that after the two 7A-7B discussions, we can come back to this, before concluding the state of conservation discussions.

I don't mind if you want to keep it open until 24th, but I think, it is very better to have the discussions on the DR, if it's not now, after the 7A-7B discussions.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Indeed, Your Excellency.

Thank you. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Greece also supports the proposal of the esteemed Ambassador of Japan, either to proceed with the general debate today or the latest next Saturday.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also would like to support the proposal by Japan and supported by Greece.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is the same, I am supporting the Japan's and Greece suggestion based on Kuwait suggest.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to endorse the Japanese Ambassador's suggestion.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We support the proposal of Japan initiated by Kuwait.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Likewise, Mr. Chair, we support this proposal and would like to have some clarity because we were a bit confused since some Observers already took the floor and the debate seemed to have started, but yet it hasn't. So, we think it's a good suggestion from the Japanese Ambassador.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Ethiopia.

La Délégation de l'Éthiopie :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je m'associe à la déclaration qui a été faite par l'ambassadeur du Japon et les autres pays, également.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Italy supports Japan too.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Qatar.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Qatar soutient la proposition du Japon, proposée aussi par Koweït.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Bulgaria also supports the proposal by Japan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Saudi Arabia. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

We endorse the Japanese proposal.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Egypt also joins appearing consensus on this proposal.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. It seems there's a consensus. *Dawlat Qatar?*

Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair. We would like to ask for a clarification.

When we were proposing postponing the general debate, we were simply thinking that there were a number of Delegations that proposed amendments to the decision, and since the decision will be taken on the 24th, it would make sense to listen to the justification for these amendments right before the decision is taken. We were not opposed to the general debate in principle, and now, there is a different proposal to postpone the general debate to Saturday if we understood correctly.

After we complete discussions of the SOC reports, does this mean that, in this case, the schedule for discussing the nominations will not be sticking to the schedule and Delegations which have come here to discuss their nominations will be enabled to participate in these discussions?

If this is the case, perhaps, it is not the best solution to the problem, and then, perhaps, the best course of action would be to hold the debates, but discuss the amendments and the justifications for the amendments on 24 September.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, in terms of postponing, you know, the discussion debate on Saturday, the timetable will be the same. To clarify this.

So, since there is a consensus and agreement to postpone the debate after closing Items 7A and 7B, that will be on Saturday, and also, we can have more discussion on this tomorrow morning at the Bureau.

Is that good with everyone?

7A. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL EN PÉRIL

The Chairperson:

Alright. So, let's proceed.

Before we start with the examination of individual state of conservation reports, I would like to give the floor to Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Director of the World Heritage Centre, to introduce this item.

Mr. Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

On this Item 7A, as indicated by the Chairperson, according to Paragraph 190 of the Operational Guidelines, the Committee shall review annually the state of conservation of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger and Documents 7A, 7A.Add, 7A.Add.2, 7A.Add.3 and 7A.Add.4 present detailed reports on the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Please note that for the three properties that have been inscribed during the 18th extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee in January 2023, both on the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger, no reporting was required on these properties at this session of the World Heritage Committee, but only at the 46th session. These three properties are Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli (Lebanon); Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba, Marib (Yemen) and The Historic Centre of Odesa (Ukraine).

In addition to the individual reports, there are three general decisions:

- one on the World Heritage properties in Iraq;
- one on the World Heritage properties in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- one on the World Heritage properties in the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC.

In line with our “rotation” practice, this year, we will start the presentation of the reports with natural properties, in the following order of regions:

- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Africa
- Arab States
- Asia-Pacific
- Europe and North America

The presentations will be made jointly by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies.

After the examination of natural properties, we will proceed with the examination of cultural properties, in the same regional order. There are no mixed properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Once we reach the relevant Agenda items, and before the floor is given to the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies, it is the practice, Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished members of the Committee, that the Committee member who has requested a specific state of conservation report to be opened for discussion be asked briefly to present the reason why it felt important to discuss this report, in order to keep the debate focused on this issue specifically.

I also would like to remind the Distinguished Committee members that for all the state of conservation reports not opened for discussion, as it is the practice, the list of these properties will only be read out by the Secretariat; after which you may, Mr. Chairperson, then declare, if there's no objection from the Committee members, the relevant decisions all adopted.

And before concluding, I would also like to recall some of the Committee's Rules of Procedure which you may want to apply on this Agenda item to facilitate the conduct of the debates. Let me remind you:

- Rule 22.5: The Chairperson shall put Committee members' questions to a State Party once at the end of the Committee's debate on the property.
- Rule 22.6: States Parties shall not speak to World Heritage properties in their own territories, except at the explicit invitation of the Chairperson within the allowed time for their speech and in response to specific questions posed.

Lastly Mr. Chairperson, I would like to remind the Distinguished Committee members about the very important Decision **35 COM 12E**, which the Committee adopted at its 35th session in 2011, requesting States Parties to refrain from providing additional information regarding conservation issues after the deadlines indicated in the Operational Guidelines, as this information cannot be given the necessary attention for review by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies at such short notice.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE NATUREL

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÎBES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Director. So now, I would like to also invite you again to read the list of the natural properties of the Latin America and the Caribbean region inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may please, Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The list of natural properties of the Latin America and the Caribbean region:

- Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras)
- Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California (Mexico)

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Director.

So, there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the Decisions read out adopted. *[gavel]*

Also, I would like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about the property for which we have adopted the decision without discussion?

So, we have a request from the Centre for Biological Diversity. You may please take the floor.

The Centre for Biological Diversity (Observer):

Mr. Chair and Distinguished Delegates, this intervention is made on behalf of the Centre for Biological Diversity and the Animal Welfare Institute.

We thank the Committee for supporting the Draft Decision **7A.2** to retain the Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and for directing Mexico to urgently implement the corrective measures for this site. The vaquita, the world's most endangered marine mammal, is an Outstanding Universal Value for the site and is only found in the Upper Gulf of California, in Mexico. Vaquita numbers have fallen from nearly 600 animals in 1997 to around ten today due to entanglement in gillnets used to catch shrimp and fish, including the totoaba fish. The decision notes that Mexico's September 2020 regulations, adopted to regulate fishing in the vaquita habitat could, if enforced, have the potential to reduce totoaba poaching and vaquita bycatch, but also notes concerns that the State Party has not fully implemented the regulation and has failed to enforce them. This situation has not changed. As May of this year, the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission noted that the vaquita will become extinct in the near future unless the risk of entanglement in gillnets is entirely eliminated. If this doesn't happen now, it will be too late. During the recent vaquita survey performed in May, vaquitas were observed outside the protection area called Zero Tolerance area. While incidents of illegal fishing in this zone have declined, fishing outside of it, which is also illegal, has been rampant.

Considering the ongoing threat to the vaquita from entanglement in illegal fishing gear, it is imperative that the Committee adopts the strongest and most comprehensive corrective measures possible for this World Heritage Site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, we will move to nature, Africa region.

AFRICA // AFRIQUE

7A.10 Lake Turkana National Parks (Kenya) // Parcs nationaux du Lac Turkana (Kenya)

The Chairperson:

I now would like to give the floor to the Delegation of the South Africa to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the Lake Turkana National Parks (Kenya).

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa has noted the report presented by the Advisory Bodies on Lake Turkana National Park, a World Heritage Property, highlighting the issues and challenges that have led to the inclusion of the property in the List of World Heritage in Danger. These threats were, inter alia, potential irreversible loss of the property's Outstanding Universal Value resulting from foreseen impacts from developments upstream the Omo River, leading to receding water levels and imbalances in nutrient flow into Lake Turkana. It is encouraging that we are informed of a turnaround of the situation. There is now documented evidence that Lake Turkana, like the other Great Rift Valley lakes, has experienced rising water levels in the last four years. This new evidence, supported by enhanced efforts towards restoration of the property to the Desired state of conservation, gives us confidence that the reasons why the property was initially inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger have not manifested as bad as we thought, and can now be addressed more concisely.

Mr. Chair, the State Party of Kenya has considered the formulation and implementation of the Lake Turkana National Parks Management Plan. This will be supported by resourcing and implementing the Desired state of conservation Strategy that has been developed. Mr. Chair, these are important milestones towards removing the property from the List of the World Heritage in Danger. The Delegation of South Africa further appreciates the Government of Norway for committing to support the formulation of the Desired state of conservation report for the property. While we recognize that there is still more work to be done, the State Party of South Africa appreciates the efforts undertaken and requests the Committee members to consider the proposed amendments.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, I would like to invite the Secretariat and IUCN to provide their comments. You may have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On the point raised by the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa. I want to just point out that, of course, the rainfall in the last couple of years has been exceptional and has resulted in a lot more water in all the lakes in the region, including also the lakes of the Rift Valley, which we will also discuss later in Item 7B. However, I think there is still questions on how the upstream dam projects and other irrigation projects might have impacted the hydrology of the lake. I think we will have to see how the situation evolves if the rainfall levels return back to the normal situation.

In terms of the amendment that is proposed, I just want to explain one point. In the report that the State Party had submitted to the World Heritage Centre, it had mentioned that through the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Omo River Lake Turkana Basin and its development, it had developed a Strategy for the implementation and to address the challenges affecting the management of the property, including the decline of wildlife species and populations. We understand that the proposal is to remove. So, we had requested in the draft decision that the State Party submits a copy of this strategy, and we see that this has been deleted in the revised draft decision. So, we would be, of course, interested to know what is the status of this strategy if this is to be deleted.

I just have one small comment is that in the formulation of the revised paragraph, there is talk of "implementation of the Inter-Ministerial Committee". I suppose that there is a typo there, and that it has to be "the implementation of the work of the Inter-Ministerial Committee". IUCN has no further comments on this.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to see if there are any comments?

Japan, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Japan would like to seek clarification on three points.

First, regarding the Paragraph 7 of the draft decision, we would like to ask the World Heritage Centre or the Advisory Body about the intention of the original draft. The original draft sentence was, I think you mentioned a little bit about it, but the original sentence is a little complicated and not easy to understand, especially the relationship with the Inter-Ministerial Committee. So, we would like to have the confirmation that the original draft decision is requesting State Party to submit two things, namely, details of the state of conservation matters and the strategy mentioned in the State Party report. Also, we would like to know whether the amendment sentence is correct in terms of the relationship with the Inter-Ministerial Committee, because it seems to us the amendment sentence is clearer than the original sentence.

The second point is to the proposal of the amendment. If our understanding is correct, in the Paragraph 7, the Committee is requesting to submit a copy of the existing strategy, and we would like to know the reason why this part is deleted.

The third question is regarding the Paragraph 8 of the draft decision. And the question is to again whether it is Centre or Advisory Body. We would like to know if the SEA mentioned in Paragraph 8 is the same as the one mentioned in Paragraph 6 c) of the Draft Decision of the Lamu Old Town (**45 COM 7B.126**). If that is the case, because the draft decision on the Lamu Old Town mentions the importance of also on the Lake Turkana National Park. I'm sorry. It mentions the impact also on the Lake Turkana National Park, so it would be better to keep mentioning the Lamu Old Town here from the consistency point of view.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Are there any comments or interventions?

So now, I would like to ask the [Secretariat] to respond your question.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

I believe the Distinguished Delegate of Japan asked three different questions.

The first question was on what is exactly requested in the original Paragraph 7, and I just want to confirm that we had requested indeed information on the progress and time information on the strategy, the strategy which was mentioned in the State Party report, and also information on the progress and timeline of the activities included in that strategy.

In terms of the second question, I think this is a question to be asked to the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa as they proposed in their amendment to delete the reference to the strategy.

In terms of the third question, which seeks clarification, if the strategic environmental assessment, which is referred to in Paragraph 5, is the same as the Strategic Environmental Assessment referred to in Paragraph 8, I can say that these are not the same. In fact, in Paragraph 5, we are talking about a Strategic Environmental Assessment that the Committee has requested in most of the past decisions, and since the site was inscribed in the List of World Heritage in Danger, to review the cumulative impacts of the developments, the different developments, on the Omo-Turkana Basin, so basically, the developments on the Omo River and other rivers in the Turkana Basin, and to assess the impacts, the cumulative impacts, on the property. The SEA mentioned in Paragraph 8 is an SEA, an existing SEA which is linked to the Lamu Port development, but includes also reference to several activities or several developments which are close to Lake Turkana, including a pipeline and several tourism developments. So, these are two different points. I think ICOMOS wants to respond on the link to the cultural property, Lamu Old Town.

Thank you. No? Not.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to give the floor to South Africa to respond to the second question.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think we just wanted to clarify that we do acknowledge that there is more work that needs to be done.

Secondly, to indicate that Paragraph 7 is just a rephrasing. It's not that we are amending anything necessarily on it. So those are just the two points that we want to bring forward.

We would like the Committee to just acknowledge and appreciate the degree of progress that the Government of Kenya has achieved to date in trying to resolve all the issues.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Sorry for taking the floor again. I think I was not so clear enough about my question, question 3 regarding the SEA. My question was: if this is in Paragraph 8, is the same as the one mentioned in the draft decision of cultural site. If that is the same, same SEA, then the expression should be the same. That's what my point. I hope you understand.

And also, I thank you the reply from South Africa. And so, I understand there are still some little work remains to be done for that strategy.

I hope that my understanding is correct. That's all.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Secretariat.

The Secretariat:

So, it is indeed the same SEA as the SEA for the Lamu Old Town, because that SEA also covers other developments, including developments which are close to Lake Turkana. That's why there is reference here. For sake of clarity, it might be good too, but I think it's also already in the first sentence because it also says the revision of the SEA for the Lamu Port-Southern Sudan Ethiopia Transport Corridor Program, because it's basically an SEA for the entire development Corridor, which goes from Sudan up to the Port of Lamu, and of course, the Port of Lamu, which is discussed in the state of conservation report on the Lamu Old Town, is a very important part of that corridor. But there are also several developments close to Lake Turkana. That is why it is also referred to here. I hope that clarifies, but perhaps my... Okay.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I see there are no other questions, so I think we will close debate and move to examine the draft decision.

So, before that, I would like to invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7A.10** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa.

The amendment is on screen. It is for Paras 5, 7 and 8.

In Para 5, there is a slight correction in the last line, as you can see: "and thanks Norway for committing to financially support the process to develop the DSOCR for the property;".

Para 7 has been rephrased and it reads as: "Requests the State Party of Kenya to submit to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, details regarding the progress in implementation of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Omo River-Lake Turkana Basin, of the various state of conservation matters pertaining to the property, highlighting the challenges facing the implementation of the developed strategy;".

And Para 8 is revised to say: "Regrets that no update on the revision of the SEA for the Lamu Port-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor Program is provided, and therefore reiterates its request to the State Party to complete as soon as possible the revised SEA, taking into account both individual and cumulative impacts that the program and its projects may have on the OUV of the property, and that no further components of LAPSSET be implemented until the SEA is completed and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;".

Rest of the paras remain as they are.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, let's proceed with adoption of the draft decision. We can scroll up.

I think we have from Paragraph 1. And if you allow me, dear colleagues, and we'll...

There is no amendment on Paragraph 1 and 2 and 3 and Paragraph 4. Since there is no amendment, can we accept them? We adopt them as it is. No objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5. We have an amendment. And do we agree with the proposed amendment? Then, we adopt as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6. There is no amendment. And if we agree, we adopt as it is. Adopted. *[gavel]*

And then, Paragraph 7, there is an amendment to the paragraph. Do you agree with the proposed amendment? I see no objection. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8. There is an amendment. Do you agree with the proposed amendment? I see no objection. Then adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9. There is no amendment. Do you agree to adopt it as it is? Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 10 and 11. There is no amendment. Do you agree to accept it as it is? Then, adopted. *[gavel]*

So, dear colleagues, we have to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7A.10** as a whole. Is there any objection? I see no objection.

Draft Decision **45 COM 7A.10** is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Now, moving to nature sites in Africa region. That's not for discussion. I now invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the natural properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger located in the Africa region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following sites are proposed for adoption without discussion:

- Manovo Gounda St. Floris National Park (Central African Republic)
- Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve (Côte d'Ivoire/Guinea)
- Garamba National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Kahuzi-Biega National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Okapi Wildlife Reserve (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Virunga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- General Decision on the World Heritage properties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Rainforests of the Atsinanana (Madagascar)
- Aïr and Ténéré Natural Reserves (Niger)
- Niokolo-Koba National Park (Senegal)
- Selous Game Reserve (United Republic of Tanzania)

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on these state of conservation reports, I declare the Decisions read out adopted. *[gavel]*

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion?

We have a request from the floor, the Indigenous Forum.

The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum (Observer):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum has been asked to read a Declaration on behalf of the Batwa peoples.

Declaration of the Batwa of the Kahuzi-Biega National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo at the meeting of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee:

We, the Batwa indigenous peoples of the Kahuzi-Biega National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1980, whose parents were expelled between 1970 and 1975, we express ourselves through this Declaration.

Since our expulsion, for decades, we have lived around the Park without land, without means of sustenance, without access to the natural resources inside the Park, and without being able to exercise our cultural practices. Taking into account the various national texts adopted and international human rights treaties ratified by the Democratic Republic of Congo, we urge the UNESCO World Heritage Committee to ask the Congolese Government to redress the historical and current injustices of the Batwa continue to suffer as a result of the evictions, return to the Batwa the customary land seized a long time ago, and respect and swiftly implement the recent decision of the African Commission of Human and Peoples Rights on issues of human rights abuses committed against us, Decision on Communication 588/15, adopted in May 2022, which calls on the Congolese Government to reinstitute our ancestral lands from the Batwa of Kahuzi-Biega.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. So, I see no other requests.

And now, we move to the Asia-Pacific region, and we have a discussion proposed by Thailand for the property, Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra in Indonesia.

ASIA-PACIFIC // ASIE-PACIFIQUE

7A.15 Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (Indonesia) // Patrimoine des forêts tropicales ombrophiles de Sumatra (Indonésie)

The Chairperson:

Now, I now would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Thailand to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra in Indonesia.

You may have the floor, Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Dear Committee members,

Thailand wishes to refer to the Draft Decision **45 COM 7A.15**, regarding the Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra.

My Delegation has studied the Desired state of conservation report submitted by the State Party of Indonesia and has taken note with appreciation the commitment of the State Party on the conservation of the Heritage site. We note that considerable efforts have been made through various measures to achieving positive results, especially in maintaining forest cover, with no significant losses since year 2011, improving the management of the protected area, conducting regular and consistent population monitoring of key species, which shows a relatively stable population trend, and enacting policies to ensure the preservation of the Outstanding Universal Values of the Heritage site.

However, Thailand is of the view that the working document and the draft decision do not reflect the reality on the ground. The negative nuance of the draft decision also does not take into account the genuine efforts and progress made by the State Party. In this regard, Thailand would like to propose amendments on a few points. They are not substantive changes to the draft decision and do not depart from the original draft. We hope that the Committee members could lend their support to the draft amendment.

Mr. Chairperson, my Delegation would also like to request the State Party of Indonesia, upon the permission of the Chairperson, to make necessary clarifications if needed.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, now, I would like to invite the Secretariat and IUCN to provide us with their comments. You may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We would like to recall that this property is faced with three important challenges: deforestation and encroachment, the second challenge pressure on the wildlife populations, including elephants, tigers and rhino, and a third one, various road development projects, which could affect its integrity.

While the World Heritage Centre and IUCN acknowledged that the State Party has made some efforts to start addressing these issues, we still are concerned that in spite of these efforts, the OUV of the site is still further deteriorating.

In terms of deforestation, we acknowledge that the rate of deforestation has slowed down. Nevertheless, during the period from 2000 to 2020, close to 30,000 ha of forest were lost in this property and some deforestation is still continuing today. For this reason, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN consider that any further loss of the forest is of utmost concern given the amount of forest already lost.

In terms of wildlife populations, the data provided by the State Party on Sumatran elephant, tiger, rhino and orangutan show a degree of uncertainty that requires continuous monitoring or shows a declining population, and IUCN will provide some more information on this.

In terms of road developments, several road development projects are still being considered, while the corrective measures adopted by the Committee requested the State Party not to further consider any new road developments. While we acknowledge that no final decision has been made on these projects, the fact that they are still being considered is a concern in its own right.

IUCN will also make some comments on this property.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. IUCN, you may take the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

IUCN also takes note of the meeting held between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN on 6 September, recently, and the World Heritage Centre and IUCN welcome the opportunity for this type of dialogue between all Parties in the lead up to the Committee session.

We would like to further complement the comments provided by the World Heritage Centre in response to the points that have just been raised.

Specifically, firstly, to note, as is noted in the opening paragraph of both the SOC report and around the decision, we do acknowledge that the State Party has provided positive updates in response to decision of the last Committee session, and specifically concerning the DSOCR indicators and meeting the corrective measures.

As was just noted by the World Heritage Centre, one of the key issues really refers to the ongoing loss of forest, and then specifically to comment also on the species data which has been raised. Just to make a point that this information that we have taken from the last State Party report provided in March 2023, which indicates either declining trends or still provides a level of unclarity that requires further monitoring, notably specifically around tiger and elephant populations. Population for tigers across the property components are reported to be relatively stable. However, monitoring survey results do show a high degree of statistical uncertainty, so there are various points that do remain of concern.

In conclusion, we note that whilst the State Party is achieving significant steps in certain areas on implementing the corrective measures, there does remain a need to further strengthen progress in this regard and we remain available to provide any technical support in this regard.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to open the floor.

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Advisory Body for the clarification.

Oman, from the report, has noted the great efforts made by the State Party to ensure the utmost conservation of the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). The State Party has set substantial hand over, encompassing

the implementation of proactive measures such as strengthened efforts to remove all incurs from property and coupled with comprehensive forest management initiatives to forest enrichment.

Furthermore, we welcome the State Party's reaffirmation from granting any concession or permits associated with the construction or development of new road within the Gunung Leuser National Park, which considered an important achievement for the conservation of the OUV of the property. We believe that more time and dialogue between the State Party and the Advisory Bodies will lead to drive properly all the efforts and intervention in a way that will not impact negatively the OUV and its attributes.

Therefore, we support the amendment to the draft decision, and we thank Thailand for opening this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

First and foremost, I would like to express our appreciation for the work done by the IUCN and other Advisory Bodies. I would also like to note that the State Party to the Convention of World Heritage has also done a great amount of work, and I would like to thank them for all of the efforts made in order to work on preserving this heritage site.

I would also like to thank Thailand for opening this discussion.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Well, I think we are generally in agreement with what has been said so far, but to make things very clear, if you allow, Mr. Chair, I would like to ask two questions to the State Party of Indonesia.

First of all, our understanding is that Indonesia has taken a number of measures to deal with the issue, and that would include, for example, the prevention of encroachment, monitoring of rainforest and also the commitment to suspend the issuance of new permissions for construction of the roads concerned. Those are other efforts that the State Party of Indonesia has been making. So, we would like to ask the State Party of Indonesia if this understanding is correct.

And secondly, in terms of the actions the State Party of Indonesia has been asked to take. I understand that they agree with the supply of further information, as well as the application of Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism to this project. So, in that sense, the way forward is very clear. That is our understanding. I would also ask the same the question to the State Party of Indonesia if our understanding is correct.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. We will pass the floor to Indonesia after we go over the intervention of the Committee members.

Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

M. le Président, chers membres du Comité,

Bien qu'il y ait encore quelques difficultés, nous notons que l'État partie de l'Indonésie a réalisé des progrès considérables dans la conservation et la gestion des forêts tropicales de Sumatra.

Il a effectué une mise en œuvre diligente d'un ensemble complet de mesures correctives, dont, entre autres, des efforts renforcés pour éliminer tous les empiètements du bien associés à des initiatives globales de gestion forestière pour prévenir de futurs empiètements, l'achèvement de l'évaluation environnementale stratégique relative aux plans de développement routier à l'intérieur du bien, le développement des modules de surveillance de la faune.

Nous sommes tout à fait d'avis que ces efforts méritent d'être reflétés de manière complète et précise dans le projet de décision.

C'est pourquoi nous apportons notre soutien aux amendements à ce projet de décision sous examen, soumis par la Thaïlande et relatifs aux forêts tropicales de Sumatra.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

India would like to join Thailand, Oman, Qatar and other countries in supporting this amendment. We would like to also thank the Evaluation Body, IUCN, for their views.

The state of conservation report, prepared by the State Party of Indonesia on the Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra, is found to be detailed with management strategies and proposals addressing the decisions of the Committee. The Progress report on the Desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the Danger List has been separately provided. However, we would also like the State Party of Indonesia to be given the floor to answer the three points raised by the expert Body, IUCN, on deforestation and encroachment, wildlife, and the possible threats from road development.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

I would first like to thank the State Party of Indonesia for their comprehensive state of conservation report, which was submitted to the World Heritage Centre in January of 2022. The report has provided detailed information on the activities and measures implemented by the State Party to improve the state of conservation of the property, in order to achieve the Desired state of conservation for removal of the site from the List of World Heritage in Danger. Interventions by the State Party include those aimed at addressing encroachment, increasing community involvement and monitoring of key species populations.

Mr. Chair, South Africa acknowledges the challenges of managing such a large property, including the need to improve the lives of communities while ensuring maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value. An example of this challenge is the issue of facilitating people's mobility, as reflected by the demand on the State Party of Indonesia to develop a road that will make traveling safer and faster. South Africa as such commends the State Party of Indonesia, for the careful consideration of the aspiration of communities and ensuring that development does not impact negatively on the state of conservation of the site.

South Africa would like to call on the Committee to acknowledge the work done by the State Party, as reported in the state of conservation report. The amendments proposed by the State Party of Thailand comes in a more positive language and reflects both the challenges faced by the site and the continuous efforts made by the State Party of Indonesia to improve the state of conservation of the site.

South Africa, therefore, supports the proposed amendment made by Thailand to Paragraphs 3, 6, 7 and 14 as this will send a positive and encouraging message to the State Party.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Egypt. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Allow me first to thank IUCN for its presentation and also to acknowledge the efforts undertaken by the State Party, Indonesia, in applying the corrective measures on the site.

I would like to ask the Delegation of Indonesia what concrete evidence they can provide to demonstrate the progress made in improving the condition of the Tropical Rainforest of Sumatra, since it was designated in the In Danger List in 2011.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Now, Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

Mexico would also like to acknowledge the work undertaken by the State Party to try to maintain its OUV concerning monitoring, surveillance, reforestation and involvement of local communities and all of the management issues that they've been trying to deal with. We do think that they've done their utmost to maintain these attributes, and that's why we can support the proposed amendment by Thailand.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I see no other interventions from the Committee members.

So, I would like to pass the floor to the State Party, Indonesia, to respond to the questions of the Committee members, specifically Japan, India and Egypt.

The Observer Delegation of Indonesia:

Thank you, Chair.

Let me answer all the questions by...

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Sorry, since this is the first time Indonesia takes the floor, allow us to take the opportunity to address the meeting, to extend our heartfelt congratulations and sincere appreciation to the Distinguished Host Country of Saudi Arabia for the impeccable organization of the meeting, and also gracious hospitality and warm welcome extended to all participating Delegations.

Let me begin by commending our utmost appreciation to the Delegation of Thailand for its invaluable support to facilitate the discussion of the property.

Dear Distinguished Committee members,

Allow me to briefly provide a rationale behind the State Party consideration of proposing the amendment to the draft decision of Tropical Rainforests of Sumatra.

The State Party wishes for more conciliatory and encouraging tone rather than a negative one. State Party didn't ask for removal of the property for the Danger List. Substantial indicators have been achieved. While the progress may be modest, the State Party seeks for recognition, if not appreciation, for the achievement thus far. The State Party wishes to inform the Committee that the current draft decision will lead to counterproductive effect. It runs the risk of demoralizing the focal point and undermining the motivation to pursue the further progress. The State sincerely wishes the Committee to consider the progress made by State Party to acknowledge its achievements, even if they may modest.

Statement the Committee, let me answer some questions regarding, especially from the Delegation of Japan, India and Egypt.

The State Party of Indonesia has consistently demonstrated a firm commitment to achieving the Desired state of conservation for Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra. Let me remind that the site itself is a 2.5 million ha of tropical rainforest that consists of three national parks.

The Chairperson:

Your Excellency, I would like to ask you to respond to these questions precisely.

The Observer Delegation of Indonesia:

Let me introduce the... That's the main point that we want to emphasize is that, firstly, with regard to encroachment, the State Party has strengthened its efforts to remove all encroachers from the property, coupled with the comprehensive Forest Management Initiative to the Forest for all future encroachments, among them are its innovative approach to engage community involvement that has been instituted to foster comprehensive and inclusive participation. Formally classifies as Encroachers now in the local community, have now assumed a role as active partners in ecosystem reforestation and restoration.

Secondly, in response to the statement regarding continued decline of the species, diligent monitoring activities for the key species, namely tiger, rhinos, Sumatra elephants and Sumatra orangutan, have been conducted within the properties. This monitoring initiative adheres to international standardized methodologies, ensuring rigorous and consistent data collection and analysis, and so far, has been getting a data showing the larger natalities of those four species.

Thirdly, with regard to the forest cover, an analysis from 2011 until 2021 reveals noteworthy trends of relative stability as already detailed in the desired state of conservation...

The Chairperson:

Your Excellency, I would like you to conclude your remarks.

The Observer Delegation of Indonesia:

Lastly, the State Party remains committed to its promise of not granting any permit of new road development within the protected areas. Instead, State Party is actively focused on mitigating the impact of existing road development. This involves intensive, intensive patrols along national road lanes and conducting studies.

The Chairperson:

I appreciate, Your Excellency, I appreciate your time. But I mean dedicated time for all State Members to intervene is two minutes.

So, I would like to ask you in the further coming request to respond precisely to the question of the Committee members in order to save the time and stay on track.

So, now I would like to ask the IUCN to respond to the Committee questions. I think there was feedback from India.

IUCN:

Mr. Chair, I think the question of India was directed to the State Party.

The Chairperson:

India. You would like to confirm this? Your inquiries have been met?

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

The question we had asked was in response to IUCN raising three points on deforestation and encroachment, wildlife, and road development, but the State Party has attempted to answer that question. We have no further questions for the State Party.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any...? Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Well, I would like to make two points. I did ask two questions, and I think Indonesia was in the process of answering the first one because this is more or less identical with what was asked by India.

Now, I had a second question, which is important from our perspective. We just wanted to make sure, we just wanted to confirm our understanding that as far as the future actions are concerned, Indonesia, the State Party of Indonesia, is trying to take actions in line with the suggestions from the Evaluation Bodies, in particular, the application of the Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism as well as supply of other information. That is a very important element in making judgments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Your Excellency, you want to direct a question to the State Party?

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes, Indeed. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Indonesia, please. Precisely.

The Observer Delegation of Indonesia:

Thank you, Chair.

We are committed to all the suggestions by the Committee. And also, I think what has been raised by the Esteemed Delegation of Japan regarding the Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism. We thank the Advisory Body for recommending the Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism, and we are ready to work closely with all the Secretariat and Advisory Body for further action towards the property.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I would like to pass the floor to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines acknowledges the efforts made by Indonesia to address the threats to the Tropical Rainforests of Sumatra. We anticipate continued efforts in this regard and further reporting to the WHC. We, therefore, support amendments made at this point.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, and I'm sorry to take the floor for the third time, but on the basis of the information that we obtained from the State Party of Indonesia, I think this should be, in a way, a very constructive case. The State Party of Indonesia has made efforts as explained, and also the State Party of Indonesia has made a commitment that they will go along with the line of actions suggested by the Evaluation Bodies. And therefore, on that basis, we support all the amendments.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any interventions?

So now, I invite to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7A.15** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Thailand, which was supported by the Distinguished Delegations of Oman and Qatar. And now, from the Committee members on the floor, we have received confirmation for these amendments from the Distinguished Delegations of India, South Africa, Mexico, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Japan, so we can add their name as coauthors.

So, the amendments are proposed for four paras. I'm going to read them one by one and show it on screen.

Para 3: "Reiterates its ongoing concern regarding the persistent challenges to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property due to encroachment, the impacts of invasive species, and the prospect of road development, which have the potential to aggravate the decline of key species, and the increasing ecological isolation of the property, and expresses its sincere regret that the State Party continues to engage in contemplating potential development activities, including road construction, and reiterates its call to the State Party to increase its efforts to implement the corrective measures in order to avoid gradual loss of OUV of property over time;"

Moving to the next para with amendments.

The revised Para 6: "Acknowledging that no decision has been taken for the proposed forest clearance within the property, and that a moratorium to prevent primary forest loss has been extended, notes with concern the reported continued forest loss within the property with a significantly lower rate, and urges the State Party to prioritize restoration activities in ecologically sensitive areas, wildlife corridors and roadsides;"

The revised Para 7: "Requests the State Party to provide clarification and detailed information pertaining to the following:". Points a), b), and c) under this para remain as they are.

Moving on to the next para with revisions.

That is Para 14: "noting with concern the persisting threats to the property and their potential impact on its OUV, decides to apply the Reinforced Monitoring Mechanism to the property to allow for a closer monitoring of its state of conservation;"

Rest of the paras stay as they are.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I listened carefully to the clarification given by the Ambassador of Indonesia. I would like to thank him for this, and my country would like also to join the list of countries supporting the amendments on this draft resolution.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair.

We also listened to the explanations provided by the Representative of Indonesia, and we would also like to support the amendment proposed by Oman, Qatar and the other countries. We would like to join this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I'm now giving the floor to Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous aimerions simplement que le nom du Mali soit ajouté au nom des soutiens exprimés.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Italy, too, would like to join the other countries in supporting this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Now, I have Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Nigeria is also joining the others in supporting this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you.

We would also like to support this amendment and have our name added.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Argentina would also like to support this draft amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Bulgaria also wants to join the other countries to support these amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Rwanda is also joining other countries to support this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Zambia would also like to join the rest of the members to support the mission.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you very much Mr. Chair.

Greece also would like to support this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Likewise, Mr. Chair. We'd like to join.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ethiopia would like also to support the amendments.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Zambia, do you have anything to add?

So now, we can move to the examination of the draft decision.

As you can see Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 2, there are no amendments. Can we adopt them, adopt the two paragraphs as they are. I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, there is an amendment. Do you agree with this proposal? I see no objection. So adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraphs 4 and 5, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as they are? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, there is a proposal. Do you agree with this proposal? I see no objections, so adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, we have a proposal. Do you agree with the amended paragraph? I see no objections. So, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8 and Paragraph 9, there is no amendment. Do you agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraphs 10 and 11, there is no amendment. Do you agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraphs [12] and 13. There are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as they are? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 14, there is a proposal to agree with the proposed amendment. I see no objection. The proposed amendment is adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 15. There is no amendment. Do you agree to accept it as it is? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

So now, I see... therefore, I declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 7A.15** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Okay. So, we have a request from the floor from one of the NGOs. So, would you please take the floor and introduce yourself and address your statement within two minutes, please?

Thank you.

Rivers without Boundaries International Coalition (Observer):

Thank you, Your Excellency.

I am representing Rivers Without Boundaries International Coalition. My name is Eugene Semenov, and I congratulate Parties on agreeing on the decision on Tropical Heritage Of Sumatra, and I want to express our sincere wish that further interaction between the Convention Bodies and the State Party, including monitoring and early examination of development proposals, will look into all hydropower projects on the rivers flowing through, from and around the property, especially in Leuser Ecosystem part. This is not only four dams listed in this decision, there are many more dams planned and unless this is examined earlier, early, in a strategic manner, it may cause a lot of damage to this magnificent ecosystem and this magnificent freshwater biodiversity of this wonderful island.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

So, we move to the examination not for discussion nature sites in Asia-Pacific, and I invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read that list of the properties.

Which reports are proposed for adoption without discussion?

You may have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following site is proposed for adoption without discussion:

- East Rennell (Solomon Islands)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the Decision read out adopted. *[gavel]*

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

So now, we move to Europe and North America region or Group where there is no site open for discussion.

I now invite also the Director to read the list of the properties of the Europe North America region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. You may have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

The property proposed for adoption without discussion is:

- Everglades National Park (United States of America)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the Decision read out adopted. *[gavel]*

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÎBES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Moving to Latin America and the Caribbean, concerning the cultural properties, I invite also the Director to read the list of the cultural properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger located in the Latin America and the Caribbean region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

The following properties are proposed for adoption without discussion:

- City of Potosi (Bolivia, Plurinational State of)
- Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo (Panama)

- Chan Chan Archaeological Zone (Peru)
- Coro and its Port (Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of)

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, there is no objection from the Committee on these state of conservation reports, I declare the Decisions read out adopted. ^[gavel]

AFRICA // AFRIQUE

7A.25 Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda) // Tombes des rois du Buganda à Kasubi (Ouganda)

The Chairperson:

Examining the cultural properties in Africa, now, I would like to invite the Secretariat and ICOMOS to present the reports on the state of conservation of the cultural properties located in the Africa region and open for discussion.

You may have the floor.

So, here we are examining actually the site of Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi in Uganda.

The Secretariat:

Mr. Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee,

At its 44th session in Fuzhou, China/online meeting in 2021, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party of Uganda to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission to the Tombs of Buganda, Kings of Kasubi World Heritage property to review the current state of conservation and evaluate whether the condition for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger have been met.

In response to the invitation by the State Party received on 14 April 2023, this Reactive Monitoring mission to the property was carried out from 11 to 14 June 2023, and the report is available to the Committee on the web of World Heritage Site.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Committee members,

As you recall, following the destruction by fire of Mazubi Azaala Mpanga at the property on 10 March 2010, the World Heritage Committee, in its Decision **34 COM 7B.53**, placed the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi on the World Heritage in Danger. The following year, in 2011, the World Heritage Committee adopted a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the World Heritage List in Danger and set corrective measures which are available in Decision **35 COM 7A.17**. Ever since the fire, the World Heritage Centre organized around 15 technical and Advisory missions to the property in order to assist the State Party in the reconstruction of Mazubi Azaala Mpanga.

The report of all of these missions can be found in the website of the World Heritage Centre and the links provided in the state of conservation report. The World Heritage Centre also mobilized substantial funding and technical support from the international community that were fundamental to the reconstruction efforts by the State Party, and to reach the required condition for the removal of the property from the World Heritage List in Danger. In this regard, I would like to recall, in particular, the generous contribution from the Government of Japan received in 2013, for the project entitled "Technical and financial assistance for the reconstruction of Mazubi Azaala Mpanga, an architectural masterpiece of the Tombs of Buganda Kingdom at Kasubi, Uganda World Heritage property". The project offered emergency assistance to Uganda and accompanied them in rehabilitating the property in view of its removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger. In 2020, thanks to Emergency International Assistance and completed with the support of UNESCO Heritage Fund, we provided financial technical assistance to assist the procurement and installation of firefighting systems at the property, as well as training in fire prevention and disaster-risk management for the site Management Authority and local community members of Buganda Kingdom living in the compound of the World Heritage property. In addition, in 2018, the Committee requested the State Party to develop guidelines for the buffer zone using the Historical Urban Landscape approach. Thanks to the generous support from the Government of Norway, UNESCO is supporting Uganda in developing guidelines.

Despite technical support, our work in Kasubi showed the importance of dialogue and trust between the Secretariat, the Advisory Body and the State Party. The dialogue and trust created an enabling environment that, through several and regular meetings, the technical review, UNESCO and the Advisory Body continue to support the State Party towards implementing the corrective measures. The state of conservation report proposed to the present Committee session reflects the findings and conclusion of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM

Reactive Monitoring mission to the Tombs of Kasubi, Kingdom of Kasubi, World Heritage property, and it is with satisfaction and pride that the mission recommended the removal of the site from World Heritage List in Danger.

I would like to end my intervention by saying that this is a good and inspiring example of how collaboration between State Party, UNESCO Heritage Centre and Advisory Body, as well as support by international community, following the inscription of the site on the World Heritage List in Danger can allow them to reach their target in implementing the corrective measures so that the site can be removed from the Danger List.

Mr. Chair, ICOMOS would like to give further comment on this. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Esteemed Chairperson, Distinguished members of the Committee,

The destruction by fire over a decade ago of the Mazubi Azaala Mpanga, the Sacred Heart structure housing the Tombs of the Buganda Kings at Kasubi, was a tragedy which, at the time, seemed insurmountable. Following the fire of 2010, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, informed by the studies presented by the State Party, concluded that the significance of the destroyed building lay partly in the way it reflected typical Bugandan traditions, but also in its size, elaboration and sacred use, which set it apart from other structures. We also noted that buildings such as the Mazubi Azaala Mpanga need constant maintenance and irregularly timed renewal. Their fabric cannot all be maintained over time. The authenticity of their structures lies more in a reflection of traditional materials and practice than in the age of component parts. We considered that a case could be made for the reconstruction of the Mazubi Azaala Mpanga building, provided that a clear reconstruction strategy was set out and agreed in advance, which set out the rationale for the chosen approach and provided clear documentary evidence. We advised then that the overall reconstruction process needed to be carefully managed, that it required detailed documentation and also needed close monitoring by the World Heritage Committee in order to ensure full recovery of the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

The Desired state of conservation for removal from the List in Danger and the associated corrective measures adopted by the Committee at its 35th session in 2011, that is, in the year directly following the fire, and the inscription of the property onto the List in Danger provided both a roadmap for the reconstruction and a framework for dialogue and collaboration on national and international level. Key achievements to date include the reconstruction of the Mazubi Azaala Mpanga, the restoration of the Buja Bukula or Gate House, and the completion of the Master Plan for the property. It is most welcome that the firefighting system has been installed in the Tombs area of the property, supported by the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the preservation of the World Cultural Heritage and the World Heritage Fund. It has been most beneficial that the process towards achieving a Desired state of conservation has been characterized by a close and continued collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies through document exchange and technical review, but also, for instance, through the ICOMOS Advisory Consultancy for the finalization of the elaboration of the Master Plan for the property, afforded through the World Heritage Fund.

ICOMOS expresses its appreciation for the strong commitment and engagement of the Government's national and local authorities, as well as the traditional custodians and managers, the Buganda Kingdom authorities and the Kasubi local communities, as the custodians of the sacred site. This experience provides a model for the cooperation of Government institutions and traditional ones for the management of World Heritage property. Their dedication to the project and to the spirit of close collaboration has not only led to the reconstruction of the Mazubi Azaala Mpanga, but also to the revival of traditional customs and practices associated with the requirements of rituals to sustain the aura and sacredness of the Tombs of the Buganda Kings at Kasubi.

While we conclude that the Desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the List in Danger has been met, additional measures need to be put in place to ensure the safeguarding of the OUV of this property in the future. The 2023 Reactive Monitoring mission recommended, amongst others, that the State Party implement measures to ensure the long-term sustainable availability of human, financial and material resources, specifically spear grass for the long-term maintenance of the property. Urban pressures remain, the drafting of urban development guidelines, made possible through the Norway Funds, and the stated intent of the State Party to investigate extending the buffer zone of the property are welcome and important. Current reviewing of the Management and Disaster-Risk Management Plans is welcome, and ICOMOS anticipates continued collegial interaction, either through discussions with the State Party or through document review processes.

Mr. Chairman,

Please allow me, on behalf of the Advisory Bodies, ICOMOS and ICCROM, to extend our thanks to the State Party and the traditional custodians of the property, the Buganda Kingdom, as well as the international partners for the spirit in which the process has unfolded over the last decade and to extend a warm-hearted word of congratulations for the progress that they have been able to demonstrate.

Thank you, *Shukran*.

The Chairperson:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you very much. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

I would like to know if there are any comments, interventions...

Japan, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Because I have already referred to this project in my previous interventions, I am not going to repeat those, but after hearing the explanations from the Secretariat as well as the Evaluation Bodies, this is indeed a very, very good example of successful collaboration among the Centre and ICOMOS, ICCROM and also international partners. This is a very successful example. And in that context, I would like to extend our appreciation to all the people concerned at the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and Norway, all the concerned Parties, and first and foremost, most importantly, the State Party of Uganda for this great success. Now, from that perspective, we would like to support the draft decision very strongly.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Oman would like to thank the Advisory Body and the World Heritage Centre for all the excellent work and efforts. Oman would like also to congratulate Uganda for this remarkable achievement and great success. We also support the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Italy too would like to congratulate Uganda for all these extraordinary efforts carried out in addressing the recommendations of the previous decisions of the Committee that have made it possible, the extraordinary result of the removal from the World Heritage List in Danger. This represents really a successful example of the virtuous synergies stemmed from the States Parties sincere efforts, the constant collaboration with the Advisory Body and the international collaboration thanks to the financial support of Japan and Norway, that added their resources to the resources of the World Heritage Fund. And for this reason, we strongly support the draft decision.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci bien, M. le Président.

Les tombes des rois du Buganda ont été classées en 2001 et ravagées par un incendie en mars. Ce site est un chef d'œuvre du génie humain. Son architecture traditionnelle est unique et n'a pas son équivalent ailleurs. Rappelons que le site a été restauré et un système de lutte contre les incendies installé pour éviter qu'une catastrophe du genre ne se reproduise. L'État partie et le Gouvernement du Buganda ont travaillé très sérieusement pour garantir que le site retrouve ainsi son état d'origine. Nous tenons donc à saluer les efforts considérables déployés par l'État partie pour préserver la VUE de ce merveilleux patrimoine. Ces efforts doivent être encouragés avec des décisions positives du Comité afin d'inciter davantage l'État partie à plus d'engagement pour assurer une préservation et une gestion idoines du bien, conformément aux Orientations de notre Convention sur la protection du patrimoine mondial.

Aussi, apportons-nous notre plein appui aux amendements proposés au projet de décision aux fins du retrait du bien de la Liste du patrimoine en péril.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

The decision which is being discussed right now is extremely important, and I firmly believe that, as we can see, based on the statements of the other members of the Committee, it has attracted considerable attention. It is extremely important for the members of the Committee because, for us, there is nothing more pleasant than removing a property from the List of World Heritage sites in Danger. We understand that a lot of work has been performed that has been difficult with the participation of the Government of Uganda, the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, donor countries. We commend these efforts and welcome the firm decision of all stakeholders of this process, including national, local governments, local communities, the Kasubi, as the guardians of these holy sites, we call upon them to preserve this unique heritage for future generations, as it belongs to all of humanity. We would like to extend our gratitude to all experts, those who worked on the restoration and, of course, we support the decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa was very saddened by the fires that seriously impacted the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi. The fires threatened the Outstanding Universal Value of this important property. We were, however, comforted by the overwhelming response of the international community, which included availing of expertise and financial resources. With the support of the African World Heritage Fund, the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies and many States Parties, we witnessed the impressive commitment by the State Party of Uganda in turning around the tragic event by tirelessly working to restore the property and introducing disaster-preparedness measures to prevent similar occurrences happening in the future. Today, we join other Committee members in congratulating the State Party of Uganda on a job well done.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

As the State Party of Zambia, we wish to congratulate the Buganda Kingdom on being able to meet the Desired state of conservation for the Kasubi Tombs. We also further wish to congratulate them on the good work done on being able to implement guidelines in line with the Historic Urban Landscape, and also being able to put in place measures for disaster-risk management. We would also wish to commend all those who were able to support the Kingdom, the African World Heritage Fund, the World Heritage Centre, Norway, Japan and others who may have been involved in one way or another to support the Kingdom.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Belgica*.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to join many colleagues in congratulating the Government of Uganda. We would like to say that this success story is actually also an excellent proof on how In Danger Listing can trigger a mechanism, a mechanism to secure conservation. We hope that this can serve as a perfect example for other sites, and we also hope that it may change the perception of In Danger Listing, which clearly does not have to be an end point, quite the contrary. Finally, it also showcases the importance of capacity-building, which was already discussed earlier in our session. In conclusion, we would like to congratulate all actors involved and obviously we support the DR.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I just wanted to say how happy we are with the idea of removing this from the World Heritage List in Danger, because I think it really does actually show how cooperation and continued efforts can really make an effort. This was the continued efforts of the Centre, of ICOMOS, of ICCROM, of so many helpful Bodies. I do think this is a really important and positive message, and I think we need to underscore the efforts of the State Party, but also of the entire international community. We can fully support the draft decision and we're really looking forward to celebrating this.

The Chairperson:

India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

I just wanted to suggest, I know everybody is very tired, if we all have our congratulatory messages to be given, we could directly go to the draft decision, and we would have an amendment wherein we congratulate, and all Member States can add their names to it. Perhaps that would keep the discussion short because we have 205 SOC reports and 53 nominations, but we are in your hands, Excellency.

And with that, please add our name also to the number of Member States congratulating the State Party of Uganda.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Egypt would like to take the floor.

The Delegation of Egypt:

It's very difficult to contradict with my Indian colleague, and I stick to my personal message addressing the Delegation of Uganda our sincere congratulations on the removal of the sites of Tombs of the Buganda Kings of Kasubi from the List of World Heritage in Danger. We commend the efforts of the State Party and assistance provided by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS to achieve this result with the generous support of Japan and Norway. This is an outstanding success story and model that should be widely applied on the World Heritage sites in Danger in order to remove them from this List. We are looking forward to enhance the cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to continue their efforts and technical assistance to African and Arab States Parties in order to apply the corrective measures necessary for lifting the sites from the Danger List.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

It seems that I understand your point of view, Your Excellency, the Ambassador of India, and I think everyone wanted to congratulate which is the aim and the success of this Convention. So maybe like because there are remaining couple of States Parties, and we will pass them the floor and then we move to the next item.

Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The State of Qatar... *[interpretation from Arabic]*

...in their efforts and Qatar wants to join all Member States in supporting the amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Mr. President.

This is going to be very fast. Rwanda wishes to extend our appreciation to the Advisory Bodies for the tirelessly work done for the removal of the Tombs of Buganda Kings of Kasubi on the Danger List. We wish to also congratulate Uganda for the work done, and we, of course, wish to support the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Similarly, we would like to add our voice to the congratulatory speech to the State Party of Uganda. This is a triumph not only for Uganda, but for all of humanity. Congratulations to one and all, therefore.

The Chairperson:

Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

That will be very brief. We would also like to join the previous speakers in congratulating the State Party of Uganda for this extremely successful outcome of their strenuous efforts, as well as the Governments of Japan and Norway for their overall support. We also express the wish that this case will be an inspiring model for other similar cases in the future, and it goes without saying that Greece fully supports the relevant decision.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thailand would like to echo the other speakers in congratulating Uganda for this very important lesson for us, and we'd like to support the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I would also be brief. I would like to appreciate the two States Parties for their assistance and congratulate Uganda, and also add my country's name to the countries which support the amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

We would like to endorse what is contained in the draft decision and thank the Advisory Bodies.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I see no other comments or interventions. So, I invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7A.25** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendments for this draft decision.

The Chairperson:

Are there any comments or objections? It seems there is nothing.

So, I, therefore, declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 7A.25** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Now, I would now like to give the floor to Uganda.

The Observer Delegation of Uganda:

My name is Charles Peter Mayiga, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Buganda, which is a constituent part of Uganda. It's an honour for us to be here, and I salute the Chairperson of the Committee and the Director of the World Heritage Centre.

We stand with the people of Morocco upon the tragedy of last Friday's earthquake.

Kasubi Royal Tombs were gutted by fire in 2010 and actual restoration processes. The works started in 2013. The Kingdom of Buganda and the Central Government of Uganda have worked together to oversee the restoration process. We appreciate the financial support we received from the Governments of Uganda, Japan, Norway and UNESCO through the World Heritage Fund, which contributed to the restoration process. The Kingdom of Buganda provided the biggest financial support. The restoration process has taken long because the Kingdom of Buganda to ensure that essential cultural and spiritual practices were strictly adhered to. The restoration works require significant financial, material and human resources whose insufficiency would impede the speed at which we operated. We are the final but still critical stage of the restoration process. It is gratifying to be part of this meeting, during which recommendations for removal of Kasubi Tombs from the List of World Heritage properties in Danger have been made. And we appreciate all the support extended and exhibited here. More funding and support will go a long way in augmenting our efforts to fully restore and present this most sacred property to the world. We shall manage the Tombs with a view to maintaining the authenticity and cultural spiritual values.

I thank you all.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again on this, on behalf of the Committee and in my own name, to the State Party of Uganda for this wonderful achievement.

So now, we came to the end of our session. I would like to give some announcements. Before we conclude, if you can take the floor, Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is just to announce that tonight we have three side events happening:

- The first one will be the event of "Global Compact UN Partnership for Sustainable and Resilient World Heritage", which is organized by Event Global Compact UN. This will take place at Rock Art Room, starting from 6:30.
- And then we have the side event titled "Raising Ambitions, IUCN's New Strategy on World Heritage", organized by IUCN and it will take place at the Advisory Bodies Space, Hegra Room, starting from 6:30.
- And then finally, we have the exhibition on the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative in the Side event space, and we are pleased to invite you to the opening of the photo exhibition on the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative, which engages youth internationally in concrete preservation of activities at World Heritage Sites. The opening will take place today at the Plenary. We remind the delegates that this would also be a chance to interact with the Young Professionals from the Forum who presented their message to all.

On my personal name, Mr. Chairperson, I would really like to thank the State Party of Uganda, as I've been working with them since the first days of the fire. Congratulations to the people of Uganda.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Dear colleagues,

We will resume our work tomorrow at 10:00 am and we will start with examination of other items on 7A, and the Bureau meeting also will start at 9:30 am.

Thank you so much. The session is over. *[gavel]*

The meeting rose at 6:04 pm. // La séance a été levée à 18h04.

THIRD DAY
Wednesday, 13 September 2023
FIFTH PLENARY MEETING
10:14 am – 1:12 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

TROISIÈME JOUR
Mercredi 13 septembre 2023
CINQUIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h14 – 13h12
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

7A. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER (Ct'd) // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL EN PÉRIL (suite)

The Chairperson:

Good morning, dear colleagues.

We are now resuming our examination of Item 7A, which concerns the state of conservation reports of the properties inscribed in the List of World Heritage in Danger. As you remember, yesterday, we have adopted 22 decisions on such properties, including the removal of the Tombs of Kings at Kasubi in Uganda from the List of the World Heritage in Danger. All my congratulations again to the State Party.

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

AFRICA // AFRIQUE

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Now, I would like to invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the cultural properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, located in the Africa region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. Mr. Lazare.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, and good morning to all.

The following properties located in the African region are proposed for adoption without discussion:

- Old Towns of Djenné (Mali)
- Timbuktu (Mali)
- Tomb of Askia (Mali)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on these state of conservation reports, I declare the Decisions read out adopted. ^[gavel]

ARAB STATES // ÉTATS ARABES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Also, I would like to request from Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the cultural properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger located in the Arab States region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

The floor is yours.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following properties located in the Arab States region are proposed for adoption without discussion:

- Abu Mena (Egypt)
- Ashur (Iraq)
- Hatra (Iraq)
- Samarra Archaeological City (Iraq)
- General Decision on the World Heritage properties of Iraq
- Archaeological Site of Cyrene (Libya)
- Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna (Libya)
- Archaeological Site of Sabratha (Libya)
- Old Town of Ghadamès (Libya)
- Rock-Art Sites of Tadrart Acacus (Libya)
- Ancient City of Aleppo (Syrian Arab Republic)
- Ancient City of Bosra (Syrian Arab Republic)
- Ancient City of Damascus (Syrian Arab Republic)
- Ancient villages of Northern Syria (Syrian Arab Republic)
- Crac des chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din (Syrian Arab Republic)
- Site of Palmyra (Syrian Arab Republic)
- General Decision on the World Heritage properties of the Syrian Arab Republic
- Historic Town of Zabid (Yemen)
- Old City of Sana'a (Yemen)
- Old Walled City of Shibam (Yemen)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Director.

If there is no objection from the Committee on these state of conservation reports...

Oman, the floor is yours.

The Delegation of Oman: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Good morning to everybody. I hope that we have a fine day ahead of us.

Mr. Chair,

Concerning the Arab region, and also concerning the sites that have just been read out, these sites are, of course, still on the List of Heritage in Danger. I would like to underscore that efforts are being made by certain Member States in order to remove these sites from the Danger List. Iraq is a good example. Iraq is introducing a number of measures in order to try to conserve and protect these sites, and have them removed from the Danger List. Syria, likewise, is making considerable efforts and should be encouraged. In my view, the World Heritage Centre ought to take steps in order to assist these States. They need to be encouraged, particularly with respect to management of these sites. They could provide these States with certain forms of assistance in protecting these sites.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Just like my colleague, Mr. President, Mr. Chair, I would like to wish all of you an excellent day.

I would like to thank the Secretariat for all the reports that we have received. I would also like to agree with my colleague from Oman. I would really like to underscore the need to encourage States Parties who have sites in the Danger List. Indeed, these States are making considerable efforts to protect their properties and hopefully in order to have them removed from the Danger List. Therefore, these States should be warmly encouraged.

We should do everything we can to encourage and assist young people, in particular, in these Arab States. We would like to encourage these young people to help protect cultural properties in their country. We should also help NGOs who are at work in these countries, in the heritage sector.

Let me give an example. In Yemen, many projects are being carried out by young Yemenis in order to help to protect sites on the Danger list. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, I see there is no intervention and, therefore, I declare the Decisions read out adopted. [gavel]

ASIA-PACIFIC // ASIE-PACIFIQUE

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Moving to the next region, I now invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the cultural properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger located in the Asia-Pacific region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The list of the cultural properties located in the Asia-Pacific region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are the following:

- Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley (Afghanistan)
- Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam (Afghanistan)
- Nan Madol: Ceremonial Centre of Eastern Micronesia (Micronesia (Federated States of))
- Historic Centre of Shakhrisabz (Uzbekistan)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation reports, I would like to declare the Decisions read out as adopted. [gavel]

Uzbekistan, you requested the floor. The floor is yours.

The Observer Delegation of Uzbekistan:

Dear Mr. Chair,

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the Chairmanship at this session. Also, I would like to thank the Government of Saudi Arabia for hosting this meeting in this amazing city.

I try to make my statement as brief as possible. It is regarding the Historical Centre of Shakhrisabz, on which a decision has been adopted today.

First of all, I would like to thank the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS for their very positive appreciation of the quality of the work done by Uzbekistan, with the support of the Institute Paris Region, to explore different scenarios and propose a more appropriate option for the recovery of the Outstanding Universal Value of Shakhrisabz.

We also thank UNESCO and its Advisory Bodies for the very positive and constructive approach engaged at the highest level to help us in the sustainable management and conservation of the World Heritage Properties in Uzbekistan, not only Shakhrisabz, but all of them.

We are grateful to the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS for their support to establish the International Advisory Committee on the World Heritage Properties in Uzbekistan in 2021 and to ensure its efficient work. We count on continuing of this high-level engagement we have established during the last years with the Centre and its Advisory Bodies.

Uzbekistan reaffirms its willingness to keep Shakhrisabz World Heritage Property in the World Heritage List due to its exceptional significance in the history of Central Asia and the high importance of the attributes that are still in place.

We would like to reiterate to the World Heritage Committee that Uzbekistan will mobilize and use all its capacities to offer the maximum guarantees in the quality of the management and the conservation of Shakhrisabz World Heritage Property.

In particular, Uzbekistan is going to mobilize the Agency of the Cultural Heritage, with the support of international experts, to prepare all the elements for the Significant modification of the boundary of Shakhrisabz World Heritage Property.

We would like to inform the World Heritage Committee that we will prepare an urban planning proposal for the recovering and engaging the site's significance in close relation with the World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies.

I kindly ask to include this statement into the record of this meeting.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

7A.55 Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria) // Centre historique de Vienne (Autriche)

The Chairperson:

Now, we move to the cultural properties in Europe and North America, and we have a discussion proposed by Saudi Arabia, the Historic Centre of Vienna.

I now would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Saudi Arabia to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria).

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Salam Aleykum.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wishes to inform the Committee about an important update in the progress made by the State Party of Austria in implementing the corrective measures for removal of the Historic Centre of Vienna from the List of World Heritage in Danger, by informing the World Heritage Centre about the reduction of the Heumarkt Neu site in both height and volume. The new concept was not known when the draft decision was published on 31 July 2023. After publication of the draft decision, Austria immediately reacted to the request in Paragraph 8 for further reduction, and provided substantial new information on the progress made on the Heumarkt Neu site, consistent with previous Committee decisions.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Now, I'd like to give the floor to the Secretariat and ICOMOS to provide their comments.

You may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The World Heritage Centre has indeed been informed of the State Party's intention to further revise the design of the Heumarkt Neu project, which was the subject of a second Heritage Impact Assessment in 2021 by further reducing the height and volume of one of its structures. To recall, the Desired state of conservation for the removal of the Historic Centre of Vienna from the List of World Heritage in Danger, adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its last session (Decision **44 COM 7A.32**), determined that a "Revised design of the Heumarkt Neu project is implemented, respecting the integrity and authenticity of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property as a whole as measured through an independent Heritage Impact Assessment, based on the results of the Heritage Impact

Assessment of 2019 and following its methodology". As the suggested amendment clearly refers to this objective of the DSOCR, the Secretariat has no objection to the proposal.

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

ICOMOS and ICCROM acknowledge that the State Party and the City of Vienna have made progress in implementing the corrective measures adopted by the Committee in 2021 to pursue the Desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. The 2023 state of conservation report available to Members of the Committee sets out what has been achieved and what remains to be done.

The amendment submitted by Saudi Arabia relates to the Heumarkt Neu project, which is the subject of Corrective Measure 5 in the Protection and Management section of the Corrective Measures package. However, let me first refer to Corrective measure 4 of that same chapter to note that the elaboration of the Management Plan for the property has progressed to the point where a revised and updated Management Plan has been adopted. Corrective Measure 4 requires that the Management Plan be accepted by the Committee and that its efficacy be proven in practice through monitoring and evaluation over a period of five years. The draft decision provides for the Management Plan to be accepted by the Committee at this session.

With respect to the proposed Heumarkt Neu project, the DSOCR requires that the revised design of the Heumarkt Neu project be implemented in a manner that respects the integrity and authenticity of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property as a whole, as measured through an independent Heritage Impact Assessment, based on the results of the 2019 Heritage Impact Assessment and following its methodology.

Redevelopment on the Heumarkt Neu site can only achieve a project that does not have adversely impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property through a reduction in the scale of development previously proposed in 2021. ICOMOS and ICCROM acknowledge the progress made since then by the State Party in developing a further revised scheme with a reduced height and built form.

In light of previous Committee decisions, the adopted Desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger and the corrective measures, the further revised scheme will need to be assessed using the methodology of previous Heritage Impact Assessments. ICOMOS and ICCROM agree that determination of the height, floorspace and built form which would achieve the desired improvement, such that the proposed development would not adversely impact on the OUV of the property, could be pursued through the modelling used to assess the visual impact, which informed the previous assessments.

ICOMOS and ICCROM have therefore no objection to the proposed amendment to the draft decision, which sets out a process for reaching an outcome with respect to the Heumarkt Neu project consistent with the Desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there is any intervention.

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Oman would like to thank the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body for the excellent report. We commend the State Party of Austria for their efforts to respond to the previous decision of this Committee. Oman acknowledges and praises the progress made by the State Party in implementing the adopted corrective measures for removal of this Historical Centre of Vienna from the World Heritage List in Danger, and also the action taken by the State Party after the publishing of the draft decision.

Oman also would like to coauthor the amendment proposed by Saudi Arabia.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any other interventions?

Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We thank you and we thank the Secretariat for the high-quality report we received. We also commend Austria for the efforts it has made. We support the draft amendment provided by Saudi Arabia and supported by Oman.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

So now, I invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7A.55** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Saudi Arabia, which is supported by the Distinguished Delegation of Oman. And we can add the name of Distinguished Delegation of Qatar, who have expressed their support for this amendment.

The amendment is to Para 7, which now reads as: "Acknowledges the efforts by the State Party and many other institutions and organizations to mitigate the negative impact of the proposed Heumarkt Neu project through design amendments and undertaking an HIA of the revised proposal using a methodology which is rigorous, authoritative and compliant with the previous HIA, but notes that this process has not resulted in an outcome which achieves the DSOCR, including the verification requirements of the corrective measures;"

The next Para 8 is revised to read as: "Notes also that redevelopment is possible on the Heumarkt Neu site to achieve a project that does not adversely impact the OUV, the Outstanding Universal Value, of the property, necessarily involving a reduction, and further acknowledges the progress made by the State Party in developing a further revised scheme with a reduced height and volume;"

The revised Para 9: "Further notes that in line with previous Committee decisions, the DSOCR and its corrective measures for the property, the further revised scheme will need to be assessed using the methodology of previous HIAs, and notes furthermore that the determination of height, floorspace and built form which would achieve the desired improvement, such that the proposed development would not adversely impact OUV of the property, could be pursued through the modelling used to assess visual impact, which informed the previous Heritage Impact Assessment;"

Paras 10 and 11 remain as they are.

End of the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I think we should move to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

And I see no amendments from Paragraph no. 1 until 6, there are no amendments. If you agree to adopt them as it is. I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, we have a minor amendment. Do you agree to this proposal? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8, there are proposals. Do you agree with this proposal for the draft decision for this paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, there is an amendment. Do you agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraphs 10 and 11, there are no amendments. Do you agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

So now, we will adopt the entire draft decision.

If there are no objections, I declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 7A.55** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Austria. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Austria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Since Austria has taken the floor for the first time, we would like to commend you on your excellent conduct of the session.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for requesting the amendment of the draft decision on the Historic Centre of Vienna. We are equally grateful to Oman and Qatar for their valuable support.

We thank the Committee for its continuous efforts in our common goal to strengthen the Convention, and we express our gratitude to the World Heritage Centre as well as to the Advisory Bodies for the most valuable work. We are most grateful to the Committee for acknowledging the efforts undertaken by Austria regarding the implementation of the necessary corrective measures for the removal of property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. Austria strongly supports the Convention, taking its objectives and procedural requirements seriously, and welcomes all efforts to further strengthen the Convention. The current decision positively reflects the ongoing, constructive dialogue regarding the Historic Centre of Vienna and Austria's full commitment to take the further necessary steps in order to achieve the desired state of conservation of the property. Let me conclude by expressing our gratitude for the valuable guidance of the Committee, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

7A.57 Medieval Monuments in Kosovo (Serbia) // Monuments médiévaux au Kosovo (Serbie)

The Chairperson:

And now, for the cultural properties located in Europe and North America, I give the floor to the Delegation of Egypt to present the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the World Heritage Medieval Monuments in Kosovo.

Your Excellency, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The World Heritage property that we are considering now was inscribed on the List in Danger in 2006. The debate on its state of conservation was adjourned by the World Heritage Committee in its Decision **44 COM 7A.33** at its 44th meeting.

We requested to open the discussion on this Agenda item in order to adjourn the debate until the next ordinary session of the Committee. Since there are no developments, we respectively proposed as a Committee to decide to adjourn the debate.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Are there any...

Ethiopia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I will second the proposal made by the Distinguished Representative of Egypt.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We also support the proposal made by the Distinguished Representative of Egypt.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico:

Thank you, Chair.

We want to second the proposal.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

We also support this proposal.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation also supports this proposal.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also support the decision, or the suggestion, made by Cairo.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Italy to support this proposal.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

With regards to the Item 7A.57 Medieval Monuments in Kosovo, Serbia, we would like to support the proposal, by the Distinguished Representative of Egypt.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Bulgaria also supports this proposal.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Qatar supports the proposal from Egypt Delegation.

Thanks.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Mr. Chair, Rwanda also supports the proposed amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Nigeria supports the proposal by Egypt.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also supports the proposal of Egypt.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Mali soutient la proposition égyptienne.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia also joins the rest of the Committee members in supporting this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thailand also supports the proposal made by Egypt.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Thailand.

Do we have any other...?

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes. Thank you. Good morning, everyone, and thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also support the adjournment. And it is our understanding that if two Committee members already support adjournment, that it is automatic. So, there is no need that all Committee members express this.

Having that said, we are obviously very glad that there is a true consensus on this point.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I think then, this Agenda item is therefore adjourned to our next ordinary session. And I would like to kindly ask our Rapporteur to ensure that this is captured in the report of the Decisions.

Thank you very much.

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

And now, I would like to invite the Director of the World Heritage Centre to read the list of the properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

The floor is yours.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following property for which the report is proposed for adoption without discussion is:

- Roşia Montană Mining Landscape (Romania)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the Decision read out adopted. *[gavel]*

7B. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

Like for Item 7A, we will first discuss the reports concerning natural properties, followed by the [mixed] and cultural properties. The Regions will be presented in the same regional order as for Item 7A:

- 1) Latin America and the Caribbean
- 2) Africa
- 3) Arab States
- 4) Asia and the Pacific
- 5) Europe and North America

NATURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE NATUREL

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÎBES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the natural properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion for the Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following natural properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Pantanal Conservation Area (Brazil)
- El Pinacate and Gran Desierto de Altar Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)
- Iguaçu National Park (Brazil)
- Area de Conservación Guanacaste (Costa Rica)
- Talamanca Range-La Amistad Reserves / La Amistad National Park (Costa Rica, Panama)
- Galápagos Islands (Ecuador)
- Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve (Mexico)
- Coiba National Park and its Special Zone of Marine Protection (Panama)
- Pitons Management Area (Saint Lucia)
- Canaima National Park (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of))

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on these state of conservation reports, I declare the Decisions read out adopted. ^[gave]

We have a request from the floor, an NGO. Please take the floor and inform us about the name of the NGO and yourself.

Thank you.

So, it seems there is no one there. So, we will move on.

AFRICA // AFRIQUE

7B.4 Okavango Delta (Botswana) // Delta de l'Okavango (Botswana)

The Chairperson:

For the next property to be discussed, Okavango Delta (Botswana), I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of South Africa, to present to the Committee the reason why it made such request.

The floor is yours, South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Chairperson.

South Africa has made the request to open the Okavango Delta for discussion, to propose amendments to a few paragraphs to assist the Committee to adopt a decision which is as accurate as possible. We are proposing to amend Paragraphs 5, 11, 14 and 17 for reasons I will explain in brief.

Paragraph 5 of the draft decision specifically calls for a new wildlife survey to be conducted. South Africa has become aware that the State Party of Botswana already conducted the survey in 2022, in partnership with the Kavango-Zambezi TFCA, which includes the countries of Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia. This is to be repeated through a three-year cycle. If the paragraph is adopted as is, it will constitute a duplication. In addition, Chairperson, the State Party of Botswana, has been implementing extensive monitoring measures for the wildlife in the Delta, including using drones and some of the latest animal population statistical modelling. This was achieved through the help of academic institutions such as the University of Pretoria in South Africa. We request the Chairperson to later give the floor to the State Party of Botswana to share with the Committee the three-year cycle surveys and findings of the 2022 survey.

In respect of Paragraph 11, South Africa has also established from the State Party of Botswana that oil and gas prospecting in the basin upstream is an issue that the State Party has managed to resolve, with some licenses that were previously issued subsequently expiring and not being renewed. The State Party has also informed us of the continuous engagements with the State Party of Namibia regarding explorations on the Namibian side. Accordingly, South Africa would like Paragraph 11 to be amended to acknowledge that although such activities are located outside the property's boundaries, the oil and gas explorations remain a concern to the state of conservation and that this matter is receiving attention.

Concerning Paragraph 14, South Africa is of the view that there is no need to request the State Party of Botswana to continue negotiating cancellation of exploration licenses when the State Party has concluded the matter by not issuing new licenses and also not renewing those that expired. We are thus proposing the deletion of Paragraph 11 in its entirety.

Chairperson, South Africa is also requesting that the Committee allows the State Party of Botswana more time to focus on implementation of the Committee decisions and to report by the 1 December 2024, instead of the 1 February 2024, for consideration by the Committee during its next 47th session.

Lastly, Chairperson, may you please allow the State Party of Botswana an opportunity to share some of the latest information on these issues at a time that is convenient to you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do we have any comments or interventions from the Committee members?

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Belgium has always been a staunch admirer of one of nature's most iconic treasures, the Okavango Delta, and not only because, back in 2014, it was designated as the landmark 1,000 site on the World Heritage List. This magnificent delta, Mr. Chair, is one of the planet's very few major interior delta systems with a rather unique ecosystem. And that is why, together with the Government of Norway, the Government of Flanders, Belgium has been a proud partner of the compact that was designed for engaging communities in conservation and shared governance of the Delta. Because of this engagement, Mr. Chair, Belgium feels it should propose a few modifications to the amendment of the DR as it was submitted by South Africa, in order to maximize the protection and preservation of this wonderful property.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

We listened with a great deal of attention to the statement made by South Africa, as well as the statement made by Belgium. Qatar supports the proposal made by South Africa and also supports the amendments to the draft decision. We need to allow Botswana to benefit from enough time to provide us the necessary information in December 2024.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Oman wishes to acknowledge also the efforts made by the State Party to address the threats of this outstanding property. Also, we appreciate the continuous cooperation between the State Party of Botswana, Angola and Namibia through the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission, the finalized guidelines on the implementation of the Southern African Development Community Protocol on shared water resources and the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the CORB reported for completion 2022. Furthermore, we encourage the relevant States Parties to further strengthen transboundary cooperation to include key areas which could contribute

to better protection of the OUV and, in particular, the integrity of the property. Therefore, we support the amendment draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

So now, I would like to give the floor to the Secretariat to respond to the Committee's comments.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think there are a couple of things raised by the Delegation of South Africa, which I would like to respond to.

On the question of the survey that was done in 2022, we just note that the State Party did not inform the World Heritage Centre about the new survey, and did not submit the results for review by IUCN. We would, therefore, suggest that the Committee notes the information provided by the State Party that the new wildlife survey has been done, but also requests the State Party to submit the survey results to the World Heritage Centre so that these results can be reviewed by IUCN.

On the issue of the oil exploration, which is in Paragraph 11, we confirm, of course, that the oil exploration areas are outside the World Heritage property and its buffer zone. However, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN would like to stress that even at considerable distance from the property, there could still be important impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value. We want to note here that the hydrology of the Okavango system is still poorly studied, in particular, the role of underground aquifers. In case the oil potential exploitation would result in pollution of these aquifers, this might directly affect the Delta. In addition, the exploration areas are important wildlife corridors and dispersal areas for key species, which are important attributes of the OUV, such as the elephants.

On the point of mining, we, of course, welcome if the State Party is giving assurances that there are no new mining licenses that have been granted, and that all the mining licenses in the buffer zone have indeed expired, then that would indeed be a reason to delete that paragraph. So, if the State Party could clarify that, I think that would be useful. IUCN might also have some additional comments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

No. We fully support the comments just made by the World Heritage Centre, and we share the sense of caution with the extreme sensitivity of the hydrology and groundwater flows in the Okavango Delta.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to give the floor to Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor.

Our Delegation is also of the view that the State Party has made significant efforts towards the mitigation of the negative impact on this unique property for mankind. Therefore, we are supporting the proposed amendment submitted by South Africa and also supported by other Member States, which simply provide significant clarifications without altering the overall spirit of the draft decision.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya.*

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

Saudi Arabia wishes to support the amendment put forward by South Africa.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je souhaite souligner que l'État partie a effectivement réalisé des actions positives en droite ligne des recommandations formulées. Dès lors, celles-ci mériteraient d'être mieux reflétées dans le projet de décision. C'est pourquoi nous soutenons les amendements proposés par l'Afrique du Sud.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no other interventions. So, I would like to give the floor to Botswana to respond to the questions...

Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines support the amendments presented by South Africa on this site, and we commend the efforts of the State Party in the implementation of all the requests.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

We would also like to support this proposal.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We also commend the State Party for their efforts, in the first place. And secondly, we'd also like to support the amendments. At the same time, we take note of the concerns expressed by the Evaluation Bodies.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Mr. Chair,

Zambia would like also to support the amendments, and we are members of KAZA with our colleagues and we support the amendments being done.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

So, taking note of the legitimate concern by Belgium, we support the proposal by South Africa, and we commend Botswana for all the efforts carried out to act now.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Chair.

We want to acknowledge the significant efforts made by Botswana in addressing the issues, and therefore, Nigeria will support the proposed amendment by South Africa.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

My Delegation also would like to commend Botswana for the corrective measures taken and the sincere efforts in conserving the site, and would like to support the amendments presented by the Delegation of South Africa.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As other Delegations, we also commend Botswana for the significant effort it did to conserve the property, and we would like to support the amendment presented by South Africa.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to acknowledge the efforts undertaken by the State Party and we, therefore, support the proposal put forward by South Africa.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

We would like to support the amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see there are no more interventions, so I would like to pass the floor to Botswana to respond to the comments of South Africa and also the Secretariat, but please, precisely within the time limit.

Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of Botswana:

Thank you so much, Chairperson.

Let me add on the onset, thanks to South Africa for tabling the amendments. I would like to state that Botswana is committed to the implementation of the 1972 World Heritage Convention as a State Party, as well as the conservation of its World Heritage properties. Botswana, therefore, wishes to further clarify a few issues.

Firstly, exploration and prospecting. At the inscription, in 2014, Botswana had issued several prospecting licenses. However, a decision in conformity with the Convention was that these licenses should not be renewed when they expired. Today, Botswana wishes to confirm that there are no prospecting, exploration and mining licenses within the Okavango World Heritage property and its buffer zone.

Secondly, aerial surveys. Botswana undertakes wildlife surveys every three years. Following the 2018 Aerial Wildlife Survey, the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area States of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe jointly conducted another survey in 2022. The report depicts a thriving wildlife population, with Botswana accounting for 58% of the total elephant population of about 227,900. As a result, the country has the largest elephant population, whose number exceeds the carrying capacity of the land. In addition, Botswana has laws and programs that promote wildlife conservation and protection against poaching.

Lastly, Chairperson, veterinary fences. While veterinary fences are assumed to be blocking wildlife migratory routes, these fences also serve a dual purpose of protecting the property. Fences prevent livestock from mixing with wildlife, thus preventing the spread of diseases, especially foot-and-mouth, which is a threat to people's livelihoods.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments or interventions?

So now, dear colleagues, I invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.4** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments to this draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment for this draft decision from the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa, which was supported by the Distinguished Delegations of Qatar and Rwanda.

Furthermore, we have from the floor received confirmation for this amendment from the Distinguished Delegations of Oman, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Mali, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Zambia, Argentina, Japan, Egypt, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mexico, and India.

As already explained by the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa, the amendments are for Para 5, 11, 14 and 16.

Para 5, as you may see on the screen, now reads as: "Whilst noting the results of the 2018 aerial wildlife survey that indicate an increase of many wildlife populations, expresses its concern over the reported increase in poaching, in particular of elephants and rhinos, and welcomes the survey conducted by the State Party in partnership with KAZA TFCA countries of Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia in 2022 as part of a three-year cycle which shows a healthy elephant population and a reduction in rhino poaching, and encourages the State Party to increase efforts to strengthen the efficiency of anti-poaching and address illegal trafficking of ivory and rhino horn;"

The next revised para is Para 11, "Reiterates its utmost concern about the advancement of the oil and gas exploration activities in the environmentally sensitive upstream areas of the Okavango Delta in northwestern Botswana and northeastern Namibia, that may pose significant risks to the interconnected water system and the ecosystem, and hence the property's OUV;"

Next revised Para is 14, which is completely deleted now.

And the final change to Para 16, which reads as: "Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024 an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Belgium, do you have an intervention?

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

I was a bit too soon with raising our flag. We will intervene when you propose the text for adoption.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

All right, thank you.

So, let's start examining the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

I see there are no amendments on Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 4. So, do you agree with the paragraph as it is. I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have some amendments.

Belgium. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you once again, Chair.

Despite the growing consensus in the room, I would nevertheless like to propose one sentence to be added at the end of Para 5, just for the other members to have a look at it, and I will read it slowly: "The State Party is invited to share the results of aforementioned surveys as soon as possible, with the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN".

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do you agree with this proposed amendment?

So, I see Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to know the rationale from adding this sentence, and, I don't know, a questionnaire or a review to be reviewed by the World Heritage Centre. What is the rationale behind that?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Oman.

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

The rationale behind it is that if this information, which is clearly important enough to mention in the DR, if the result of this survey is available, why not share it with the Secretariat for review by IUCN? It's just a matter of transparency, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to support the proposal made by Belgium.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Chair.

I would like to propose an amendment to the one proposed by Belgium. I will propose that the State Party only submits the survey, but not subject for review because it's for information.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to give the floor to the Rapporteur to summarize the updated amendments.

The Rapporteur:

So, I will read Para 5, which is now revised as: "Whilst noting the results of the 2018 aerial wildlife survey that indicate an increase of many wildlife populations, expresses its concern over the reported increase in poaching, in particular of elephants and rhinos, and welcomes the survey conducted by the State Party in partnership with KAZA TFCA countries of Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia in 2022 as part of the three-year cycle, which shows a healthy elephant population and a reduction in rhino poaching, and encourages the State Party to increase efforts to strengthen the efficiency of anti-poaching and address illegal trafficking of ivory and rhino horn *comma*,". We may add "invites the State Party to share the results of the aforementioned surveys as soon as possible with the World Heritage Centre, for review by IUCN".

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do we agree with this proposal?

Yes, Mr. Director. He has some interventions about the language of this draft amendment.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

M. le Président,

C'était juste pour faire une proposition, une suggestion, pour plus de clarté dans la lecture de la version française de votre amendement, pour que votre paragraphe soit beaucoup plus compréhensible pour l'État partie.

Alors, l'État partie, vous "accueillez avec satisfaction le recensement" et vous "encouragez l'État partie à accroître les efforts", donc vous pouvez remonter ? Voilà, alors, après la virgule, peut-être vous pourriez dire "et invite également l'État partie". Si vous le souhaitez.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

You would know that Botswana hosts the largest population of elephants in SADC. In SADC alone, the Southern African Development Community, is home to 75% of the elephant population across the globe. We also work with the specialist working groups, which include the IUCN Elephant Specialist Working Group, which have already reviewed the survey report through their nominated specialists, so we can confirm that the report has actually been reviewed. It could be that the Specialist Working Group might have to inform IUCN headquarters on the outcome of that particular review.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Chair.

I just want to observe that the Secretariat did not mention our proposal. It is already there, but when reading the paragraph for adoption, she did not mention the proposal made by Nigeria.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, does the Committee agree with the Nigeria's proposal to remove the review by IUCN?

So, I see no objection to remove the last four words: "for review by IUCN".

Are we in agreement with this proposal?

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think it is a balance. It is taking both the Belgium and Nigeria's suggestions. It is a balance. So, we agree to delete the last phrase.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I see no other objections.

And so, the amended paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraphs 6 and 7. There are no amendments. Paragraph 8 and Paragraph 9 and Paragraph 10. There are no amendments on these paragraphs. Do you agree to adopt them as it is? So, I see no objection. Then adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 11. We have a proposal. Do you agree to this proposal?

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you again, Chair.

Mr. Chair, Belgium prefers the original sequence of the two main elements in this paragraph, and it feels that the Committee is concerned about the complex, interconnected water system and ecosystem that constitutes this magnificent delta should take precedence over the fact that the exploration activities are taking place outside of the buffer zone. That's why we would prefer the original sequence of both elements. And to start with, the wording "Reiterates its utmost concern". But I will read the amendment we would like to propose in full "Reiterates its utmost concern about the advancement of the oil and gas exploration activities *comma*, located outside the buffer zone *comma*, in the environmentally sensitive upstream areas of the Okavango Delta in northwestern Botswana and northeastern Namibia *comma*, that may pose significant risk to the interconnected water system and the ecosystem and could hence affect the property's OUV".

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Belgium.

Do we have any comment on this? Do we agree to this proposed amendment? I see no objection. The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraphs 12 and 13. There are no amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as it is? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 14 is now 13. There is an amendment. Do we agree to this proposal? I see no objection. The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 14 and Paragraph 15. There are no amendments. Do we adopt them as it is? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 16. We have a proposal. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

So now, we will adopt the entire draft decision if there are no objections. No one.

Okay, so I declare that Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.4** is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

So, we have a request from the Indigenous Peoples' Forum.

You may have the floor.

The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum (Observer):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Okavango Delta has rightfully earned a claim for its natural beauty and ecological significance. However, a critical dimension has been often overshadowed, the profound indigenous cultural values deeply intertwined with this pristine landscape.

Indigenous communities have called this region home for centuries. They possess an intimate understanding of the delta's intricate ecosystems, a wisdom passed down through generations living in symbiotic harmony with the land. The traditional practices to manage resources fostered biodiversity. Regrettably, these invaluable indigenous cultural values have not received the recognition they unquestionably deserve within the World Heritage designation.

In recent times, worrisome signs of change have emerged. Shifts in land use, resource management, and altering environmental patterns have begun to challenge the delicate equilibrium carefully preserved by indigenous communities over centuries. The repercussions of this diminished recognition of indigenous values within the broader narrative threaten both their unique cultural heritage and the fragile delta ecosystems.

The Committee artificial distinction between cultural and natural World Heritage sites is deeply problematic in the context of indigenous territories and heritage. The inclusion of natural sites in the World Heritage List without acknowledging associated indigenous heritage values disregards the interconnectedness of cultural and natural values for indigenous peoples, which should be managed and protected holistically.

We, therefore, urge the Committee to revise the criteria for assessing Outstanding Universal Value, to ensure that the values attributed to World Heritage sites by indigenous peoples are fully and consistently acknowledged as integral components of their OUV. We hold a moral and ethical responsibility to acknowledge, celebrate and protect the rich indigenous cultural values interwoven with the Okavango Delta.

Collaborative efforts...

The Chairperson:

Please, I would like to ask you to conclude.

Thank you.

The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum (Observer):

...with indigenous communities should be prioritized, engaging them as genuine partners in conservation endeavours, respecting their traditional knowledge and ensuring their active involvement in decision-making processes concerning their ancestral lands.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

So, I would like to pass the floor to Alliance Earth, an NGO.

You may have the floor.

Alliance Earth (Observer):

I'm very happy to be here today representing Alliance Earth and our partner organizations and communities fighting to protect the Okavango World Heritage site, but under duress, I am surprised that our statement is not taken into account before the vote. Thank you very much, Belgium.

"This natural wonder is worthy of protection not only because of its incredible diversity of endangered species, but also because it is a lifeline for more than a quarter million people in three countries who are facing serious challenges in the face of climate change. Because we will not come up for discussion again for another two years,

we are asking UNESCO to, please, take the precautionary principle and be proactive in monitoring the situation closely in this desert region where we have ReconAfrica drilling in the sensitive watershed of the Okavango Delta for oil and gas that the Earth's people no longer need, and the local communities do not support. The need for vigilance is acute because the company has repeatedly shown contempt for local laws and regulations, already drilling illegally for oil inside of officially protected areas without a permit.

This inland delta has no outlet to the sea, which means pollutants cannot be dispersed, resulting in toxic build up in the water over time.

There is also a serious need for water pollution monitoring to make sure that big new agricultural projects upstream are not polluting the river that more than 10,000 people directly rely upon for their daily unfiltered water. These big agribusinesses are using dangerous, persistent chemicals and need to be regulated.

This is a critical time for the Okavango and its people. We are encouraged to see that there is strong interest among the States Parties who are responsible for this natural wonder to expand the property, to include its watershed in Angola's Benguela Plateau. This exciting plan could also help secure the headwaters of the Zambezi River, the lifeline for 45 million people in Africa. We are ready to assist. Please, count on us as your secure allies."

Thank you all very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

7B.7 Kenya Lake System in the Great Rift Valley (Kenya) // Réseau des lacs du Kenya dans la vallée du Grand Rift (Kenya)

The Chairperson:

So now, for the next property to be discussed, Kenya Lake System in the Great Rift Valley (Kenya), I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Rwanda, to present to the Committee the reason why it made such request.

You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to be very brief. The draft decision on the Kenya Lake System includes a requirement that suppose Kenya has been contemplating an extension of the site.

Chair, Paragraph 7 in the draft decision before you presume that connectivity and possible extension of the site has been contemplated by Kenya, and this is not the case. Therefore, if the draft decision is adopted without amendment, the World Heritage Committee will be creating a dilemma for Kenya to handle an issue which has not been planned by the State Party.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there's any comment or intervention.

So, I'll give the floor to the Secretariat and IUCN.

The Secretariat:

Thank you.

IUCN will take the floor on this case, please.

IUCN:

Shukran, Mr. Chair, thank you very much.

Perhaps just to respond on the point on Paragraph 7, the changes to Paragraph 7, for clarification, the text that is being proposed for deletion does not refer the text around. This is to consider the possible extension and formalization of the buffer zone and around the connectivity with Lake Elementaita. So, we would just like to, on this point, also note that recalling that during the evaluation of this nomination in 2010, the State Party informed IUCN that discussions were underway between KWS and the Soysambu Conservancy to open a wildlife migratory corridor to connect Lake Nakuru and Lake Elementaita. In its decision to inscribe the site, the Committee, therefore, requested the State Party of Kenya to take effective action which could reinforce the link between the conservation

of the three parts of the property, including protecting secondary ecological areas and opening wildlife corridors such as that linking Lakes Nakuru and Elementaita through the Soysambu Conservancy. As part of the Reactive Monitoring process, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN have been following up on this request by the Committee, and that is the text that is reflected in Paragraph 7 of the draft decision.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, IUCN.

So, we have South Africa. You may have the floor.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Lake System in the Great Rift Valley in Kenya is home to 13 globally threatened bird species and some of the best biodiversity in the world. It is the single most important foraging site for the lesser flamingo, and a major nesting site and breeding ground for great white pelicans.

Mr. Chair, study was taken by the State Party, Kenya, to determine the causes and the effects of the rising water levels in the Lake System of the Great Rift Valley. This study made recommendations which the State Party has assured our Delegation that they will be implemented. This is a great initiative, and the State Party of Kenya should be commended for.

Additionally, South Africa commends the State Party for initiating discussions with relevant stakeholders, including communities, to establish a coordinated management system for the three components of the property.

Mr. Chairman,

South Africa, therefore, supports the amendment in the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.7** as proposed by the Delegation of Rwanda.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do we have any other interventions? So, I see none.

Then I invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.7** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Rwanda, which is further supported by the Distinguished Delegations of Ethiopia and Qatar, and now also confirmed by the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa.

The changes are for Para 6 to Para 9. We will go over each para on the screen.

Para 6: "Notes the results of the scoping report conducted by the multi-agency team on the impacts of the rising lake water levels and the State Party to implement the study", sorry, "and encourages the State Party to implement the study recommendations, including resurveying the riparian zones beckoning the new boundaries, continued monitoring of the site, relocating or rehabilitating the sewage treatment plants near Lake Nakuru and other lakes, raising awareness on the impacts of climate change, as well as establishing buffer zones while at the same time taking urgent actions in close collaboration with local communities to address deforestation and land degradation in the basin, and especially in the Mau escarpment;"

The revised Para 7: "Appreciates the State Party's discussions with stakeholders towards securing a wildlife corridor between Lake Nakuru and Lake Naivasha, using wayleaves and creating a task force, developing a concept note and a work plan, but considers that the site selection and design of the wildlife corridor should be based on an evaluation of relevant needs of specific species to allow the potential corridor to accommodate movement of each target species, and therefore also requests the State Party to provide more information on this concept;" End of Para.

Para 8 is revised to say: "Also notes that a meeting was organized in 2020 in Naivasha to agree upon the coordination of the management of the three components of the property, and further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre a report of follow up actions made to implement its decisions;"

The revised Para 9: "Further noting that the rising lake levels affected the zonation scheme of the property, which will be reviewed once the lake levels subside, reiterates its request to the State Party to develop and implement regulations to prohibit developments in close proximity to fragile areas and sensitive buffer zones of the property;".

Rest of the paras remain as they are.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, let's examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

So, from Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 5, there are no amendments. Do you agree to adopt them as it is? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have an amendment. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objection. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, there is no amendment. Do we agree to adopt it as it is?

Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

We'd like to support this amendment here.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like also to support this and to add our name.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Zambia joins the team to support as well, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

We would also like to support this.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

My Delegation would like to support this amendment as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any other interventions?

Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Nigeria joins the others to support the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, do we agree to this proposed amendment? I see no objection. So, adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8, there is a minor amendment. Is there any objection? I see none. Then it's adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, there is a minor amendment. Do we agree to this proposal?

Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Yes, we agree with this amendment.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Do we agree to this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, there is no amendment, and Paragraph 11, no amendment. Do we adopt them as it is? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

So, to adopt the whole entire draft decision.

I declare that the Decision **45 COM 7B.7** is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

So, we have some interventions from the NGOs. Endorois Welfare Council, you may have the floor.

We move to the other request. The World Heritage Watch. You may have the floor.

It seems that who requested the floor is not here. So...

[Observer] Statement on behalf of the Endorois Welfare Council:

I'm sorry. Just give me a second.

This is a statement on behalf of the Endorois Welfare Council.

"We welcome the work done by the UNESCO and World Heritage Committee for the good work they do in prescribing and protecting this important world assets.

- 1) The Endorois... *[recording interrupted]*... of Lake Bogoria Management Plan, which was a joint work between the Community Baringo County and Kenya Wildlife Services.
- 2) The Endorois Welfare Council and the community reported that the Lake Bogoria water levels have subsided. Thus, pH levels increased, leading to increased populations of lesser flamingo.
- 3) However, the Endorois Welfare Council is concerned and worried that due to poor management, governance and management of Lake Bogoria National Reserve by the County Government of Baringo and exclusion of the community in Kenya Wildlife Services, it has led to encroachment by unauthorized charcoal dealers, destroying the wildlife habitat and biodiversity loss within the conservation area.
- 4) We further reject the way Lake Bogoria Management Plan is being implemented in exclusion of the Endorois community, through the Endorois Welfare Council and other stakeholders in the Management Plan.
- 5) The Endorois Welfare Council calls upon the UNESCO World Heritage Committee to direct Baringo County Government to respect the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights Decisions Communication no. 276-2003, Centre for Minority Rights Development and Minority Rights Group international on behalf of Endorois Welfare Council vs. Kenya."

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

7B.9 iSimangaliso Wetland Park (South Africa) // Parc de la zone humide d'iSimangaliso (Afrique du Sud)

The Chairperson:

Now, for the next property to be discussed, iSimangaliso Wetland Park (South Africa), I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Rwanda, to present to the Committee the reason why it made such request.

You may have the floor, Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

The Delegation of Rwanda believes that the State of South Africa has had a discussion with the World Heritage Centre and the IUCN, and notes South Africa's commitment to the establishment of the buffer zone for the property in an effort to reduce water stress on Lake Sibaya, including all the related land use consultations as proposed.

We, however, would like to propose the deletion of the last part of the sentence in Paragraph 6 that makes reference to the alignment of this exercise to the ongoing dialogue between South Africa and Mozambique.

While South Africa has supported regional cooperation and not opposed the proposed extension of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park World Heritage site into Mozambique, the reference to the extension at this stage is premature.

Chair, we note that the discussions on the proposed extension are still at early stage, and the inclusion of them in this decision may not allow the States Parties concerned enough time to comply with the respective domestic protocol. Furthermore, the Panel of Experts report cited in the draft decision made several recommendations aimed at addressing various factors at Lake Saint Lucia Estuary.

Noting this, we would like to propose a review of Paragraph 8 to align it with the language used in the Recommendations of the Panel of Experts, that was appointed by the relevant ministers in South Africa. This will allow for clarity and ease monitoring and reporting by the State Party. It should be noted that this has also been clarified in the discussions held with the World Heritage Centre and the IUCN.

Lastly, Mr. Chair, while we understand that activities outside the World Heritage property might have significant negative impacts in the property, the State Party of South Africa, through its state of conservation reports for the property, has repeatedly confirmed its commitment to ensure that any activity that has the potential to negatively impact on the OUV of the property will be subjected to an Environmental Impact Assessment. To this end, Paragraph 10 is preemptive of the outcome of such an Environmental Impact Assessment, should the need to do once arise.

We, therefore, would like that the State Party be given an opportunity to implement their national legislation and inform the World Heritage Centre, in line with the Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines.

I thank you, sir.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to give the floor to the Secretariat and IUCN.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Apologies. There seems to be a problem with the mic.

So, on the Paragraph 7, we note the info provided by the State Party during the meeting we had, that the process for the transboundary extension to include Maputo National Park in Mozambique into the property still needs to be discussed at bilateral level and, hence, that the establishment of the buffer zone under the World Heritage Convention, through the procedure of a minor boundary modification, is likely to go ahead separately.

IUCN will further provide comments on the two other paragraphs.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN.

IUCN:

Yes. Thank you very much.

On Paragraph 8, we would just like to add, the original wording around the reference to "avoiding further interventions, such as breaching or dredging until additional monitoring data collection as recommended by the Panel" which has been proposed for removal. This is a reference specifically to the independent Panel report that was just referred to, which includes. On this point, we would just like to note the importance of the recommendations of this independent Panel, which notes that "maintenance breaching could continue in exceptional circumstances". However, these circumstances, ecological or social, need to be clearly defined. It is also essential that breaching does not take place without adequate ecological monitoring before or after the event, and the breach level should be informed by quantitative recorded measurements to ensure the most official breach in terms of the intended objectives as potential socioeconomic reasons, and that had been included in the original wording.

Thank you very much.

On Paragraph 10, we would just like to reiterate the point that is referred to in several SOC reports, which "recalls the fundamental incompatibility between extractive industries and World Heritage status". And perhaps just a suggestion to request the clarification around the confirmation of prospective mining.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to know whether there are any comments or interventions from the Committee. I see none.

Therefore, I invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.9** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Rwanda, which is supported by the Distinguished Delegation of Zambia.

The changes are proposed for Paragraphs 6, 7, 8 and 10.

Starting with Paragraph 6, the revised Para 6 is: "Reiterating its concern on the continued water stress in the Lake Sibaya ecosystem, further requests the State Party to maintain a moratorium on issuing licenses for commercial forestry, to address unauthorized commercial forestry plantations identified as a key source of water use stress within the watershed of Lake Sibaya, and to report on the hydrological and ecological conditions of Lake Sibaya system;"

The revised Para 7: "Welcomes the State Party's plan to establish a buffer zone to the property in an effort to reduce water stress on Lake Sibaya, and recommends that the consultation process consider the overall land use planning affecting the property's integrity;"

The revised Para 8: "Also notes the conclusion and recommendations of the report of the independent Panel of experts, tasked to review the impact of the January 2021 artificial breaching of the mouth of the Saint Lucia Estuary and to develop guidelines for future management of the estuary so as to safeguard the property's Outstanding Universal Value, and urges the State Party to ensure that any intervention in the Saint Lucia Estuary would be aligned with the panel recommendations and subject to relevant Environmental Impact Assessments conducted in conformity with the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, and further requests the State Party to revisit the recommendations of the GEF-funded study;"

Para 9 remains same.

Revised Para 10: "Further welcomes the State Party's commitment to ensure that adequate national level impact assessment for any extractive industry development proposal is conducted in conformity with the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, and furthermore requests the State Party to keep the World Heritage Committee informed on any developments in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;"

End of Para 10 and Para 11 remains as it is.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I suggest we go examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

I see from Paragraph 1 to Paragraph...

Rwanda would like to take the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

Would you please give the floor to South Africa for more clarification as the questions were asked by IUCN?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, and we appreciate Rwanda's support on this item.

We just would like to clarify that there are no planned activities in relation to any extraction of minerals within and even outside the property. We also can confirm that a portion of this property also includes the marine protected area.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to appreciate and recognize the effort of the State Party. I would like to put our name in all the amended paragraphs.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any other interventions or comments?

Mali. You may have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Mali souhaite apporter son soutien aux amendements proposés.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My Delegation also would like to support the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

My Delegation also supports the proposal.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We would also like to support the proposed amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

Nigeria, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Nigeria would like to support the amendments by Rwanda.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

We also support these amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

I see no other...

Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you, Chair. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

Qatar supports Rwanda proposals.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

So, I see no other additional interventions and I suggest we go examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

From Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 5, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as it is? I see no objection. So, adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, there is a proposal. Do we accept this amendment? I see no objection. So, that paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, there is a proposal. So, do we accept it as amended? I see no objection. So, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8, there is a proposal. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objection. The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, there is no amendment. Do we accept it as it is? I see no objection. The paragraph is adopted. *[gavel]*

Then, we have a proposal for Paragraph 10. Do we accept and agree with this proposal?

Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

We also support the amendment proposed in this paragraph.

The Chairperson:

Do we agree with this amended paragraph? Then, I see no objection. The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 11, there is no amendment. Do we accept it as it is? Then, I see no objection. Then it's adopted. *[gavel]*

Now, my dear colleagues, I see that there are no objections to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

Therefore, I declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.9** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

7B.10 Mosi-oa-Tunya / Victoria Falls (Zambia, Zimbabwe) // Mosi-oa-Tunya / Chutes Victoria (Zambia, Zimbabwe)

The Chairperson:

For the next property to be discussed, Mosi-oa-Tunya / Victoria Falls (Zambia, Zimbabwe), I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of South Africa, to present to the Committee the reason why it made such request.

You may have the floor, South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa has analysed the state of conservation document and sought further clarity from States Parties of Zambia and Zimbabwe.

We, therefore, propose amendments to Paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 10 b) on the following basis.

In respect of Paragraph 4, Chairperson, we would like to first congratulate the State Party of Zambia and their counterpart, the State Party of Zimbabwe, for cooperating to ensure responsible implementation of the Batoka Gorge Hydro Electric Scheme, BGHES, which should be welcomed by the Committee as an important step in humanity's effort to address the increasing threat of climate change. The BGHES, which is located outside of the property's boundaries, will contribute immensely towards increasing power generation in the region through a clean energy source. The State Party of Zambia has taken utmost care to avoid any possible impacts on the OUV through the selection of an alternative that has no likelihood of undermining the integrity of the site. The chosen alternative clearly shows the tail of the backflow of the reservoir waters will only be located in gorges, with a potential water level rise of only 25% maximum, and as such, no flooding of the gorges and, therefore, no negative impact on the attributes of the OUV. Such water level increases have been continuously witnessed seasonally, depending on amounts of rainfall, and are expected to follow the same pattern beyond the completion of the BGHES. We are, therefore, proposing amendments that will create a balanced decision.

In respect of Paragraph 5, Chairperson, we would like to draw the attention of the Committee to a Joint Integrated Management Plan developed by the two States Parties, and we believe that the plan will serve as an important tool to guide future developments in and around the property. South Africa, therefore, call on the Committee to support the States Parties towards sustainable infrastructure development for the benefit of the site and the States Parties population in the region. We thus believe that issues raised in Paragraph 5 will be addressed through the existing processes, including the use of Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines and other States Parties level safeguards.

South Africa has noted that Paragraph 6 has been overtaken by events as developments referred to in that para, like the resort hotel, are already finalized in accordance with national approvals. As such, we are proposing that the Committee acknowledges this reality and record its regret that such development has taken place.

Lastly, Chairperson, we are asking that Para 10 be deleted as the SPs have developed a Joint Integrated Management Plan, which serves as a guide for future development and therefore, there is no need for the Committee to ask for another blueprint for the development.

As this is a short report with Zimbabwe, we request the Chairperson to give the State Party of Zimbabwe to clarify other elements.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to give the floor to the Secretariat and IUCN to give their feedback on this comment.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much.

On the issue of the Batoka Gorge Hydro Electric Scheme, which is referred to in Paragraph 4, we would like to note that following a review of the documentation from the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN have assessed that the reservoir area of the electric scheme will extend approximately 10.75 km into the property at full supply level, which at the deepest point will increase the water level in the property by around 43 meters. During the dry season, it is reported that the reservoir level will be lowered, which will reduce the flooded area by 5 km. This means that during the dry season, still 5.75 km of the gorge inside the property will remain with a higher water level. The project will therefore alter the unique gorge ecosystem and water flow, and could potentially impact on the ecological values of the property as defined in its Statement of OUV. The World Heritage Centre, therefore, considers that the property should not proceed as currently proposed, but should be further revised together with the Environmental Impact Assessment to assess alternative project designs that would avoid these impacts on the property and include a comprehensive ecological assessment of the gorge ecosystem. I will also speak to the other paragraphs.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just like to comment on the tourism infrastructure developments. As noted, this refers to Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the draft decision.

The property faces serious threats from individual and cumulative infrastructure developments associated with tourism. IUCN and the World Heritage Centre recalled past Committee requests to the State Party of Zambia to halt the Mosi-oa-Tunya Livingstone Resort Hotel development. However, as now confirmed by the State Party of Zambia, the resort hotel was completed and has been opened for business. Other tourism developments have also been reported in Zimbabwe, within the areas of the property that are recognized as highly sensitive zones according to the Joint Integrated Management Plan.

This concern is further compounded by inconsistent property boundaries that are used in different documentations, creating confusion as to what is and is not inside the property boundaries. Other inconsistencies are also seen in permitted and prohibited activities and developments, which appear to differ between the management plan for national parks, which the property overlapped with, and the Joint Integrated Management Plan for the property. IUCN and the World Heritage Centre considered that it would be valuable to determine development areas and criteria that ensure the protection of the OUV of the property. A detailed plan that prescribes where, what, and how constructions can take place in and around the property would become the blueprint for development to allow the States Parties to map out areas where construction could take place based on clear criteria, and areas that should be considered free from development.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to ask the Committee if they have any interventions or comments on this.

Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Comme vous le savez, les chutes Victoria sont au nombre des merveilles naturelles les plus emblématiques au monde et méritent de ce fait toute notre singulière attention. Il est vrai qu'elles ont été confrontées à divers défis en matière de conservation et de protection au fil des ans. Cependant, il reste essentiel que les membres du Comité apprécient mieux les efforts des États parties de la Zambie et le Zimbabwe concernant la gestion et la conservation de ce site, et notamment la préservation de sa VUE.

Concernant les questions de développement des infrastructures, les deux États parties ont fourni des précisions écrites qui dissipent, à notre sens, toute ambiguïté et permettent d'avoir une meilleure compréhension des actions en cours. Par exemple, le projet hydroélectrique de la gorge de Batoka aura des avantages environnementaux. De même, le déclassement de la centrale électrique Zesco des Chutes Victoria en Zambie, permettra de restaurer le cours naturel de la rivière et d'améliorer la beauté naturelle du site.

Soulignons que la recommandation de suspendre la construction de l'hôtel Mosi-oa-Tunya Livingstone Resort a été prise en compte à notre sens, les conclusions juridiques et relatives ayant été remplies et une évaluation d'impact environnementale et sociale révisée ayant également été soumise. Les distingués délégués de la Zambie

et du Zimbabwe pourraient d'ailleurs, le cas échéant, nous apporter davantage de précisions et d'éclairage. Aussi, apportons-nous notre soutien aux amendements proposés par l'Afrique du Sud.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

We recognize that the site is inscribed based on the criteria (vii) and (viii). However, the Statement of OUV (SOUV) is mentioned about the unique, important ecosystems like a rainforest and near the big falls.

So, regarding the amendments proposed, they are for the I for the Batoka Gorge Hydro Electric Scheme. They are trying to change the focus of I from ecological survey, ecological assessment, to the geological or geomorphological assessment. So, in that context, we would like to ask the States Parties about how they consider about the OUV of this site, because the SOUV mentioned about the ecosystem or the biodiversity value of this site in the criterion (vii). So, I just wonder how those States Parties consider about the OUV of this site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I give the floor to South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think just emphasizing the point that Japan raised, to confirm that the OUV of the site is based on geomorphology and not on ecosystem, and I'm sure the State Party of Zambia can clarify that. And if they can also allow Zimbabwe to clarify other elements.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair.

Dear colleagues,

We wish to support the amendments put forward by South Africa. According to us, these amendments reflect the current situation and are justified. This draft decision will contribute to cooperation between the two States Parties of Zambia and Zimbabwe, not just in the area of preserving the OUV of the site, but also as regards the sustainable development of the site and the region in general and the development of their peoples.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm listening to South Africa to open this file and the justification provided, as well as the Advisory Bodies and the remarks by others. I would like to support the amendment of this decision and to associate our name with all the amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any other interventions from the Committee?

So now, I would like to give the floor to Zimbabwe to respond to the question addressed by South Africa, Mali and Japan.

The Observer Delegation of Zimbabwe:

Thank you, Chair, for giving us the opportunity to speak.

As it is the first time Zimbabwe is taking the floor, we'd like to congratulate you as Chair and also thank the Secretariat for the hard work and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the warm hospitality accorded to all of us.

We would like to also convey our heartfelt sympathies to the States Parties of Morocco and Libya, following the devastating natural disasters that occurred recently.

Chair, there is and has been overwhelming pressure from various players proposing various developments since the property was inscribed in 1989 and we have, over the years, turned down hundreds of proposals to preserve the Outstanding Universal Values of the property. Apart from our increasing wildlife populations in the KAZA TFCA where the property is located, the human population growth in our region has grown by over 45%, and this has triggered the corresponding increase in competing claims for land for various purposes and we have successfully managed such pressures. As a transboundary property, we believe the inclusive and highly effective three-tier system that starts from Joint Site Management Committee, Joint Technical Committee and Joint Ministerial Committees is exemplary.

The establishment of the Batoka Gorge Hydro Electric Scheme will contribute to the partial fulfilment of the national obligations under the Paris Agreement following the UN-FCCC-COP 21 decision to encourage States Parties to promote clean energy production whilst reducing and eventually eliminating fossil fuels that are exacerbating climate change and has negative and significant implications on the hydrology of the Zambezi River. At present, the average of 50% of our populations, both in Zambia and Zimbabwe, lack access to electricity. Chair, in the quest to achieve Goal 7 of the SDGs, the investment in clean energy is necessary. In joint efforts, Chair, our Governments remain committed to religiously implement the recommendations of the Environmental Social Impact Assessment prepared for this project.

Given these submissions, Chair, together with Zambia, we pledged to continue preserving the integrity of the property whilst ensuring that livelihoods surrounding communities are enhanced through sustainably designed programmes and ensuring that the ecosystems and habitats are conserved to protect the OUV of the property.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

So, I'd like to see if there is one anyone from the Committee members who would like to take the floor.

Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Qatar acknowledged that Zambia has taken the right measures in the implementation of the Batoka Hydro Electric Scheme, which will not affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Therefore, the State of Qatar supports the amendment proposed by South Africa.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm sorry to take the floor again now. Japan commends the efforts made by the States Parties of Zimbabwe and Zambia, and also, we have now explanations about the measures they have taken. But at the same time, we do recognize that there are concerns expressed by the Evaluation Bodies. Now, I believe this is a very typical example of the compatibility between development and conservation.

And also, another point is that relationship to climate change and the Paris Agreement, hydroelectric power is recommended from that perspective, and as I understand it, this hydropower project is a regional project which is designed to supply green electricity to other countries in the region. So, all in all, there are many elements to be considered in this particular case. If I'm not mistaken, I heard a suggestion yesterday, I think, from the Delegation of Zambia, to have a look at this particular project, or I mean, the Victoria Falls project are the kind of showcase of

development versus conservation. And the reply, I believe the reply from the Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre at that time, was that she was very positive about that kind of exercise.

Now, this particular project, this particular file, has a very wide-ranging implication. There are, of course, conservation issues, but there are also development issues. In this context, I would just like to ask a question to the State Party of Zambia, in particular, because I heard that they suggested that perhaps, we can have comprehensive or comprehensive studies on this particular case in terms of the compatibility between development and also conservation. And if the World Heritage Centre is positive on this initiative, perhaps we have to look at this file from that perspective. These Victoria Falls, I had a chance to go there once, it is such a magnificent heritage. We have to preserve it, but at the same time we have to cater to the development needs and particularly when those things are in compliance with International Agreements, Paris Agreement or the needs in the region. So, I think we have to take a broader approach to this particular file. I would like to ask a question to the States Parties and hopefully from the Centre as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

So, I will pass the floor to Zambia to respond to your question.

Zambia, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As a State Party of Zambia, we have over many years, since the inscription of the Mosi-oa-Tunya Victoria Falls World Heritage site in 1989, worked collaboratively with our Zimbabwean counterparts in jointly preparing the state of conservation reports, General Management Plans, Strategic Environmental Assessment reports, facilitated reviews in EIS, resource boundary mapping and capacity-building programmes. All these have been aimed in protecting the property's key attributes and Outstanding Universal Value, which has a magnificent beauty, beautiful, breathtaking and grandiose waterfall as well as a scenic gorges and islands. It is for this reason, Mr. Chairman, that the property has remained the largest block of naturally falling waters in the world. Over the past three decades, it has still remained one of the prestigious natural wonders of the world, due to the pristine nature and due to the efforts undertaken by the States Parties. Whilst noting and generally appreciating the concerns raised by IUCN, the Committee and the Centre, it is important to note that the Mosi-oa-Tunya Radisson Blu Hotel project development, which is 4 km away from the lip of the falls or the falls itself, is upstream of the main falls and it is largely in the area which is known as a buffer zone. I'm using or we are using the word "largely", implying that it is not impacting on the views and the geomorphological processes and features of the site.

Further, the State Party would like to acknowledge its shortfalls in contributing to the current debate on the inappropriate terminologies and attributes which were crafted in the OUV. The adoption of the use of the terminologies "ecologically sensitive", "geomorphological sensitive" have been complicated and, in this case, you find that, for instance, the Outstanding Universal Value for the Victoria Falls is based on geomorphological features and processes. And when you look at the assessments, they are emphasizing on ecological assessments, which is a wrong judgment because we should be, as two States Parties, we should be judged on the geomorphological features and processes rather than the biological aspects, which are also important in the environment. That is a consideration.

When it comes to the Batoka Gorge Hydro Project, the impact will be felt 2 km downstream of the main falls, meaning the linear distance which in terms of the Outstanding Universal Value, the site was nominated out for its beauty. So, we feel that this will not really impact the values as it is being projected.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to ask the Secretariat if they have any comment on Japan's request.

You may have the floor, Mr. Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I think to reply very quickly to the very important question raised by the Ambassador of Japan, the issue of the balance between heritage conservation and development has been a subject which has been discussed by this Committee and there has been a number of decisions. In particular, I think this issue has started to be really tackled by the Africa Group, and I would like to recall the very important meeting which was organized a few years ago,

with the support of China, which led to a very important Declaration and publication on the World Heritage and sustainable development to safeguard Africa's heritage as a drive for sustainable development.

I think, here, the role of the Committee has always been to try to look at this issue as a balance, on one way, of course, to preserve the OUV of the property, on the other way, to make sure that properties as they are preserved contribute to the sustainable development of the countries and, in particular, the concerned communities. I think it is already clear with this Committee that there is no objection about the need to see the World Heritage properties contribute to the socio-economic development and sustainable development, and it is important to ensure a compatible development in and around World Heritage sites. I think that's the discussion that you are having, and that's the reason why the Deputy Director in her presentation has been positive on using it as a pilot to help implementation of the project.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Director.

Do we have any other interventions or comments from the Committee?

Japan, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I very much appreciate the reactions from the World Heritage Centre on this particular point. I think this is a very important point because we have to make a judgment as to whether we accept the amendments or not.

I just wanted to clarify that because of the particular importance of this particular file, that's one of the most important files in our World Heritage List, because of that reason, I wanted to make sure that discussions on the compatibility between development and conservation will continue, particularly with regard to this file. I thought, on that basis, we could support the amendments, but we want to make sure because we understand the concerns expressed from the Evaluation Bodies. At the same time, we do understand the need to produce electricity with very clean measures, the hydro is one of them. And also, there is a development need for electricity in the region. So, we have to take all those things into account when we make our reservations. What I wanted to say is that we can support the amendments, but this is on the understanding that discussions will continue on this very important point. I hope if the States Parties of Zambia and Zimbabwe can agree with my statement, that is appreciated.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much.

I haven't fully understood the perspective expressed by the Distinguished Ambassador of Japan. This is a very important file, and what we're discussing here is particularly important because we always need to ensure that we balance the safeguarding of cultural heritage and sustainable development. For this reason, the Committee does need to keep this aspect in mind, and we need to examine this issue in some depth. Perhaps we could organize a special seminar on this topic, because sometimes there are contradictions between assessments and needs. For this reason, we consider that we do need to reflect more deeply on the needs of local communities, needs, for example, for electricity. We could perhaps organize a special meeting or seminar to discuss this more.

Thank you.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Mr. Chair,

Just to emphasize and agree with the point that Japan has laid before us, that Zambia is in agreement with the suggestion from Japan.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'd like to see if there are any additional comments.

Since we have none, I invite you, my dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.10** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa, which was supported by the Distinguished Delegations of Ethiopia, Oman and Qatar.

We also received a revised version of the amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa last night.

Further from the floor, we got confirmation for supporting the amendment by the Distinguished Delegations of Mali and Russian Federation.

The proposed amendment is for changes in Para 4, 5, 6 and 10.

Starting with Para 4: "Notes again with increasing concern, the inevitable negative impacts of the proposed Batoka Gorge Hydro Electric Scheme on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, due to seasonal rising of water levels and partial disappearance of some swash in a significant, 'in a significant' is deleted, portion of the gorges within the property and requests the States Parties to implement the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission recommendation to revise the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment in accordance with the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context* to undertake a comprehensive geomorphological and slash/or geological assessment of the gorge environment that takes into account the property boundaries, and resubmit the revised ESIA to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN before making any decisions that may be difficult to reverse in accordance with the Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines;".

The revised Para 5: "Reiterates its concern over the increasing pressure from tourism infrastructure within and around the property, exacerbated by the absence of strategic planning, and also requests the States Parties to prioritize the review and update the Joint Integrated Management Plan to ensure that necessary safeguards and thresholds are incorporated to mitigate against developmental pressures for the protection of the property's OUV, and further requests the States Parties to adhere to the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, prior to taking any decision that is difficult to reverse;".

The revised Para 6: "Regrets that the construction of the Mosi-oa-Tunya Livingstone Resort Hotel has concluded despite the Committee's request to halt further activities and urgently requests the State Party of Zambia to implement migratory measures integral to legal conditions of approval issued by Zambian Environmental Management Authority", I think there's a correction here, "to implement mitigatory measures integral to legal conditions of approval issued by Zambian Environmental Management Authority and contained in the Joint Management Plan. The ESIA has been revised in accordance with the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, and a comprehensive Environmental and Social Management Plan has been developed and submitted together with impact assessments to the World Heritage Centre;".

Paras 7, 8 and 9 stay as they are.

In Para 10, point b) is deleted, which is to "develop a blueprint for infrastructure development in and around the property,". The rest of the para stays as is.

Para 11 remains as is.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

India, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

India would like to join the Member States, South Africa, Ethiopia, Oman, Qatar, Russian Federation and Mali.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My Delegation would like to support all the amendments to the draft resolution.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Nigeria is supporting the amendment as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

We, likewise, support these amendments.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Nigeria, you may close the mic.

So, I think we have no other interventions, and we should move to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

From Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 3, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as it is?

Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Sorry, Mr. Chair,

I would just like to add our name to all the amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There was one particular point about ecology. Now, I understand that the mist from the falls, the Victoria Falls, have created particular ecological circumstances which are very unique in this particular context. Therefore, we wanted to revive the word "ecological", but we also heard from Zambia that this was not the reason, the justification for the inscription.

So, we don't insist, but we hope that this aspect is already also considered in the future steps. And with that, we support the consensus.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

Kindly add Rwanda to the proposed amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

So now, I would like to go back to Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 3.

Okay, so there are no amendments on the Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 3. If there is not any objection, the paragraphs are adopted as it is. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have an amendment. Do we agree to this proposal? I see no objections. The paragraph is amended as it is amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposal. Do we agree to this proposal? I see no objections.

Japan. You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Mr. Chair, it's not objection. We also support this paragraph.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, if there is no objection, then we adopt the paragraph as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6. Do we agree to the proposal? I see no objection. The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7 and Paragraph 8, there are no amendments. Do we agree to accept them as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, there is no amendment. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9. We have a proposal. Do we agree with the amendment?

I see Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

This is exactly the point that I was referring to earlier. You know, the Distinguished Ambassador of Oman was trying to clarify what I was saying. Yes, I think what he suggested and what I was saying are more or less the same. It is a need to have further discussions on this issue of compatibility between development and conservation. And that has to be, and we had a very positive reaction from the State Party of Zambia, and I highly appreciate that with that understanding, we support this as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Indeed, Your Excellency, thank you.

So, do we agree with the proposed amendment? I see no objections. Then, that paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 11, there is no amendment. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objection then adopted. *[gavel]*

So now, if there are no objection to adopt the entire and whole draft decision amended.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.10** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

World Heritage Watch, you may have the floor.

The World Heritage Watch Forum (Observer):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was about to read a statement from the NGO Keep Victoria Falls Wild, but this statement contained a precise suggestion for an amendment of the draft decision. So, there is no point in reading that statement anymore.

But this incident gives me an opportunity to request you, please, consider again whether it would not be useful for everyone in the room if the Observers could be allowed to make their statements before decisions are taken. This has been granted in previous Committee sessions, and we were, for some time, under the impression that this could become a standard procedure. Now, we are very disappointed about the fact that we are only allowed to make statements after decisions are taken. So, we are working hard, we are trying to make serious, productive and constructive contributions to the findings of the Committee, and we would be very happy if this could be more highly appreciated by allowing us to speak before decisions are taken.

I would also like to request the Committee members to change the Rules of Procedure, or to change the Operational Guidelines, whatever is needed, to make sure that the Observers, both the NGOs, the indigenous peoples and others have the right to speak before decisions are taken. The present experience is really quite frustrating.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you for your intervention.

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

So now, moving forward, I invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the natural properties inscribed in the World Heritage List, located in the Africa region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may have the floor, Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The following natural properties located in the Africa region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- W-Arly-Pendjari Complex (Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger)
- Dja Faunal Reserve (Cameroon)
- Salonga National Park (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary (Senegal)
- Sangha Trinational (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo)
- Simien National Park (Ethiopia)
- Lake Malawi National Park (Malawi)
- Rwenzori Mountains National Park (Uganda)
- Serengeti National Park (United Republic of Tanzania)
- Mana Pools National Park, Sapi and Chewore Safari Areas (Zimbabwe)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on these state of conservation reports, I declare the Decisions read out adopted. ^[gavel]

ARAB STATES // ÉTATS ARABES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I would like to request from the Director to read the list of the natural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Arab States region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following natural properties located in the Arab States region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Banc d'Arguin National Park (Mauritania)

- Socotra Archipelago (Yemen)
- Sanganeb Marine National Park and Dungonab Bay – Mukkawar Island Marine National Park (Sudan)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on these state of conservation reports, I declare the Decisions read out adopted. ^[gavel]

Alliance Earth, NGO, you may have the floor.

Alliance Earth (Observer):

There must have been a mistake, Chairperson. That was for the previous session.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Okay, since the next item is open for discussion, I propose that we reopen and resume our work after this morning's session at 3:00 pm., so that we can have continuous dialogue and debate among the Committee members.

So, for now, you may have earlier session that will be over. See you after noon. ^[gavel]

Mr. Director has some announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you.

This is just to let everyone know that we are trying to continue fix the issue of Wi-Fi.

Thank you.

The meeting rose at 1:12 pm. // La séance a été levée à 13h12.

THIRD DAY
Wednesday, 13 September 2023
SIXTH PLENARY MEETING
3:16 pm – 6:03 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

TROISIÈME JOUR
Mercredi 13 septembre 2023
SIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h16 – 18h03
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

7B. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) //
ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU
PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

NATURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE NATUREL (suite)

ASIA-PACIFIC // ASIE-PACIFIQUE

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

So, we are now resuming our examination of Item 7B, which concerns the state of conservation reports of the World Heritage properties. But before we proceed with that, I would like to pass the floor to Mr. Lazare with some announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I just would like to inform the members of the Committee that the request by Rwanda to open the report 7B.132 on the Fossil Hominid Sites of South Africa has been withdrawn. Consequently, the Secretariat has circulated a revised list accordingly to all of you, which is INF.7.Rev.6. That was just for your information. It has already been circulated to you.

Thank you.

7B.14 The Sundarbans (Bangladesh) // Les Sundarbans (Bangladesh)

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

As I have mentioned, we are now considering the properties located in the Asia Pacific region.

And now, for the next property to be discussed, The Sundarbans in Bangladesh, I would like to give the floor to the Delegate of Oman to present to the Committee the reasons why it has made such a request.

Sultanate of Oman, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The file of Sundarbans was opened in 2013 over construction of a coal-fired power plant that was located outside the buffer zone. The buffer zone for the property is drawn 60 to 80 km away from the Heritage property. However, Bangladesh has continued to make a positive effort toward enhancing the protection of the property and had made a progress in implementation of the 2019 mission recommendations.

Mr. Chair and Esteemed Committee members,

In this regard, the State Party has completed Strategic Environmental Assessment, Strategic Environmental Management Plan, including routine submission of the state conservation reports. In 2019, The report also reported positive trends in conservation of the biodiversity, including the increase in the number of the Royal Bengal Tigers. In addition, the State Party has taken extensive conservation measures, which was also evident from the third-party report. We believe this needs to be recognized in the Committee decision. As the SR shows positive efforts towards the protection of OUV, we recommend the State Party should be allowed to considerable time to wait for the environmental parameters to change before submitting the new SOC report. The State Party has also logical and evidence-based argument for the proposed amendment.

For this reason, Oman submitted the amendment, and I do encourage and hope the Member States of the World Heritage Committee support it. Having said that, I would like also to ask the State Party to answer the following questions: what have the State Party done or efforts extended to the conservation of this site? I would also like to suggest that the draft amendment discussion to be postponed till tomorrow for further consultation.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to give the floor to the Secretariat and the IUCN to respond to this comment.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

IUCN will first respond to some points related to the Strategic Environmental Assessment. And then, I will make some additional comments if you allow.

Thank you.

IUCN:

Thank you very much.

We would just like to comment specifically on the Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Strategic Environmental Management Plan. So, this is referred to specifically in the original draft decision, Paragraph 4, for your reference. IUCN and the World Heritage Centre recall that a Strategic Environmental Assessment, or SEA, was first requested by the Committee in 2014 in order to ensure that cumulative impacts of developments in the Sundarbans are adequately assessed, including in relation to the OUV of the property, and this was following concerns about the impacts of coal-fired power plants on the OUV, as well as reports of further infrastructure and industrial development. The SEA has subsequently been requested in further decisions to date. So, it's therefore appreciated that the State Party has undertaken an SEA for the South-West region of Bangladesh, which encompasses also the World Heritage property and the associated SEMP.

However, IUCN would like to highlight the following concerns in relation to the SEA and SEMP. Importantly, the conclusion of the SEA is that there is a risk of negative, direct, indirect and cumulative impacts from developments over the next 20 years in the South-West region, if appropriate and adequate mitigatory measures are not taken. These impacts will arise from developments within the 9 key sectors and as a result of interactions between them, and this is taken from the SEMP report. This refers specifically to the proposed amendment on the original draft decision, Paragraph 4.

The SEA focuses on three growth scenarios: a low growth, which is considered not to be a policy choice; a medium growth, which is equivalent to the current situation and projected developments over the next ten years; and a high growth scenario, which would be required to achieve the high-income country status, that is the ambition to reach by 2041.

So, IUCN and the World Heritage Centre note that the conclusions in relation to the impacts on the OUV appear to be based on several assumptions that would require further follow up and research. For example, the Royal Bengal tiger is a key attribute of the OUV. The SEA specifically states that "the tiger population will experience healthy growth under a high-growth development scenario if there is considerable reduction of anthropogenic pressure and improved management practice, suitable habitat improves, and poaching is brought to a minimum level". So around this, it is unclear how this overall justification was reached and the feasibility of implementing the management actions that would be required to considerably reduce these anthropogenic pressures, improve management, ensure suitable habitat, and address poaching. This is just one example. The SEA notes that further development remains a priority for the region. However, we note that it remains critical that the potential impacts of any development to the OUV of the property are appropriately assessed prior to proceeding with further development. Close follow up on this is therefore required in order to determine what development scenario would ensure that there would be no impact on the OUV before making decisions on specific development projects. IUCN and the World Heritage Centre, therefore, strongly recommend to retain the language in the original Paragraph 4 of the draft decision that further research is required to ascertain the potential risks of different development scenarios on the OUV in order to ensure the long-term protection of the OUV, and to avoid adverse impacts from large-scale development in the vicinity of the property, as was requested by the Committee.

IUCN remains available to provide any further technical guidance as required.

I would like to now pass back to the World Heritage Centre.

Thank you.

The Secretariat:

The World Heritage Centre and IUCN consider that the OUV of this property remains under threat as a result of the rapid industrial development of the region in which it is located.

While we welcome the work done by the SEA, the review of IUCN has revealed important shortcomings that require to be addressed as explained. The SEA itself also reports that the scale of the potential impact on the OUV is unknown and that it requires further research, that there is a clear risk of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts from developments in the study area over the next 20 years if appropriate and adequate mitigation measures are not taken, and that there remains a need to analyse potential risks and impact in more detail.

The World Heritage Centre and IUCN consider that the State Party should also be requested to keep the World Heritage Centre informed of any proposals for major projects that may impact on the OUV, in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, including on the planned development of the Mongla port and other developments that might further increase traffic on the Pashur River, and to ensure that the appropriate assessment of impacts is done in line with the guidance.

It is unclear to the World Heritage Centre and IUCN why the reference to the specific planned developments is proposed to be deleted from original Paragraph 4 c).

In the light of this, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN consider that the state of conservation of this property needs to continue to be monitored closely and, therefore, we strongly recommend the Committee to maintain the request for a new report in 2024 for review by the Committee at its 46th or perhaps 47th session, in line with the normal reporting periods for sites under Reactive Monitoring.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there is any intervention from the Committee.

Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Mr. Chair,

The State of Qatar supports the request concerning the Sundarbans site and acknowledge the efforts undertaken by the State Party in implementing effective measures to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Additionally, Qatar commends the Contingency Plan put in place during the difficult time of COVID-19, including the adoption of the National Oil Spill Plan to prevent and mitigate risk in case of an emergency.

Finally, Mr. Chair, we express our support for the ongoing efforts of the State Party in preparing the 2025-2035 Management Plan to manage the integrated resources of the Sundarbans.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Egypt welcomed the continued national efforts of the State Party to enhance the protection of this property and the progress in implementing the recommendation of the Reactive Monitoring mission.

We appreciate the submission of the state of conservation report, the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Environmental Management Plan by Bangladesh as requested by the Committee. We also appreciate the State Party for supporting the Reactive monitoring mission.

The Delegation of Egypt would like to further ask the State Party of its rationale behind its request to submit the next state of conservation report in 2029.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We do recognize with appreciation the intensive measures that have been taken by the State Party of Bangladesh, but at the same time, we heard that IUCN and the Secretariat both have strong concerns about this particular property. As a result, we do have very extensive amendments to the DR at hand. That means there are clear divisions of positions between the two sides. Now, in this context, I'm not sure if it is productive for us to continue the amendment discussions after this session.

Therefore, I would like to support the proposal from Oman to postpone the discussions of the DR, possibly to tomorrow, in the hope that the State Party of Bangladesh and the Evaluation Bodies and the Secretariat can produce some kind of compromise text for us to consider.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Although now, we seem to be that is compromised, following the previous speaker's presentation. However, we will go ahead with what we want to present.

As a State Party of Zambia, we would like to appreciate the presentation or the intervention coming from the State Party of Oman, and we would like to just also appreciate the works or the measures that have been taken by the State Party of Bangladesh in trying to comply with some of the requirements of the World Heritage Convention.

Mr. Chairman, from that angle, we would also want to further appreciate the Advisory Bodies in terms of the work that they have done, and we would like to add our voice to Oman as the authors of this document.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

After listening to the States Parties of Oman and Japan, Excellency, we would like to hear what the State Party has to say about this. We would like to hear, we would like them to be given the floor, with your permission, to explain their position on the report, Excellency. And then, we would like to make our intervention.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

The State Party will be given the floor but after hearing from the Committee members.

South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We would like to commend the State Party for their efforts towards improving the protection of the property through completion of the Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Strategic Environmental Plan and the National Oil and Chemical Spill Contingency Plan 2020.

Mr. Chair, we do understand that the mission conducted in 2019 published its report in 2021, due to the challenges imposed by the pandemic. This then created a communication gap between the time the reactive monitoring took place and the time the report was published. As we will hear from the Bangladeshi Delegation, they did not wait for the report to be published, but rather continued with their conservation efforts.

Mr. Chair, we would like to applaud the continued cooperation between the State Party and the World Heritage Centre in ensuring that the protection of the OUV is balanced with the much-needed sustainable development in Bangladesh.

South Africa is, therefore, open to further deliberations on the decision as proposed by Oman and others.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Nous tenons tout d'abord à remercier le Centre du patrimoine mondial et l'UICN pour les différentes missions effectuées sur le terrain concernant les Sundarbans ainsi que les recommandations y relatives formulées.

Nous constatons ensuite, à la lecture des différents rapports, que les préoccupations relevées sont principalement d'ordre environnemental. Or, objectivement, les paramètres environnementaux ne changent pas sur une courte période et nécessitent au contraire un temps raisonnable pour faire constater qu'il y a eu changement, qu'il soit positif ou négatif. Ajoutons que l'État partie bangladais a déjà démontré son engagement en faveur de la conservation de la VUE du bien, et il a aussi effectué un investissement financier considérable dans ce sens. L'État partie pourrait d'ailleurs fournir plus de précisions sur cet aspect, le cas échéant.

Au regard de cet état de fait, nous estimons que le Bangladesh devrait disposer d'un délai nécessaire pour pouvoir faire refléter les changements des paramètres environnementaux dans son prochain rapport SOC. C'est pour cette raison que nous soutenons les amendements proposés au Projet de décision **45 COM 7B.14** soumis par Oman et invitons le Comité à les soutenir.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have studied very carefully the report provided by Bangladesh, which is a State Party to the Convention.

The documents provided are very complete with respect to the state of conservation of the property. It is clear for us that the Government of Bangladesh has very seriously studied the recommendations provided by the Committee. It has been transparent and thorough in its communications with the World Heritage Centre and other Bodies, and it has made serious efforts to try to implement the recommendations provided to it. It has been working over a long period of time, and has invested considerable financial and human resources in carrying out this work.

These efforts, we believe, should be commended by the Committee. And we feel that these this praise should be reflected in the texts that we are producing.

We, therefore, support the proposal by Oman to adjourn study of this text to the next session.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chairman,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has examined the amendment presented by Oman with respect to the Sundarbans National Park in Bangladesh.

We note the challenges being experienced by the State Party and indeed by the country, occasioned by the effects of climate change and other natural pressures. We also note the challenges of economic development and the need to proceed with the advancement of renewable energy installations, for example.

Notwithstanding all of this, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines applauds the efforts made by Bangladesh in recent years navigating COVID-19 pandemic challenges included, to address all the issues identified by the Advisory Bodies and we are satisfied that the efforts will continue as planned. We look forward to the updates in the coming years as results are realized.

Therefore, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines now registers its support for the amendment as presented at this 45th session. However, we are open to further deliberation and to listening to the State Party of Bangladesh as is now being proposed.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is indeed an extraordinary site, the Sundarbans, that merits our undivided attention. However, if I may, Mr. Chair, I'm a bit confused. There are several Committee members who requested to give it a bit more time and to postpone this discussion for maybe 24 hours, allowing the time between the different parties, IUCN, the Secretariat and the State Party to solve maybe a few issues.

We think, considering the many outstanding amendments, that this is a very good suggestion made by Oman and the Distinguished Delegate of Japan as well. We also think that the Indian Ambassador's proposal to stop the debate here and then ask for the State Party and the Parties concerned what they think about it, we think it would be appropriate to first decide on whether we will or not postpone, because in the meantime, many colleagues already made interventions while it seems to us it would be more wise to first see will we treat this tomorrow? Yes, or not?

If it would be decided that we can indeed give it another 24 hours so that there can be some work done, we would also like to request that our experts, experts of Committee members, may attend these works. So, if you allow me, we would like to request, before we enter into the matter, that this is solved, if we will postpone, yes or not.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for your intervention.

So, in terms of postponing, the draft decision is for tomorrow. I mean, that was what the proposed point of order by Oman.

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

My suggestion was not to postpone the debate on the item. I'm suggesting to postpone the discussion on the amendment, I mean, the draft resolution. So, it is two different issues.

We want to listen from Member States about their status about the whole issue. But I am suggesting to postpone the discussion of the amended draft resolution, because we need to revise some of the language and to sit with the Advisory Body.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, Your Excellency, this is how it was looking like. It's like we look and hear from the Committee members and then examine the draft decision tomorrow.

Okay, so we will continue in giving the floor to...

The Delegation of Oman:

Yes, because some countries are asking to stop the discussion. That's not what I meant.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Exactly, Your Excellency.

So, we will proceed with taking the floor of the Committee members. And then, if there is a consensus, we will postpone the examination of that draft decision to tomorrow.

So, we will move on with Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Italy supports the proposal made by Oman, Japan and Belgium.

We want to commend the serious efforts made by Bangladesh, and unfortunately, the language between the original draft decision and the substantial amendments is very, very far.

We believe that in 24 hours, probably, some further talks between Secretariat and State Party, that can take in consideration these efforts that have been recognized by many members, can take to a more simplified wording of the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

Saudi Arabia commends the efforts made by Bangladesh with respect to safeguarding this property, The Sundarbans.

We support the proposal made by the Sultanate of Oman as to postponing discussion on the draft decision until tomorrow.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would also like to thank the Delegation of Oman for submitting these amendments, since they reflect significant progress made so far by the State Party, as well as the implementation of concrete measures to prevent any direct impacts on this property's OUV. As already mentioned by previous speakers, we believe that the State Party must be encouraged to continue its efforts and reporting procedures in accordance with the Operational Guidelines of the Convention.

We would also like to support the proposal of Oman to suspend the decision on this DR only until tomorrow, in order to achieve a compromise and address all pending issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We note that the 2019 REMA could not submit their report due to pandemic. We finally submitted a report in 2021. However, the State Party completed the National Oil and Chemical Spill and Contingency Plan during the COVID in 2020. This is yet another demonstration of the State Party's commitment to conservation of OUV of the property.

I would like, therefore, to request the State Party of Bangladesh, through you, Mr. Chairman, if the Distinguished Ambassador could enlighten us as to why there was a delay in starting the implementation of the NOSCOP.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to go back to Belgium.

Regarding your request, we are suspending the debate or if you have an intervention, you would like to have an intervention before we give the floor to the State Party?

The Delegation of Belgium:

No, thank you, Chair.

Indeed, there is a consensus on the way to proceed, so please continue. We're fine.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I think there are no more comments or interventions.

Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to commend the State Party on doing their work on The Sundarbans. And we also like to echo our support for postponing the decision until tomorrow as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more interventions from the Committee. I think, as there are consensus to postpone the examination of the draft decision tomorrow, but we will give the floor to the State Party before we proceed.

Bangladesh, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Bangladesh:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the distinguished members of the Committee.

Since I'm taking the floor for the very first time in this session, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman and the members of the Bureau. I'd also like to thank the permanent Delegation of the Sultanate of Oman for authoring the draft amendments.

Mr. Chair, I don't know whether we should be responding to the comments made by IUCN, because we have just received their views on the SEA and SEMP, which we should have received at least six weeks ago according to the Rules of Procedure.

However, there were other questions which was addressed to the State Party.

For instance, to start with, what are the conservation methods? What are the conservation activities that Bangladesh has undertaken? I can give you right away 17 of them, but I don't think the time will permit. But just to mention a few things, we deployed spatial monitoring and reporting tools in the Sundarbans to prevent floral and faunal aquatic resources, whose application helped reduce the wildlife poaching, smuggling and illegal fishing. We have imposed moratorium on logging. We have drone-based monitoring to ensure better security. We have three new dolphin reserves. We have a Tiger-Action Plan, we have a wildlife-breeding, fish and crab conservation measures. And I can go on and on.

But coming back to the issue which is being discussed by the Distinguished members of the Committee, and I think that this is what you would like to hear from this from the State Party is whether we are agreeable to the proposition that we continue with the debate now, and we take up the draft decision tomorrow within the Agenda Item 7B. Well, for the sake of flexibility and compromise, we are agreeable to do that.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, as Oman proposed to postpone the examination of the draft decision, I think there has to be a Drafting Group will be formed for the draft decision and led by one Committee member. So, I would like to hear from you, Oman.

Would you like to lead this Drafting Group?

The Delegation of Oman:

I think I'd rather have someone else to do that, to be neutral.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And also, we'd like to know who will be part of this Drafting Group.

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, we'd like to take on that responsibility.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Oman would also be one of the group.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Italy is available to take part in the Drafting Group.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Your Excellency, Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to say that we are happy to be a part of it.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, the Expert Body of India would like to be a part of the Drafting Group.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Saudi Arabia would also like to be part of the Drafting Group.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also can form part of the Working Group.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My Delegation as well is ready to participate in the Working Group. I think you should make it as open ended, which country who would like to join could join, without spending time.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar*.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We are also willing to be part of this group.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I'd like to let you know that...

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, sorry, Chair, sorry to take the floor again, but we'd also like to suggest that IUCN joins this Working Group in an advisory capacity.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

That's what I was going to say. The Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat are at your disposal.

Thank you everyone.

So, we will resume to this item tomorrow. *[gavel]*

7B.19 Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex (Thailand) // Complexe forestier de Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai (Thaïlande)

The Chairperson:

For the next property to be discussed, Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex (Thailand), I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Thailand, to present to the Committee the reason why it made such request.

Excellency, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency. It's the State Party of India that is presenting this.

The Chairperson:

My apologies. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

First of all, I would like to start off by saying the Saudi Arabian Delegation has wished *Salam Aleykum*. So let me reply *Aleykum Salam* from India.

And with that, Excellency, India wishes to refer to the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.19** regarding the Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex in Thailand.

My Delegation has carefully studied the draft decision, in particular the possible modifications of some areas of Thap Lan National Park by revising its boundaries. We find that the draft does not reflect the context on the ground and the information submitted by the State Party. Upon studying the report of the state of conservation, we have learned that, in 2005, Thailand sent a letter to the IUCN confirming that some areas of inhabited and degraded park

land in the north and northwest of Thap Lan National Park would be excluded from the Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex. Meanwhile, some areas in the National Reserve Forest, located in the north of the Thap Lan National Park, would be added to the Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai Forest Complex. In this regard, India would like to seek some clarification from the State Party of the Kingdom of Thailand on two points: one, the rationale behind the possible modification of the boundary of the property; two, the way forward, taking into account relevant procedures in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the Convention. As India would like to emphasize that compliance with the Operational Guidelines, decisions of the Committee, as well as recommendations from the Advisory Bodies are important mechanisms to ensure the effective protection of World Heritage sites, therefore, India encourages Thailand to remain open to constructive dialogues with the I, the Advisory Bodies and notify the World Heritage Centre in accordance with the Operational Guidelines, once the process of the boundary modification has been legally initiated.

Mr. Chairperson, in light of the situation, India has proposed some minor amendments to the draft decision, and we hope that the Committee members could lend their support to the draft amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat and the IUCN to respond to this comment. Thank you.

Point of order. Russia.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair.

Excuse me for taking the floor all of a sudden, our excuses, our apologies.

We simply wished to speak with reference to what was just discussed, that is the creation of a Drafting Group. We would also like to be part of this Drafting Group, if possible, as we were coauthor to the amendment.

And we would also like to draw attention to the fact that the Advisory Bodies might provide some useful information and some useful advice to this group. However, they are not supposed to be part of negotiations when we're actually drafting decisions, so this, I think, does need to be taken into account.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

It's well noted.

Secretariat.

The Secretariat:

IUCN responds to this point.

The Chairperson:

IUCN, you may proceed.

IUCN:

Yes. Thank you, Chair.

The World Heritage Centre and IUCN note that the proposed amendment in Paragraph 4 reflects a point of clarification that was provided by the State Party of Thailand during meetings, during this Committee session, that there has been no change made to the boundaries of Thap Lan National Park to date, and that the State Party has expressed its commitment to follow the processes of the World Heritage Convention in relation to boundary modifications.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to...

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We are coauthor for the amendment of this draft decision.

Oman appreciates the commendable effort of the State Party that has made in preserving the property OUV, and the dedication of safeguarding this invaluable natural treasure is truly inspiring. The State Party management measure implementation are also commendable, in addition to their collaboration with international organization which enhanced their efforts, showcases in their long-term vision and dedicated to continuous improvement in preserving this site.

Taking into account this reason, Oman welcomes the amendment of the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In light of the presentation by India, and also in light of the clarifications made by IUCN, we support this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Any other interventions?

Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

Qatar has carefully listened to what India said, and we commend the efforts made to safeguard this property. Therefore, we support the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je voudrais tout d'abord remercier l'Organe consultatif pour son travail très appréciable. Ensuite, tout comme la Thaïlande, je suis d'avis que le respect des Orientations pour la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial, les décisions du Comité du patrimoine mondial ainsi que les recommandations des Organisations consultatives sont importantes et constituent un mécanisme pour assurer la protection efficace des sites naturels du patrimoine mondial et leur valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

Notre sentiment par rapport au complexe forestier du Dong Phrayayen est que la modification prévue des limites du bien est conforme à la stratégie nationale du Gouvernement royal thaïlandais concernant le statut juridique du régime foncier des personnes qui résident dans des zones protégées. En effet, les zones potentiellement exclues sont celles résidentielles ainsi que les terres arables, ce qui n'aura aucun impact sur la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du complexe en question. L'État partie de Thaïlande pourrait toutefois donner d'amples précisions sur ces aspects. En tout état de cause, nous retenons, qu'à ce stade, aucune modification des limites n'a eu lieu. Soulignons que les agences compétentes thaïlandaises sont encore en train de réaliser des études et de procéder à des vérifications des données pertinentes et l'État partie de la Thaïlande s'engage fermement à signaler au Centre du patrimoine mondial, le cas échéant, toutes évolutions y relatives.

Au vu de ces éléments, nous appuyons les amendements relatifs au Projet de décision **45 COM 7B.19**, relatif au complexe forestier de Dong Phrayayen-Khao Yai.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We would like to support the amendment as proposed and supported by other Parties in Paragraph 4, which appropriately reminds the State Party of Thailand how to cautiously proceed with a possible boundary modification without compromising the legal status and protection of the World Heritage property.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We appreciate the explanation given by IUCN. We also extend our support for the amendment proposed by India.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you very much.

We also support the amendments of Paragraph 4 as originally suggested by India.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Rwanda is joining its voice to support the proposed amendment by India.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines registers its support for the amendment submitted by India.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, it seems like we exhausted the list of the Committee members and Laos asked the floor. So, we will give the floor to Laos.

The Observer Delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My Delegation highly commends the tireless and exemplary efforts made by the State Party of Thailand. And in the same vein, my Delegation would like to echo the invention and amendments submitted by India.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see there's no more interventions.

So, dear colleagues, I would like to invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.19** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of India, which was supported by the Distinguished Delegations of Thailand, Egypt and Qatar. Now, from the floor, we have also received confirmations from the Distinguished Delegations of Oman, Japan, South Africa, Ethiopia, Bulgaria, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Mali.

The proposed amendment is for Para 4. The revised Para reads as: "Takes note that the State Party is considering the possible modification of some areas of Thap Lan National Park by revising its boundaries and reminds the State Party that a modification with the potential to have a significant impact on the extent of the property or affect its Outstanding Universal Value would require a significant boundary modification, in line with the Operational Guidelines;".

Rest of the paras remains as they are.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I think we shall proceed to examine the draft decision, paragraph by paragraph.

I see from Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 3, there are no amendments.

Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Salam Aleykum.

We'd like to support the amendments in general.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia would also like to join the rest of the members in supporting the amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, let's proceed with examining the draft decision as I mentioned...

Nigeria, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Nigeria would like to be included in the list, please.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

Now, we can proceed.

As from Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 3, there are no amendments, do you agree to accept them as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

We have a proposal for Paragraph no. 4. Do you agree with the proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

From Paragraph 5 until Paragraph 10, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as it is? I see no objections, so adopted. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues,

To adopt the whole draft decision as a whole, there are no objections? I see none.

I declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.19** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Now, I would like to invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read the list of World Heritage located in the Asia-Pacific States region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following properties located in the Asia-Pacific States region, for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Great Barrier Reef (Australia)
- Komodo National Park (Indonesia)
- Lorentz National Park (Indonesia)
- Phoenix Islands Protected Area (Kiribati)
- Landscapes of Dauria (Mongolia, Russian Federation)
- Gondwana Rainforests of Australia (Australia)
- Greater Blue Mountains Area (Australia)
- Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan Protected Area (China)
- Keoladeo National Park (India)
- Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (India)
- Shiretoko (Japan)
- Western Tien-Shan (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan)
- Chitwan National Park (Nepal)
- Sagarmatha National Park (Nepal)
- Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex (Thailand)
- Ha Long Bay (Viet Nam)
- Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park (Viet Nam)

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If the Committee agrees with these state of conservation reports and there is no objection, I declare that the Decisions read out adopted. *[gavel]*

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

7B.26 Volcanoes of Kamchatka (Russian Federation) // Volcans du Kamchatka (Fédération de Russie)

The Chairperson:

For the next property to be discussed, a property proposed for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, I would like to give the floor to the Secretariat and IUCN to present the reports on the state of conservation of the natural properties located in the Europe and North America region and opened for discussion.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

In its report submitted on 31 January 2022, the State Party confirmed that the areas of Vilyuchinskaya Bay and Zhirovaya Bay were excluded from the boundaries of the South Kamchatka Nature Park under Decree 311-P of the Kamchatka Territory Government, approved on 16 July 2021. The confirmation by the State Party, in its report to the Committee, that boundaries of the South Kamchatka Nature Park have indeed been modified at the national level is of utmost concern as this means that the protection status of part of the property has been removed. In its letter, sent to the World Heritage Centre just before this session, on 8 September 2023, following an online meeting with the State Party that same day, with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, the State Party indicated that a new National Park is to be designated in 2024, covering the area of the South Kamchatka Nature Park as amended in the 2021 Decree. The National Park would, therefore, not include Vilyuchinskaya and Zhirovaya Bays, although these would be planned to be included in the buffer zone in the future. This means that these areas of the property also will remain without adequate legal protection after the creation of the National Park.

It is recalled that the legal protection is one of the three pillars of the Outstanding Universal Value and that under Paragraph 180 b) of the Operational Guidelines a property is faced with potential danger if the modification of the legal protective status of the area could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics. The removal of the areas from the South Kamchatka Nature Park under national law constitutes a clear modification of the legal protective status of this part of the property, which does not require substantiation via the pending mission. It is, therefore, concluded that the removal of these areas from South Kamchatka Nature Park constitutes a clear potential danger as foreseen in Paragraph 180 of the Operational Guidelines.

It further needs to be recalled that the removal of the protection status of this area of the property was motivated by the planned development of a large-scale tourism resort in these areas, the "Three Volcanoes project". The State Party reports that infrastructure previously proposed within the property under the project, including a marine terminal in Vilyuchinskaya Bay, a hotel in Zhirovaya Bay and a road to connect these areas with further tourism infrastructure outside the property has not yet been approved. Nonetheless, the legal protection of these areas of the property has not been restored.

It is, therefore, recommended that the Committee inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in line with the Operational Guidelines, and request the State Party to develop a set of corrective measures and a Desired state of conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger ensuring that the legal protection of the entire property is restored and that tourism development within the property does not negatively impact on its OUV.

IUCN will also comment to this site.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Based on the information received from the State Party, IUCN concurs with the World Heritage Centre that the property is lacking adequate legal protection in the areas excised from the South Kamchatka Nature Park. IUCN notes that this area currently belongs to lands of the Forestry Fund, with a small proportion also belonging to lands of Specially Protected Territories and Objects, however, considers that this is not consistent with the property's OUV. Moreover, no detailed information has been provided as to the level of protection that would be granted to the Vilyuchinskaya and Zhirovaya Bays through their inclusion in the National Park buffer zone, specifically whether the level of protection afforded within this legal framework would be in line with the property's OUV in the context of the proposed infrastructure development in these areas, which the World Heritage Centre and IUCN consider could jeopardize its OUV, if approved in future.

IUCN recalls the repeated requests by the World Heritage Committee to implement the recommendations of the 2007 and 2019 missions to the property to further upgrade the protection status of the regional protected areas included in the property and to strengthen the zoning to bring it in line with the required protection of its OUV. The removal of the area from the Southern Kamchatka Nature Park to its current level of protection, therefore, leads IUCN to the conclusion that the property cannot be considered to meet the protection and management requirements consistent with its OUV.

Finally, it is also recalled that the State Party previously submitted a minor boundary modification to exclude this area from the property, and that the IUCN evaluation concluded that the area contains attributes directly relevant to the property's OUV, and should, therefore, not be proposed for removal. The proposal was subsequently withdrawn by the State Party before being examined by the Committee.

In conclusion, IUCN considers that the property meets the criteria for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to know if there are any interventions or comments from the Committee members.

Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

As the State Party which submitted the amendment, Ethiopia would like to make the following comments.

Ethiopia submitted amendments on the proposed draft decision on the Volcanoes of Kamchatka for the following procedural reasons:

- In accordance with the Guidelines, the Russian Federation State Party informed the IUCN of its plans for a possible minor boundary modification of the property.
- Although the IUCN evaluation was officially published on the UNESCO website prior to the publication, no information had been received by the State Party stating that the anticipated plans for minor modification of the boundaries could threaten the property's Outstanding Universal Values.

It should be noted that the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee made almost identical claims but that, at the end, didn't decide to include the property in the List of Danger, nor was there any indication to have the file included for consideration at the 45th session of the Committee for a listing in Danger. In accordance with the Guidelines, it should be noted that when considerations of inscription of a property on the List of Heritage in Danger, prior consultation of a joint Reactive Monitoring mission should be carried out for proper assessment. This has unfortunately not taken place.

Moreover, important factual circumstances were not taken into account in the preparation of this draft decision. The Three Volcanoes Park project is being implemented outside the boundaries of the South Kamchatka Nature Park and at a considerable distance from it, including beyond the boundaries, pending their clarification. As of the current date, there are no economic activities that could cause damage to the property. Hence, the change in the status of the South Kamchatka Nature Park did not fundamentally affect nor weaken the protection of the property to the point where it is threat requiring protection. It has also come to our knowledge that additional measures aimed at ensuring the conservation of the property's OUV are being taken. Therefore, without carrying out proper monitoring mission, the Ethiopian Delegation failed to understand that the grounds for assisting that there is a specific threat to the property. Without a shadow of doubt, the conclusion about the alleged potential danger in connection with the implementation of a planned project activity seems also premature.

In this context, Ethiopia proposes that the discussion on this item be postponed for the next session so as to allow the joint Reactive Monitoring mission to be carried out, so as to enable the experts to confirm or deny the existence of such potential threat on the ground and allow them as well to conduct appropriate consultation in order to decide whether or not to inscribe the property on the List of Heritage in Danger.

Based on the above, Mr. Chairperson, Ethiopia submits amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to give the floor to Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

While we appreciate the creation of the National Park and granting the national level of protection to the site, we also note that there is a part of the World Heritage property that is not included in the National Park. So, we were wondering if the Russian Federation could clarify whether an extension of the National Park to include that missing segment is something that could be foreseen for the very near future, and pending that extension, we would also be interested to know what the protection status is today of the area of the World Heritage property that is not included in the National Park, whether developments, be it tourist facilities or other things, are currently possible in this area or not.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous tenons tout d'abord à saluer le Centre du patrimoine et l'UICN pour leur rapport sur l'état de conservation des volcans du Kamchatka. Il s'agit du rapport issu de la mission conjointe de suivi réactif Centre du patrimoine mondial/UICN effectuée en 2019. Il convient ensuite de rappeler que l'État partie de Russie a informé le Centre et l'UICN des plans pour une éventuelle modification mineure des limites du bien, conformément au Paragraphe 172, des Orientations devant guider la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial. Nous notons que l'évaluation de l'UICN pour une modification mineure des limites du bien a été publiée le 8 juin 2021 et avant cette publication, aucune information n'avait été reçue du Centre du patrimoine mondial indiquant que des projets de modification mineure des limites de l'une des composantes du bien pourraient menacer sa valeur universelle exceptionnelle. Rappelons en outre que, conformément au Point 183 des Orientations, lors de l'examen de l'inscription d'un bien sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril, le Comité devrait élaborer, et dans la mesure du possible, adopter après consultation de l'État partie concerné, des exigences relatives à un état de conservation attendu en vue du retrait du bien de la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril et d'un programme de mesures correctives pour le bien. Cependant, nous notons que cette consultation n'a pas été faite. Soulignons par ailleurs les efforts considérables fournis par l'État partie de Russie pour conserver la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien et le préserver des dommages irréversibles.

À la date d'aujourd'hui, à ce que nous sachions, il n'y a pas d'activité économique qui puisse causer des dommages aux biens. Aucun document autorisant des travaux de construction sur le territoire du parc naturel du Kamtchatka méridional ou à proximité immédiate de ces biens, de ces limites, n'a non plus été délivré par les autorités de l'État du kraï du Kamtchatka. L'État partie de la Russie pourrait, le cas échéant, nous fournir d'amples éclairages y relatifs. Ajoutons que, conformément à la décision de la 44^e session du Centre du patrimoine mondial en 2021, le Gouvernement du kraï du Kamtchatka a approuvé la feuille de route pour l'établissement d'une zone de protection tampon du parc naturel du Kamchatka méridional afin de fournir des mesures de protection supplémentaires pour la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien. À la lumière de ces éléments, une décision de mise sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril nous paraît prématurée.

C'est pourquoi nous apportons notre soutien aux amendements proposés par l'Éthiopie concernant cette décision. Nous saluons la disponibilité affirmée de l'État partie de la Russie à accueillir une mission conjointe de suivi réactif du Centre du patrimoine mondial et de l'UICN afin que les experts puissent confirmer ou infirmer en toute sérénité l'existence d'une menace potentielle grave et mener, le cas échéant, les consultations appropriées.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

Very briefly. After having heard the IUCN report and the statements made by previous speakers, we commend these reports, and we take due note thereof. We also support Ethiopia's amendments.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like also to thank the Advisory Body, and I would like to thank the State Party and the Advisory Body, both for their excellent report and collaboration, which contributed to conservation of the property. I will take this opportunity to appreciate the great efforts provided by the State Party for its endeavour to preserve the property Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). By prioritizing the conservation of the site, the State Party has shown a deep understanding of the significance, implementing additional management measures to ensure the change in the status of the territory of the South Kamchatka Natural Park did not fundamentally affect the possibility of its use, and did not weaken the protection of the property to the point or cause any threat. Further, the State Party shows their commitment to conduct significant research and prepare proposal on the regime and boundaries of the

protection zone and enhance more cooperation with the Advisory Body. However, we believe that sufficient time is required to allow the State Party to comply with all requirements of the Advisory Body.

For this reason, and as was stated by Ethiopia, we support the amendment to the draft decision.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa would like to align with the statement given by Ethiopia and Mali in respect of the procedural aspects as raised. We, therefore, would like to propose that the Advisory Body undertake a Reactive Monitoring mission, which was expected to be undertaken in 2022, as we feel that the decision to place the property on World Heritage List of sites in Danger is very premature.

We will also propose that the State Party be given an opportunity to clarify certain elements before we can arrive at the decision. Further that, we can confirm that the State Party has confirmed to South Africa that the marine terminal for cruise ships, as planned in the pristine fjords, is no longer planned.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

My Delegation agrees with the points raised by Ethiopia regarding the absence of Reactive Monitoring mission to evaluate the state of conservation of the site before deciding on the procedure of whether to inscribe it on the World Heritage List in Danger or not.

My Delegation would like to ask the Delegation of Russian Federation for clarification on the additional measures that have been taken to preserve the Volcanoes of Kamchatka since the 44th session of the Committee.

I thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Salam Aleykum.

We would like to thank the State Party and the Advisory Body for the efforts which they have done to protect the site, and we would like to ask the State Party what activities are planned at the UNESCO natural Heritage site, and can they harm it?

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

We would like to support the amendments presented by the State Party of Ethiopia regarding the Russian World Heritage property, Volcanoes of Kamchatka. We assume that the Russian Federation has presented as additional information the measures it has taken to comply with the decisions and postulates of the Convention and welcome the State Party's efforts to preserve the volcanoes. In particular, the State Party has started the work on the creation of a Specially Protected Natural Area of Federal Significance, a National Park with the project name of "Volcanoes of Kamchatka". The National Park will be created on the basis of two Specially Protected Natural Territories of Regional Importance, Klyuchevskoy Nature Park and Southern Kamchatka Nature Park, and the protection zone of the National Park will fully include the territory within the boundaries of Vilyuchinskaya and Zhirovaya Bays. We have also been informed that the construction of a hydroelectric power station in the vicinity of the Kronotsky State

Nature Reserve and the proposed construction of a fish channel to connect Kronotskoye Lake with the Bering Sea are not planned to be implemented, and the withdrawal of mining licenses that could damage the Outstanding Universal Value of this property. We have also been informed of the significant changes in Russian environmental legislation.

We, therefore, support the proposed amendments to the draft decision on the Kamchatka Volcanoes property, primarily understanding and welcoming the State Party's willingness to continue dialogue and constructive work with the good work being done by the World Heritage Centre and the expert Body IUCN on the conservation of unique natural areas and request you to give floor to the State Party to respond to the queries and to the points raised.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

Rwanda supports the amendment proposed by Delegation of Ethiopia.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Zambia also supports the rest of the Committee members.

But at the same time, we would like to just appreciate the fact that it's not easy to manage sites like a geological site while you've got volcanoes and, you know, for you to start protecting volcanic processes is not something which is easy. And in this case, we would like to appreciate the fact that the Republic of Russia has made some steps in trying to protect such. At the same time, we want to appreciate the works that the Advisory Bodies are working on the same in trying to make sure that there are checks and balances. So, we want to commend, rather agree with those who would like to make sure that there is continued dialogue between the State Party of Russia and the Advisory Body.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I see no other interventions or requests.

Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I believe much has been said about the efforts of the State Party to comply to the recommendations by the Evaluation Body, and they've done everything to respond to the issues that have been raised.

So, based on this, Nigeria supports the amendment to the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat to respond to some of the comments addressed by Committee members.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to first respond to the points raised by Ethiopia and, in particular, why we are making this proposal when the mission could not take place, the mission which was requested by the Committee. As I mentioned in my presentation, the State Party, in its own report, confirmed that the legal protection status of the South Kamchatka

Nature Reserve was changed and that these areas had been excluded. As the lack of legal protection is explicitly mentioned in the Operational Guidelines as a case of potential danger, we consider that no mission was needed to ascertain this question.

In terms of the minor boundary modification. So, the minor boundary modification which was submitted and considered was supposed to be considered at the last session, was published. The results of that evaluation by IUCN were published in accordance with the normal procedures. I think my colleagues from the Nomination Unit could further clarify, but the normal procedures do not foresee a specific consultation with the State Party on the results of the evaluation of minor boundary modifications before they are published to the Committee.

In terms of the point on the Three Volcanoes Tourism Project. This project was presented to the 2019 mission, when the 2019 Reactive Monitoring mission was in Kamchatka. They received the presentation on this project, including details on what was planned, including the marine terminal in the Vysotskaya Bay and the hotel. I think the map is on the screen that was presented to the that mission. And since then, we have not received any official information from the State Party that changes had been made to this proposed project. Also, this map is still on the website of the company as of today. So, we did not receive any official information that the size of the project was being reconsidered.

Finally, in terms of the creation of the National Park, I think India mentioned the fact that the protection status of two components, which are currently under regional protection, are going to be elevated to national protection status as a National Park. This is, of course, a very welcome news, because this has been requested by the Committee for a long time to upgrade the protection status of the Regional Parks. However, the two components which are going to be elevated to National Park status are the South Kamchatka Nature Reserve and another component, and South Kamchatka Nature Reserve in its current configuration, meaning without the two areas that have been taken out of the South Kamchatka Nature Reserve, and, therefore, this is not a solution in terms of guaranteeing the protection status of that area. If, of course, these areas would be included in the National Park, that could be a solution, but at this stage, this is not foreseen. And although there is, it was mentioned in the letter from the Russian Federation that they are considering a buffer zone status for this area, we consider that a buffer zone is not an appropriate legal status for World Heritage site.

I don't know if IUCN wants to have... No. I think we limit this to these explanations.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to...

Ethiopia, do you have any interventions before passing the floor to...

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Mr. Chairperson,

I do apologize. I brought my flag up before you concluded. I assume that you are going to give the floor to the State Party for further clarification, I do apologize.

The Chairperson:

No worries.

So, yes, I would like to pass the floor to the Russian Federation to respond to the question addressed by Belgium, Mali, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and India.

You may have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair, very much for giving us the floor.

Thank you to our colleagues for your questions. I'd like to go through those questions one by one.

So first, the Three Volcano Park will be outside of the South Kamchatka Nature Park. It will be significantly distanced from the UNESCO property. Indeed, it will be at least 10 km from the UNESCO property. As of today, no activity that might damage the property is being carried out. There have been no building permits provided for building infrastructure on the site of the property. Therefore, it's very difficult to argue that there could be any concrete damage or threat to the property. Therefore, there is no real danger to the property we consider at this stage, and it's not founded to claim that there would be. No building of infrastructure at the borders of the South Kamchatka Nature Park is planned and none is being carried out. Some events are being organized with respect to eco-tourism, that is, we're adding to existing infrastructure so as to try to better protect rather than harm the property.

I would like to underscore that the state of conservation of the buffer zone will be equivalent to that of the rest of the area. Since 2021, we've actually increased financing to conserve the project from the regional budget. We've increased funding by 2.1 times. Likewise, there were some plans for mineral exploitation, but this has been stopped. And we've actually cancelled any licenses to carry out such work. We've also stopped the planned construction of a hydroelectric station. This all demonstrates, I think, that the Russian Federation is open to dialogue, and we are willing to fully fulfil the recommendations made to us in the context of the monitoring mission, and we really invite our colleagues to come and visit the property and see what's being done. And we hope that during the upcoming mission, you'll be able to assess our work carried out so far.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair, and thank you also to the Russian Federation for the answers that were provided.

I did notice, however, that in the answers there was more than once mentioned that today and at the moment the situation is like this. But what we are looking for is, the Committee, I think, and in line with the provisions of the Convention and the Operational Guidelines, is reassurances that also in the future we can be sure that no developments will take place that might harm the Outstanding Universal Value. So, I would like to ask the Russian Federation again whether developments in the future also..., we can have the reassurances that they can be excluded or that, at the very least, they will be put forward to the Committee and the World Heritage Centre in line with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines before they happen.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor back to the Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Chair. Thank you for this question.

I would note that in the framework of our national legislation, we are trying very hard to fulfil or carry out the recommendation of the World Heritage Centre with respect to providing federal status to this property. So, this will be federal status for the buffer zone around the property, and this would mean that the Federal Government of the Russian Federation would be committed to protecting this property. I think that this willingness on our part demonstrates that we do intend to protect this property for future generations. This means that we're not planning to conduct any construction work that might damage the property. And indeed, we're trying to recognize the unique nature of this property and to protect it from the trend for construction that we're seeing across the world.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any other comments or interventions?

So, since there is no other intervention, I would like to ask you and invite you, my colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.26** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Ethiopia, and we have received further confirmations from the floor from the Distinguished Delegations of Mali, Qatar, Oman, India, Rwanda, Zambia and Nigeria, and I think the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa also mentioned but it was subject to a query response from the Distinguished Delegation of Russian Federation. So, I'm not sure if the name has to be added, they may confirm.

Amendments are to Para 4 and Para 5, where the original text is completely deleted.

So, the revised Para 4 reads as: "Decides therefore to deploy without any further delay the joint World Heritage Centre *slash* /IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission initially scheduled in consultation with the State Party for March 2022 and then postponed;".

Paras 5 and 6 are retained as per original text of the draft decision.

Revised Para 7 now reads as: "Welcomes the measures to clarify the functional zoning of the property as well as the ongoing efforts to establish a strictly protected area of federal significance Volcanoes of Kamchatka National Park on the basis of Klyuchevskoy and South Kamchatka Natural Parks component parts of the property, dash, in order to strengthen its legal protection status, as recommended by the 2019 mission and previous Committee decisions;".

The revised Para 8: "Notes with appreciation the plans declared by the State Party to also establish a buffer zone for the federally protected Volcanoes of Kamchatka National Park to ensure the integrity of the property, as well as additional control of tourist traffic and adequate security;".

Paras 9 and 10 remain as they are.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'd like to give the floor to South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

We just wanted to confirm, Chair, that we are also part of this, of supporting the amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Salaam Aleykum.

We would like to add our name to support this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My Delegation also would like to support the amendments to the draft resolution.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

I see no other...

Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thailand would like to add our name as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I think there is no more intervention.

So, let's proceed and examine the draft decision, paragraph by paragraph.

So, Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 2, there are no amendment. Do you agree to accept them as it is? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, there is a proposal. There is no proposal. There is no amendment. Do we accept it as it is? If there is no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, there is a proposal. Do you accept it as it is? Do you accept the amended proposal? Are there any objections? So, I see no objection. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph. So, for Paragraph 4. A new Paragraph 4. We have a proposed paragraph. Do you accept this proposal? I see no objections. So, adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, there is no proposal, Paragraph 6 as well. Do you accept them as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, there is a proposal. Do you agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8, we have a proposal. Do you agree with this proposal?

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, thank you, Chair.

We would like to suggest to add at the end of the para: "to ensure the integrity of the property as well as additional control of developments, tourist traffic and adequate security". And then, continue with: "and invites the State Party to look into possibilities of extending the National Park to include the whole of the World Heritage property".

The Chairperson:

Would you please repeat it slowly?

The Delegation of Belgium:

I think it's quite correctly on the screen: "invites the State Party to look into possibilities to extend the boundaries of the National Park to include the whole of the World Heritage property".

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

Do you agree to this proposal?

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much.

I think I would like to ask the State Party, the constant State Party, if they agree with the additional proposal by Belgium, I don't know how we can propose to extend if the State Party are not willing.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

I'm sorry, Chair.

There is, in fact, one thing missing. What I proposed in the paragraph as it was, "as well as additional control of developments". So that's the word that should be added "tourist traffic and adequate security". And then, the rest of the sentence is there.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for the clarification.

I would like to give the floor to the Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair.

We are willing to accept this amendment by Belgium. The only thing would be for the last paragraph where we have "included in the whole", the property actually includes a number of different components, and so, we need to state which of these components are being referred to because there are several within the Kamchatka property.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

If I may, "to include the relevant component as a whole".

The Chairperson:

Belgium. You have any response on this?

The Delegation of Belgium:

I would hope the Secretariat could help us out with this one.

The Chairperson:

Secretariat.

The Secretariat:

I'm reading the proposal. So, basically the proposal is that the entire South Kamchatka Nature Reserve, as it existed at the time of inscription of the property, would be included in the National Park. I think that is the idea.

The Chairperson:

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

That is in fact the idea, I don't know if we can put it like that in the paragraph.

The Secretariat:

I think perhaps the easiest would be to say: "to include the South Kamchatka Nature Reserve, including" and then we put the names of the two areas that have been excluded, so "Vilyuchinskaya and Zhirovaya Bays into the National Park". I think that is very clear for everybody.

The Chairperson:

I would like to ask the Secretariat to repeat what they have mentioned a little bit slowly.

The Secretariat:

So, I said: "to extend the boundaries of the National Park to include the South Kamchatka Nature Reserve including the Vilyuchinskaya and Zhirovaya Bays". The correct spelling of the terms of the two areas, I can provide to the Secretariat with. Vilyuchinskaya and Zhirovaya Bays. I will give the names to the...

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Secretariat:

And it is "South Kamchatka Nature Park", not "South Kamchatka Nature Reserve".

The Chairperson:

Thank you to the Secretariat.

Belgium, does it make sense now?

The Delegation of Belgium:

We're very happy with what's on the screen, Chair.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to ask the Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

We, likewise, support this wording.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, we have this Paragraph 8. We have a new proposal. Do we all agree on this proposal? I see no objections. Io, it's adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9 and Paragraph 10, there are no amendments. Do we accept them as it is? I see no objections. So, adopted. *[gavel]*

So, dear colleagues, we will have to adopt the whole draft decision as a whole.

If there are no objections, I declare that Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.26** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat**The Chairperson:**

Now, I would like to invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the natural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Europe and North America region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may have the floor, Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following natural properties located in the Europe and North America region, for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion, are the following:

- Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine)
- Białowieża Forest (Belarus, Poland)
- Wood Buffalo National Park (Canada)
- Wadden Sea (Denmark, Germany, Netherlands)
- Lake Baikal (Russian Federation)
- Natural System of Wrangel Island Reserve (Russian Federation)
- Western Caucasus (Russian Federation)
- Pirin National Park (Bulgaria)
- Gulf of Porto: Calanche of Piana, Gulf of Girolata, Scandola Reserve (France)
- Durmitor National Park (Montenegro)
- Central Sikhote-Alin (Russian Federation)
- Golden Mountains of Altai (Russian Federation)
- Virgin Komi Forest (Russian Federation)

- Doñana National Park (Spain)
- Gough and Inaccessible Islands (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, if the Committee agrees on these state of conservation reports and there's no objection, I declare the Decisions read out are adopted. ^[gavel]

So, Canada requested the floor. They may have.

La Délégation du Canada (Observateur) :

Merci, M. le Président.

Comme c'est la première fois que le Canada prend la parole, j'aimerais saisir cette occasion pour remercier l'Arabie saoudite d'avoir accueilli cette réunion. Mes commentaires concernent le parc national de Wood Buffalo.

Le Gouvernement du Canada reconnaît la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du parc national de Wood Buffalo et s'engage à sa protection pour les générations futures.

In 2017, the Government of Canada led a collaborative effort, with indigenous, provincial and territorial partners to develop a multi-year Action Plan to address the state of conservation of the Park.

The Plan is informed by indigenous perspectives, values, and knowledge and collaborative leadership with indigenous partners who have a key role in its implementation. The Action Plan was commended by the Committee at its 43rd session in 2019.

The Government of Canada is investing more than US\$87 million to implement commitments, including:

- strengthening park management in collaboration with indigenous partners;
- enhancing research, monitoring and management of the Peace-Athabasca Delta using science and indigenous knowledge, and;
- establishing new mechanisms to support improved water management.

There has been notable progress since 2019, with more than two thirds of the 138 Action Plan measures now completed or underway.

The Committee's decision on Wood Buffalo National Park underscores the complex environmental challenges faced by this World Heritage site.

It also creates opportunities for the State Party and its partners to continue to work with IUCN and the World Heritage Committee to ensure implementation progress is recognized as we continue to put in place long-term solutions.

We look forward to the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to plan a third Reactive Monitoring mission in 2026, where we can demonstrate our progress to date.

I wish to thank the Committee for its recognition of our ongoing efforts for the conservation of Wood Buffalo National Park and reiterate Canada's commitment to address the conservation of Wood Buffalo in collaboration with governmental and indigenous partners.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Mikisew Cree First Nation.

The Mikisew Cree First Nation (Observer):

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman.

My name is Melody Lepine, and I'm a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation.

Wood Buffalo National Park is my ancestral lands, and the Peace-Athabasca Delta represents our culture and identity. It was the Mikisew Cree that sounded the alarm to the Committee about the deterioration of Wood Buffalo National Park's Outstanding Universal Value from upstream dams, oil sands mining and climate change. We are grateful that since then, the Committee has successfully urged Canada to acknowledge this situation and begin work on addressing the serious threats. The Wood Buffalo Action Plan is an important start of these efforts. My nation is proud to have contributed to its implementation despite ongoing barriers.

Mr. Chairman, while any progress is appreciated, the recent mission report confirms there continue to be numerous threats to the property. The Peace-Athabasca Delta remains at great risk. Unfortunately, threats have grown since the mission. The decision rightly notes there is need to further strengthen progress towards saving the Peace-Athabasca Delta. The Action Plan:

- urgently needs new sustained investments;
- must be enhanced to address challenges identified by the mission;
- must be supported by commitments from Canada to meet the timelines in your decision as well as greater participation by upstream jurisdictions;
- must urgently lead to real action within the Park and on the Peace and Athabasca Rivers to correct the harmful alterations to our Delta's hydrology.

We are hopeful your decision will be another opportunity for Canada to reflect on areas of progress, but most critically, to renew, rededicate and expand its commitments to save this vital area in full partnership with the Mikisew Cree. The Mikisew Cree is committed to working hard to see the Action Plan succeed. We expect nothing less of Canada and it is through partnerships we can secure a healthy future for this important place and safeguard our Mikisew way of life.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the World Heritage Watch.

The World Heritage Watch (Observer):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have two statements: one on the Wadden Sea; and one on Doñana National Park.

The Wadden Sea, representing also the Deutsche Umwelthilfe and the Vereniging from the Netherlands. The Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea, a World Heritage site of unmatched ecological importance, is in grave danger. The North Sea, integral to the Wadden Sea's ecosystem, recorded alarming temperatures five degrees above normal in June this year, a stark sign of environmental distress. Recent studies predict that 60% of ground dwelling species within the Wadden Sea will disappear in the coming years. Oil and gas extraction, fundamentally incompatible with World Heritage status, persists as Germany and the Netherlands greenlight new drilling projects. We commend the UNESCO Committee's efforts to assess cumulative impacts on the Wadden Sea. Yet assessments alone won't be sufficient. We implore the Committee to designate the Wadden Sea as a World Heritage in Danger. This overdue step is a call to action for the responsible States Parties. The Netherlands must uphold its January 2022 promise by refraining from approving further extractive projects. We demand the immediate withdrawal of the permit for the recently approved GEMS gas extraction project, and an end to the planned gas drilling at Ternaard. For Germany, we urgently request rejecting Wintershal Dea extension of oil extraction within the World Heritage site. Furthermore, we call for the rejection of one-year plans to drill in the immediate vicinity of this invaluable property. We must act resolutely now to protect the Wadden Sea unique, biodiverse heritage for present and future generations.

Thank you. I'm following with...

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

The World Heritage Watch (Observer):

I'm going to read the statement on Doñana now on behalf of WWF Spain, who planned to be here, but since we have advanced the Agenda, they will be late. So, they have asked me to present this.

Thank you, Chair.

"Doñana is facing the worst...

The Chairperson:

Excuse me, Sir. So, it is only allowed to you, you know, the intervention is only for two minutes.

The World Heritage Watch (Observer):

Yes, but per statement, two minutes, and I have two statements.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Excuse me. We will only be allowing you to provide one. My apologies.

The World Heritage Watch (Observer):

Very disappointing, Sir.

I remind you that WWF has been at the at the root of this Convention. It's one of the founding actors of why we are sitting here.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

The World Heritage Watch (Observer):

It's a major worldwide organization that is funding many, many activities that that's why we're having all these sites.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to ask the Alliance Earth if they are here...

So, then we will move to the following item.

MIXED HERITAGE PROPERTIES // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MIXTE

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÎBES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Now, I invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the mixed properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Latin America and Caribbean region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Merci. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following mixed properties located in the Latin America and the Caribbean region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are the following:

- Ancient Maya City and Protected Tropical Forests of Calakmul, Campeche (Mexico)
- Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu (Peru)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If the Committee agrees on these state of conservation reports and there is no objection, I declare the Decisions read out adopted. *[gavel]*

AFRICA // AFRIQUE

7B.101 Maloti-Drakensberg Park (Lesotho, South Africa) // Parc Maloti-Drakensberg (Lesotho, Afrique du Sud)

The Chairperson:

Now, for the next property to be discussed, Maloti-Drakensberg Park (Lesotho, South Africa), I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Rwanda, to present to the Committee the reason why it made such request.

You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to take the floor.

The Rwandan Delegation would like to first commend the States Parties of the Kingdom of Lesotho and South Africa on their collaboration in the conservation of this important transboundary site.

Chair, our rationale to propose for an amendment of Paragraph 3 before you of the draft decision is related to the updated information on the proposed cableway in the immediate vicinity of the property and the proposed oil and gas exploration within the anticipated buffer zone in South Africa. While these proposed developments might have potential to threaten the OUV of the property, we are encouraged by the fact that South Africa has had a discussion with the World Heritage Centre and both ICOMOS and IUCN, where this matter was clarified. We, therefore, appreciate that no formal development applications have ever been submitted to the competent authorities, and therefore, no information was expected to be updated by the States Parties on this matter. The Rwandan Delegation, therefore, proposed the amendment to reflect the commitments made by South Africa to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment, in line with the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context*, and inform the World Heritage Centre in accordance with Paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines. This information will also be updated in the state of conservation as resolved in the meeting.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat and Advisory Bodies.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In past sessions, the Committee expressed concern on proposed shale gas and oil exploration within the property's newly proposed buffer zone in South Africa, as well as the proposed cableway project, both of which, if pursued, could have negative impact on the property's OUV. We, indeed, had a meeting with the State Party in which the State Party confirmed that, for the moment, these proposals are not being considered and that they will, if they are considered in the future, provide the necessary Impact Assessments. So, we are happy with these clarifications provided by the State Party.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

ICOMOS acknowledges a fruitful meeting held with the State Party and the World Heritage Centre recently. This meeting has allowed to clarify various aspects, and particularly those which are the object of the amendment in the SOC report. ICOMOS, therefore, has no objection to the amendment which reflects the exchanges and clarifications achieved.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

No further comments from IUCN.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if anyone from the Committee members would like to take the floor.

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We appreciate also the efforts made by the Member State, and we do support the amendment of the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, I see Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Nous soutenons les amendements proposés par le Rwanda.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I see no additional interventions. We'd like to invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.101** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Rwanda, which has now been confirmed by the Distinguished Delegations of Oman and Mali as coauthors.

The amendment is for Para 3 of the draft decision.

The revised Para 3 reads as: "Appreciates the commitment by the State Party of South Africa to undertake Environmental Impact Assessments in line with the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context* for the proposed cableway in the immediate vicinity of the property, and for the proposed oil and gas exploration within the anticipated buffer zone in South Africa, which could impact the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and requests the State Party of South Africa to ensure that their potential impacts on the OUV of the property are assessed in line with the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, and to submit impact assessments to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before making any decisions that may be difficult to reverse, and to continue to keep the World Heritage Centre informed before any such pending decision to proceed is made, in accordance with the Paragraphs 118bis and 172 of the Operational Guidelines;"

Remaining paras are as per original draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

I would like India's name to be added, and I would like to also ask the editors whether its "impact assessments" plural or is "impact assessment" singular, because in the French it is "pour les évaluations". So, that's a plural in French and a plural in English as well. But in English, it doesn't sound quite right.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I would also like Ethiopia's name to be added in there.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

My Delegation also would like to add its name to the list of countries supporting amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like the Secretariat to clarify India's intervention, whether it is singular or plural.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think we can keep it plural where we are saying "environmental impact assessments". But in the second line, when we are saying "*Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments*", unless the toolkit is specific named just for impact assessment, I think here also we can retain the plural.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Is it good with you India?

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

Yes, I yield myself to the wisdom of the Rapporteur.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Chair, Zambia would like to add our name also on the issue of Maloti-Drakensberg Park for Lesotho and South Africa. We support, we should be added.

The Chairperson:

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

We would also like to commend the clear efforts of the State Party and add our name to the co-sponsors of this amendment.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any additional interventions? *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

We'd like to add our name to support this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I think that those making the addition did not hear me well. Ethiopia supports the amendment as proposed by Rwanda and would like to have its name on the text.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would also like to add the name of Thailand to the coauthors of the amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar*.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Qatar would support the amendment presented by Rwanda.

Thanks.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeeelan. Russia.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair.

We would also like to support this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no any other interventions. So, I would like you to proceed for examining the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

I see Paragraphs 1 and 2, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as it is? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we agree on this proposal? I see no objections. So, adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

From Paragraph 4 to Paragraph 9, there are no amendments. Do we agree to accept them as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

So, dear colleagues, to adopt the draft decision as a whole if there are no objections. I see none.

I declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.101** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Now, I would like to invite the Director of the World Heritage Centre to read the list of the mixed properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Africa region and for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The list of mixed properties located in the Africa region and for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion, are the following:

- Ennedi Massif: Natural and Cultural Landscape (Chad)
- Cliff of Bandiagara (Land of the Dogons) (Mali)
- Ngorongoro Conservation Area (United Republic of Tanzania)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If the Committee agrees on the state of conservation reports... I see no objections. I, therefore, declare the Decisions read out adopted. *[gavel]*

Also, I would like to refer back to the Director. So, we have a request from the Indigenous Forum.

You may have the floor.

The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage (Observer):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is a statement of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage regarding the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania:

"Mr. Chair,

We are deeply concerned about and appalled by reports that we have received about ongoing serious human rights abuses in and around the conservation area. As mentioned in Document 7B.Add.2, the Tanzanian Government has made plans to resettle the area's Masai indigenous residents from the property and has already relocated over 3,000 people. While the Government claims that the relocations are voluntary, the Government has heavily reduced basic social and medical services in the property, and continues to constrict Masai livelihoods as a means of exerting pressure on the Masai to relocate. Regrettably, this comes after UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies have repeatedly encouraged Tanzania to promote the voluntary resettlement of the indigenous communities. We have received information that the Government authorities are currently harassing and threatening community members who speak out against the relocations and have arrested dozens of peoples over the last three weeks, including political and traditional leaders. Last week, the Tanzanian Government abruptly cancelled an independent observation mission of European Parliament members that was to investigate the situation. We've also been told that a UNESCO Advisory mission that was to take place at the end of August was postponed at the last minute. We appreciate the Committee's unequivocal condemnation of any forced evictions in Decision **45 COM 7B.30**, and its emphasis on the need to respect human rights. Given the gravity of the situation and the reports of gross human rights abuses, we consider imperative that the UNESCO mission to the property to be undertaken and suggest that it will be conducted jointly with the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights."

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

ARAB STATES // ÉTATS ARABES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Now, I would like to invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the mixed properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Arab States region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may have the floor, Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The list of mixed properties located in the Arab States region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are the following:

- The Ahwar of Southern Iraq: Refuge of Biodiversity and the Relict Landscape of the Mesopotamian Cities (Iraq)
- Wadi Rum Protected Area (Jordan)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And the Committee agrees on these state of conservation reports and there is no objection, I would like to declare the Decisions read out adopted. *[gavel]*

So, I would like to pass the floor to Iraq.

The Observer Delegation of Iraq: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

Allow me to state that the Government of Iraq is committed to preserving and conserving the Ahwar of the South of Iraq. We are committed to implementing all of the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of this site despite the impact of climate change and the droughts that we've experienced over the past three years. This site covers a significant share of the country's water resources and despite the droughts that we've experienced we will continue to implement all of the necessary measures and we call on you to support us in our efforts. The Government of Iraq has undertaken all of the necessary measures in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and IUCN. In order to preserve the Outstanding Universal Value of this site and the ecological system thereof. As for oil exploration projects within the site's proximity, we wish to reassure you that we will not accept any of these such activities so long as no harmful impact has been demonstrated.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

ASIA-PACIFIC // ASIE-PACIFIQUE

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

So now, I would like to invite the Director, again, of the World Heritage Centre to read the list of the mixed properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Asia-Pacific region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

The following mixed property located in the Asian-Pacific Pacific region, is proposed for adoption without discussion:

- Trang An Landscape Complex (Viet Nam)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

[interpretation from Arabic] Iraq, please, could you turn off your microphone. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Committee agrees on the state of conservation report and have no objection. I would like to declare the decision is adopted. *[gavel]*

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Also, I would like to pass the floor again to Mr. Lazare to read the list of the mixed properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Europe and North America region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following mixed properties located in the Europe and North America region, for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion, are the following:

- Laponian Area (Sweden)
- Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid region (Albania, North Macedonia)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to ask the Committee if they agree on these state of conservation reports and, if there is no objection, I would like to declare the Decisions read out adopted. *[gavel]*

Sweden, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Sweden:

Thank you, Chair, for giving us the floor.

As this is the first time Sweden is taking the floor, please allow me to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the great hospitality.

We note the Committee's decision regarding Item 7B.32 concerning the Laponian Area, which is located in the Northern part of Sweden. Its uniqueness lies in the intersection of culture and nature, demonstrating a spectacular landscape and a unique living culture with traditional practice of reindeer husbandry by the Sami people. In March last year, the Swedish Government granted an exploitation concession for the right to extraction and utilization of iron based on 12 conditions, and one of these conditions, the Swedish National Heritage Board and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency were given the task to ensure that any development takes account of Laponian status as World Heritage property. An exploitation concession determines who has the right to extract the minerals, but it does not give a right to start operations. This requires a permit under the Swedish Environmental Code. In June this summer, we notified the World Heritage Centre of our intention to send a formal invitation for an Advisory mission to the Laponian Area. We regret that this notification came so close to the Committee meeting and, therefore, could not be taken into account. The Advisory Bodies are fundamental to this expert-based Convention. Sweden, therefore, welcomes the Committee's decision in line with the advice of the Advisory Bodies. We look forward to a fruitful dialogue and cooperation in organizing the mission, which will have to take place after the winter and the snow melting season. The same applies to the conducting of Impact Assessment.

To conclude, Mr. Chair, please let me assure the Committee and the Observers of our commitment to the World Heritage Convention and to the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Laponian Area.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like also to pass the floor to North Macedonia.

The Observer Delegation of North Macedonia:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Republic of North Macedonia is exceptionally proud to have the Ohrid region inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage, and have recently celebrated more than 40 years of its inscription. We remain fully committed to maintaining the World Heritage status for the property and to ensure its protection, conservation and sustainable management. We continue to strengthen the measures of protection of the Ohrid region and the Joint Strategic Recovery Plan, contributed by both North Macedonia and Albania, continues to be our direction and part of the strategic priorities of both countries.

Thank you very much.

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÎBES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Now, also going back to the Director of the World Heritage I, I would like to ask Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the cultural properties inscribed in the World Heritage List, located in Latin America and the Caribbean region, for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The list of cultural properties located in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion, are the following:

- National History Park – Citadel, Sans Souci, Ramiers (Haiti)
- Quebrada de Humahuaca (Argentina)
- Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru)
- Tiwanaku: Spiritual and Political Centre of the Tiwanaku Culture (Bolivia)
- Brasilia (Brazil)
- Settlement and Artificial Mummification of the Chinchorro Culture in the Arica and Parinacota Region (Chile)
- Churches of Chiloé (Chile)
- Historic Quarter of the Seaport City of Valparaíso (Chile)
- Port, Fortresses and Group of Monuments, Cartagena (Colombia)
- Precolumbian Chiefdom Settlements with Stone Spheres of the Diquís (Costa Rica)
- Colonial City of Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic)
- City of Quito (Ecuador)
- Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and Historic District of Panamá (Panama)
- Historic Centre of Lima (Peru)
- Historic Centre of the City of Arequipa (Peru)
- Historic Inner City of Paramaribo (Suriname)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

The Committee agrees on these state of conservation reports and have no objection.

I declare the Decisions read out adopted. *[gavel]*

Panama, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Panama:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Being this is the first time, we take the floor, we would like to thank the Host Country for a warm welcome and the Chair for his management of the meeting.

We also join our voice to our colleagues' condolences for the Government and people of Morocco after Friday's earthquake.

Chair, colleagues,

The Government of Panama would like to clarify that in the Decision **7B.116**, that has been adopted, in Paragraph 3, there is a mention that our existing property, Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and Historic District of Panamá, will be transformed by our new nomination that is currently being evaluated, the Colonial Transisthmian Route of Panamá. It's important to note that the new nomination will include the existing site, yet it will not transform it. We appreciate this clarification be included in this meeting report.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'll go back to Argentina. Apologies if you raised your flag before Panama.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much. Chair.

As regards Quebrada de Humahuaca, Argentina accepts this decision and we highlight that the decision made at the 44th session has been fulfilled, as demonstrated by the Reactive Monitoring mission carried out in last July. We have also been involving the institutions of the Argentinian Heritage Committee in our mission. We have carried out Impact Assessment requests, and we have been working with the World Heritage Centre in order to revise these reports. In Jujuy, we have been working with ICOMOS, and the Republic of Argentina supports this decision and through the technical team in June 2024, we have been able to work together. In 2024, we will be celebrating the anniversary of this site. The State of Chile has been working with us to come up with an ad-hoc proposal to ensure that we can protect all of the components of the property, and we have been working with the management authorities, the technical coordinating unit of Argentina, and we have undertaken significant efforts alongside the concerned States Parties. The World Heritage Committee will be assessing this report at its 47th session.

And lastly, as regards the participatory nature of this mission, we have undertaken efforts to ensure better monitoring of the site alongside the State Party of Peru.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

AFRICA // AFRIQUE

7B.34 Royal Palaces of Abomey (Benin) // Palais royaux d'Abomey (Bénin)

The Chairperson:

So, moving from Latin America and Caribbean to Africa, for the next property to be discussed, Royal Palaces of Abomey (Benin), I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Nigeria to present to the Committee the reason why it made such request.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor.

Having examined with great attention the draft decision on the item and appreciating the great resolve of the State Party to continue to comply with the recommendations of the Reactive Monitoring mission to the Royal Palaces of Abomey, as many are being taken into account, Nigeria proposes amendments to Paragraph 7, a new Paragraph 8 and Paragraph 10 of the DR. We stress that the ongoing revision of the UNESCO-Benin Framework Agreement will, inter alia, greatly improve capacity-building to keep up with the demands of protecting and promoting the property, as well as technical and scientific support for future developments.

Mr. Chair, the Royal Palaces of Abomey are a subject of perfect collaboration between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies, with the new vision developed in Benin for the protection of cultural heritage. The site benefits from the special attention at the highest level of government, and this will continue to impact its response to the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies for continued improvement.

In the light of the above, we reaffirm that the requested Heritage Impact Study was carried out and believe that a revision of this study will not be necessary considering the progress observed on the site since the last report. I, therefore, invite the Committee to adopt the DR as amended and reaffirm that the State Party remains open to the Committee's recommendations and advice as may be necessary.

Thank you for your attention, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat and ICOMOS to respond to this comment. You have the floor.

Le Secrétariat :

M. le Président, chers membres du Comité,

L'amendement proposé fait suite à de nombreux échanges avec l'État partie concernant la coopération entre l'UNESCO et le Gouvernement du Bénin dans le domaine de l'éducation et notamment de la culture. En effet, l'UNESCO et le Gouvernement du Bénin sont engagés depuis septembre 2022 dans l'élaboration d'un projet d'envergure dans le domaine de la culture, qui prévoit, entre autres, d'appuyer davantage l'engagement des institutions de professionnels du patrimoine et des communautés dans la conservation, la gestion et la sécurisation du patrimoine historique et culturel, matériel et immatériel, lié aux palais royaux d'Abomey et du Musée des Rois et des Amazones du Dahomey.

Nous n'avons donc pas d'objection à l'amendement proposé. L'ICOMOS souhaite ajouter quelques observations additionnelles.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS.

ICOMOS :

M. le Président,

L'ICOMOS exprime son appréciation pour la collaboration fructueuse avec l'État partie du Bénin dans le processus de développement du projet du Musée des Rois et Amazones de Danxomè, un projet très important pour le bien et le patrimoine culturel du Bénin. L'ICOMOS confirme l'attention accordée par l'État partie à la mise en œuvre du plan de gestion et à l'intégration des mesures de sécurité/sureté pour le bien, en particulier pour ce qui concerne les incendies, afin d'assurer la conservation du bien dans son ensemble.

L'ICOMOS reste à la disposition de l'État partie pour poursuivre le dialogue et la coopération déjà établie avec le Bénin pour l'actualisation du plan de gestion et les étapes ultérieures de la conception du projet de musée.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa supports the amendment made by the Delegate from Nigeria and wishes to congratulate the State Party of Benin for the commitment demonstrated to address the illegal development encroachment of the property. The State Party of Benin is in full collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Body. With the new vision developed in Benin for the protection of cultural heritage, the site enjoys special attention at the highest level of government of Benin. South Africa has been assured that most of the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies and the report of the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission are being addressed.

Furthermore, Mr. Chairperson, we wish to bring to the attention of this Committee that the requested Heritage Impact assessment was carried out even though this project requires a revision of the statute. The State Party remains open to the Committee's recommendations and advice.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there are any interventions.

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman: *[Interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Now that we've heard the statement by Niger, Nigeria, excuse me, and the Advisory Bodies, we can clearly see that the Government of Benin has demonstrated its willingness to cooperate with the World Heritage Centre and with the Advisory Bodies. Therefore, we support the amendments.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Avec la nouvelle vision développée par l'État partie du Bénin pour la protection du patrimoine culturel, le site dénommé "palais royaux d'Abomey" bénéficie d'une attention particulière de la part des autorités béninoises. Il convient de souligner de même la riche collaboration entre le Bénin, le Centre du patrimoine mondial et les Organisations consultatives. Le Bénin s'emploie du reste, avec de grands moyens financiers, à redonner une meilleure image aux palais royaux d'Abomey. Tout cela laisse croire que ces efforts rassurants vont se poursuivre pour la prise en compte totale des recommandations des Organisations consultatives et du rapport de la mission de suivi réactif de 2022.

Aussi, conviendrait-il que les nombreuses actions réalisées par le Bénin après la publication du rapport puissent être prises en compte par le projet de décision proposé. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous soutenons l'ensemble des amendements proposés par le Nigéria et relatifs au bien.

Merci bien.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more interventions. So, I would like to invite you now to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.34** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Nigeria, supported by the Distinguished Delegation of Ethiopia and now, from the floor, we have received support from the Distinguished Delegations of South Africa, Mali and Oman.

The changes proposed are to Para 7, 8 and 10.

The revised Para 7: "Also notes that an overall Risk and Disaster Management Plan for the property is foreseen for 2022, and that fire protection measures are being designed and will be implemented as part of the National Agency for Touristic Heritage (ANPT) programme for this year;"

The revised Para 8: "Appreciates that the State Party has planned, in the Restructured draft Memorandum of Understanding, to update the management plan in view of taking into consideration the measures identified for the security and safety of the property and the new museum within it;"

The next revised para is Para 10: "Further notes that more information on the museum project is needed to avoid any negative impact on the OUV of the property, and also requests that an integrated plan concerning the treatment of the surface of the Amazon court, the materials to be used, the functional links between the different spaces, the access to visitors, the scenario and the scenography of the exhibition, the cultural and scientific programming, as well as the detailed timetable of its implementation are developed and shared as soon as possible with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for consideration, including appropriate mitigation measures identified, before launching the construction works foreseen to be carried out in 2023 and 2024;"

Remaining paras stay as per the original draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

[interpretation from Arabic] Egypt. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My Delegation would like to join the list of countries supporting the amendment to this draft resolution.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. [interpretation from Arabic] Japan. [end of interpretation from Arabic]

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

Hearing the information from the Secretariat and ICOMOS and carefully reading the document, we are happy to see that everything is going with corroborated manner. So, we are happy to support the amendment.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Rwanda aimerait soutenir le projet d'amendement.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: [interpretation from Arabic]

Chair, we also support this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

India would also like to join Nigeria and other States Parties and support this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar: [interpretation from Arabic]

Thank you, Chair.

We would also like to support these amendments.

The Chairperson:

Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: [interpretation from Spanish]

Thank you.

We also support the amendments.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. *Belgica.*

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Belgium would also like to see its name added to the list in support of this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Bulgaria also supports this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We also wish to support the amendments.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Okay, so we'll start examining the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

From Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 6, there are no amendments. You accept them as it is. I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, we have a proposal. Do we agree on the proposed paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8, we have a proposal by the Rapporteur. You may have the floor.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have just received information from the Secretariat.

There is a slight correction in this para. Instead of saying "Restructured draft Memorandum of Understanding", we would like to change it to "Restructured draft Framework Agreement". So, "Framework Agreement", and delete "Memorandum of Understanding".

So, I can read the para again: "Appreciates that the State Party has planned, in the Restructured draft Framework Agreement, to update the Management Plan in view of taking into consideration the measures identified for the security and safety of the property and the new museum within it".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, do we agree on this proposed amendment? I see no objections. The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, there are no amendment. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 10, we have a proposal. Do we agree with this proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 11, 12 and 13 and 14 and 15. There are no amendments. Do we agree to accept them as it is? There is no objection, so adopted. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues,

I'd like to invite you to adopt the whole draft decision, and if there is no objection, I declare that the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.34** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

So, I would like to pass the floor to the director of the World Heritage Centre for some announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I just want to announce the side events of this evening, after the session:

- At 6:30, in Al-Ahsa Oasis Room, we will have a side event organized by Venezuela, "The Recovery experience of the Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas", and there will be an exhibition until Friday 15 September, which we will be able to discover.
- In Hegra Room, which is the Advisory Bodies space, there will be a side event organized by ICOMOS jointly with the Arab Centre for World Heritage, titled "Exploring Cultural Heritage in the Arab Region".

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And also, I would like to remind you that the Bureau meeting tomorrow is at 9:30. We came at the end of this session and see you tomorrow. ^[gavel]

The meeting rose at 6:03 pm // La séance a été levée à 18h03.

FOURTH DAY
Thursday, 14 September 2023
SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING
10:11 am – 1:08 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

QUATRIÈME JOUR
Jeudi 14 septembre 2023
SEPTIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h11 – 13h08
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

7B. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) //
ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU
PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

AFRICA (Ct'd) // AFRIQUE (suite)

The Chairperson:

Good morning, dear colleagues.

Dear colleagues, please be seated.

Dear colleagues, good morning.

Before we resume the examination of Item 7B, please note that the Bureau, at its fourth meeting this morning, recommended to the Plenary that the examination of general Item 7 will resume once we have completed the examination of Sub-item 7A, 7B by the Draft Decision **45 COM 7**, which only will be adopted on 24 September. However, please note that, in case the discussion on Item 7 is not finished by midday on 16 September, we will resume it after the examination of all nominations.

It is suggested that during the examination of nominations recommended for inscription and presenting no particular potential issue, we proceed in a way to avoid repetitions of interventions aimed only at congratulating the concerned State Party. Indeed, I will congratulate the State Party concerned on behalf of the Committee after the inscription. To this extent, I will ask the cooperation of all Committee members, as it would be preferable to uniformly apply this standard as from the beginning of the examination of all nominations.

Concerning the request received from States Parties to move the timing for the examination of their nominations, I wish to inform you that the following has been decided by the Bureau:

- The examination of Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan (Palestine), 8B.36, will take place as the first nomination in the morning of 17 September to allow a Minister from the State of Palestine to attend.
- The examination of the Silk Roads (Tajikistan Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), 8B.13, will take place immediately after Jericho in the morning of the session of the 17 September to allow the participant of a High-Level Delegation from Uzbekistan.
- The examination of the Cold Winter Deserts of Turan (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), 8B.[29], will take place as the first nomination in the morning of 20 September to allow the participant of High-Level Delegation from Uzbekistan.

In addition, I would like to inform you that the Drafting Group established on the Sundarbans yesterday will meet tonight at 6:00 pm. We will, therefore, examine this item tomorrow afternoon once they have completed their work.

Thank you very much.

Point of order, Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Good morning to everyone.

Two points, Mr. Chair.

The first point is regarding Item 7. When we discussed Item 7 here, we agreed that we close it at the end of its discussion. But today, you are announcing that you are going to close it on the 24th. And this is not the way that we discussed in this matter here.

The second point is regarding the Bangladesh item. Yesterday you gave 24 hours. 24 hours is ending at 13:15, today. But now, I can see that you are putting it for another day. I cannot accept this as I am delivering this file because they should have performed yesterday. If they have failed to perform yesterday, I am going to open it on after lunch.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

Regarding the opening of the discussion of Item 7, you know, the adoption of Item 7, it will take place after completing 7A and 7B, but once the nominations start on Saturday afternoon, then we will postpone the draft decision until the 24th. But the discussion will take place. I hope that's clear to you.

The Delegation of Oman:

I don't know. I need to hear from the room, now. The discussion that we closed, this discussion at the end of discussion of Item 7, if they are in agreement, I am in agreement. But this is what we discussed before. That's what I am saying. Even when we discussed, you agreed that we are going to close it when we finish Item 7. If you want to delay it in the room, I'm in agreement, I'm in agreement. I have no problem.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

We have explained this and addressed it to the Bureau. And I think like we have consensus on this, unless there is someone would like to have another different...

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor.

I obviously understand the remark made by Oman. We were given 24 hours by the Committee and that time expired at the beginning of this afternoon, but unfortunately, we were unable to dive into the amendment yesterday in the evening. We thought we needed some time to get clarification on some issues, and that's what we discussed yesterday in the evening with Bangladesh in the room, with Oman also taking part in the discussions. I think that was a very fruitful discussion that will help us in working on the amendment. And the thing is, I myself am not available at noon, unfortunately, to do the Drafting Group then because I will be taking part in a side event. So, the earliest possible moment to have the actual Drafting Group, unfortunately, was 6:00 pm, today. That was proposed yesterday to the people present in the room. Bangladesh was also there, and I had the impression that we agreed that that was acceptable and that was what we were going to propose to the Bureau this morning. So, that's what I can tell you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Belgium.

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

I would like to state our positions on the two points that were mentioned here.

First of all, on the question of Item 7. Yes, I think we have agreed that we are going to discuss this after we complete the discussions on Item 7A and B, but at the same time, we have to understand that some Delegations, High Level Delegations, are coming for inscription items. And therefore, the agreement, I believe, was that if we have time after A and B, we will do this. But inscription items have to start on Saturday afternoon, so that is fine from our perspective.

Now the issue of the Bangladesh file, I understand that the positions are still a little bit far apart, and as you can probably see from the drafting amendments, it will be difficult to deal with those amendments which are actually far apart from each other in such an open setting like this. So, I would appreciate if Belgium can continue to this process up until tomorrow afternoon.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

Sultanate of Oman, is it clear now about the discussion and adoption of Item 7? Also, regarding the Bangladesh file.

The Delegation of Oman:

For Item 7, I do agree as the room is agreeing, but I don't want to disagree with others. Thank you.

As for the Bangladesh file, I have to go back to the State Party, and I will come back to you.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

I would request you to look on the left side of yours as well more often, so we get to see your smiling face.

Excellency, we would like to support Oman. The points raised by Oman are very pertinent. And just to say that the Bureau reached an agreement does not satisfy us because it was in the house that the statement was made through your Chair. And of course, we do understand that there are States Parties which are not available but whenever a decision is taken to make a Working Group, it is a serious decision. And there was time allocated yesterday and it was incumbent on all to have been present there. If a consensus has not been reached, that means it has not been reached. So, we would like to support Oman and also the State Party of Bangladesh, because even though Bangladesh is not a member of the Committee, ultimately the entire country of Bangladesh is waiting. The Government of Bangladesh is waiting, and everyone is waiting as to what is going to be decided. So, the point and the path taken by Oman will be supported by us. So, we are in your hands, Excellency.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

As Belgium mentioned, the State Party of Bangladesh were in consensus and agreement to continue this afternoon. Right, Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

They were in the room when we discussed meeting at 6. Yes.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for the clarification.

Sultanate of Oman, regarding the update and postponing the opening of the Bangladesh file, we look forward to and hear from you about the updates when you consult with them. Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, dear colleagues, we are now resuming our examination of Item 7B, which concerns the state of conservation report of the World Heritage properties. We are now considering the cultural properties located in the African region.

7B.35 Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela (Ethiopia) // Églises creusées dans le roc de Lalibela (Éthiopie)**The Chairperson:**

For the property to be discussed, Rock-Hewn Churches, Lalibela (Ethiopia), I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of South Africa to present the Committee the reasons why it made such request.

You may have the floor, South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Chair. Good morning to you and to Distinguished Delegates.

Chairperson,

South Africa has requested the opening of the draft decision on Lalibela to propose minor amendments to Paragraph 6. This amendment is of a technical nature, and it will not change the materiality of the decision. The Advisory Body, ICOMOS, has been consulted on this technical amendment, and we request you, Chairperson, to request ICOMOS to confirm their view on the proposed amendment.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to give the floor and invite the Secretariat to respond to this comment.

The Secretariat:

Good morning, Chair. Good morning, Distinguished members of the Committee.

Chair,

The proposed amendment to Paragraph 6 of the draft decision has indeed been discussed between the State Party, the Secretariat and ICOMOS in a meeting held on 10 September. This dialogue allowed a better understanding of the current situation in Lalibela, which has changed following the development of research and consultation with stakeholders, in particular local communities. Hence, the situation calls for a pragmatic approach introduced in this paragraph, allowing a possible alternative to the current shelter. ICOMOS and the Secretariat would like to thank the State Party to have given us this opportunity to clarify some questions that remained about this paragraph, which resulted in consensus on the proposed amendment. Chair, ICOMOS wanted also to add something.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

You may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

The Advisory Bodies considered that new shelter options should not be seen as a final solution, but rather as a solution in which constant monitoring and data collection provide feedback for improvements and adaptation should these structures be found to have unforeseen negative impacts on the Rock Hewn Churches.

ICOMOS welcomes the inclusion of the request for continued consultation with the Advisory Bodies, and we remain at the disposal of the State Party.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, now I would like to open the floor to the Committee members. So, I see none.

Then, I would like to invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.35** concerning this property but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa, which is supported by the Distinguished Delegation of Rwanda. The amendment is to change Para 9 and Para 12.

Sorry, I'm sorry. It starts with changes in Para 6. The amendment is as seen in the screen. It's proposed by the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa and supported by the Distinguished Delegations of Oman, Russian Federation.

The revised Para 6 reads as: "Considers that the ESIA and the HIA pointed out that not enough data has been collected yet to define conclusively a state of environmental equilibrium for each of the 11 churches, nor precisely what impact shelters might have to support the idea of permanent shelters, and requests that a robust monitoring and maintenance regimen be developed on a partnership basis, with the aim of involving local communities and implemented as soon as possible, therefore, also considers that the shelter option should continue to be an evolving solution that could be reconsidered and reassessed in the future on the basis of feedback from local communities and ongoing monitoring, in consultation with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies;"

The next revised para. That's the only minor change in Para 6.

The remaining draft decision stays as it is.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair, and good morning to one and all.

We should like to add our name to the list of countries supporting.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Mali soutient les amendements proposés.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

We would also like to align ourselves with South Africa, Oman and Russian Federation for this draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Egypt. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Egypt:

My Delegation would like to join other countries as well, supporting this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

We would like to join those who supported this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thailand would like to join as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

We also support this amendment simply because we always encourage to have consultation, mutual consultation.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Saudi Arabia. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

[interpretation from Arabic] Good morning. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

We support amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Chair.

Nigeria joins South Africa and other State countries to support this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines supports the amendments presented by South Africa.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair. Good morning.

We also would like to express our support and co-sponsor.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Zambia also joins the rest in supporting the amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Bulgaria also wants to support the proposed amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Italy also supports the amendment.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

I am sorry, but, Mr. Chairman, our name is not yet up there. We did request that it be included.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

On the way. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you very much and good morning, Mr. Chair.

We would also like to support this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina:

Thank you, Mr. President.

We support this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I recommend that we proceed examining the draft decision para by para.

I think from Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 5, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as it is? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have an amendment. Do you agree to this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

From Paragraph 7 to Paragraph 14, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as it is? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

So, I would like you, my dear colleagues, to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

If there are no objections, I declare that the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.35** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

7B.126 Lamu Old Town (Kenya) // Vieille ville de Lamu (Kenya)

The Chairperson:

For the next property to be discussed, Lamu Old Town (Kenya), I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Rwanda, to present to the Committee the reason why it made such request.

You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Allow me to draw your attention to several issues raised concerning the Lamu Old Town, which we would like to share more light on.

Rwanda Delegation is of the view that the section in Para 9 requesting the State Party of Kenya, and I quote, "to provide an update on the composition and functioning of the committee since its reestablishment" is not necessary. Kenya has been proactive in involving communities in governance of the World Heritage property through the Lamu Heritage Committee, comprised of different stakeholders. Its major mandate is to manage matters relating to sustainable tourism on the Heritage property. Chair, requiring the State Party of Kenya to provide details about the Committee's composition and its functionality may not serve any purpose as at the Centre level, the interest for the Centre is that Heritage governance involves communities.

Alternatively, on Para 12, it should be noted that the State Party of Kenya has shelved the plan of constructing a coal plant in Lamu. As you are aware, there are other alternative sources of energy being used by the Government of Kenya.

Thank you so much for your kind attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat and ICOMOS if they have any comment to this response.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Chairperson, Distinguished members of the Committee,

The amendment proposed to Paragraph 9 related to the efforts to enhance good governance and inclusive management of the property by engaging stakeholders and communities in activities related to sustainable tourism for the property, the efforts toward reestablishing the Lamu Heritage Community. A joint UNESCO, ICOMOS and ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission visited the property from 23 to 28 July of this year following the invitation by the State Party on 30 June 2023. While the mission report is not yet available, we expect it to report on the composition and function of this committee since its reestablishment.

As to the amendment to Paragraph 12, Chair, the communication that the Lamu Coal-fired Plant project is officially cancelled is welcomed. We would like to stress that this information was not included in the State Party's recent state of conservation report, hence, the wording of the draft decision. We, therefore, see no particular objection to amend it in the sense of proposed by the State Party.

Chair, however, the Secretariat and ICOMOS also want to suggest a little bit of language here to finalize this paragraph and to suggest that the text of amendment should read as follows, if you allow, Chair, "Notes with satisfaction that Lamu Coal Plant has been halted, and requests that any future development proposed to meet the electricity needs for the region, be subjected to EIA and HIA to ensure that there is no negative impact in OUV of the property". Mr. Chair, ICOMOS also wanted to add something. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Advisory Bodies have taken note of the efforts made by the State Party in the first place to address the conservation issues at the property, including the inventorying of the physical state of conservation of its built fabric, as well as the cancellation of the Lamu Coal Plant.

We remain at the disposal of the State Party to provide advice, and we welcome continued dialogue.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS.

So, I would like to see if there are any comments or interventions from the Committee. Also, if Rwanda is okay with the proposed language from the Secretariat.

You may have the floor. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

Can we have the language on the screen, please?

The Chairperson:

Indeed.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Rapporteur, you may have the floor.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We will show the language on the screen. This is for the amendment proposed by Rwanda, supported by the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa and the changes made by the Secretariat.

So, for the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.126**, we go to Para 9. The revised para is: "Takes note of the efforts to include stakeholders and community in activities related to sustainable tourism for the property and the efforts towards reestablishing the Lamu Heritage Committee".

We can go to Para 12, which is the next revised para, where Secretariat has suggested some changes. The revised para says: "Notes that alternative solutions to the Lamu Coal plant proposed to meet the electricity needs of the region were halted and requests that any proposed future development be subject to EIAs *slash* /HIAs to ensure that there are no negative impacts on the OUV of the property". I think the Secretariat has suggested that we change it to "Notes with satisfaction that the Lamu Coal Plant has been halted and requests that any future development proposed to meet the electricity needs of the region be subjected to EIAs *slash* /HIAs to ensure that there are no negative impacts on the OUV of the property". So that's the suggested change by the Secretariat. If we can have consensus on that.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Rwanda, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

Would you please give the floor to our Kenyan Delegation?

They would like to have some clarification on the proposed wording from the Secretariat.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Kenyan Delegation.

The Observer Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair.

My name is Dickson Ritan, from Kenya. We welcome the amendment. In regard to conducting EIAs and HIAs in terms of project development in the country, is a procedure that is done before any project is implemented, and in regard with the property of Lamu Old Town, that is going to be adhered to.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

So, I would like to see if there are any comments from Committee members.

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

With support, we thank all Parties involved for improving the decision and we support the amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Russia.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We would like to clarify one point. You write: "any future developments proposed to meet the needs of the region". Now, are all of these developments related to the property or not? That would be our question.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I just wanted to clarify something like if you want to proceed with examination of the draft decision, then we have to close the debate. So, we are reflecting on the Secretariat's suggestions. If there are no interventions or comments before we examine the draft decision and go to this point, Paragraph 12.

Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Mr. Chairman,

We wanted to recognize the State Party's efforts in this regard, and therefore, we can support this proposed amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to stick to the proposed original amendment.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

My Delegation subscribes to the original amendment as indicated by South Africa and Rwanda.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My Delegation would like to support the initial amendment presented by Rwanda.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Sorry, I just forgot to take my nameplate down, Sir.

The Chairperson:

India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

We would also like to align ourselves with our friends Rwanda, South Africa, Ethiopia and Egypt for the original amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, I think we move to the examination of the draft decision.

Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you Chair.

Nigeria also supports the original amendment by Rwanda to this DR.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to support the original Agenda.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

So, I think we should move to the examination of the draft decision paragraph by paragraph. We can move to the top.

From Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 8, there are no amendments. Do you accept them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, we have a proposal. Do we agree on this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 10 and Paragraph 11, there are no amendments. Do we accept them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 12, we have a proposal. Do we have an agreement on this draft proposal or not?

Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

We have an amendment suggested by Rwanda and several countries. We would like to join in supporting this amendment which we approve.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, we have the original text. I would like to ask the Secretariat to put the original text on the screen. I'd like to ask the Rapporteur to read out the proposed draft by Rwanda.

You may have the floor.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The original proposed amendment reads as: "Notes that alternative solutions to the Lamu Coal Plant propose to meet the electricity needs of the region were halted and requests that any proposed future development be subject to EIAs *slash* /HIAs to ensure that there are no negative impacts on the OUV of the property", end of para.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do you have any objections on this proposed amendment? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 13, there is no amendment. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

I invite you to adopt the paragraph as a whole. Are there any objections?

So, dear colleagues, I declare that the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.126** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

7B.127 Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site (Kenya) // Site Archéologique de Thimlich Ohinga (Kenya)

The Chairperson:

For the next property to be discussed, Thimlich Ohinga Archaeological Site (Kenya), I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Rwanda again, to present to the Committee the reason why it made such request.

You may have the floor, Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Shukran jazeelan.

The Chairperson:

Oman. Point of order.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Before we are going on this item, we have just seen there is an intervention from the Secretariat and they amended the amended decision. I would like to hear from the Legal Advisor. Is that legal or not?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

The Legal Advisor, you may have the floor.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

This is the first time I take the floor, and I would like to congratulate you on your appointment to this position.

In response to the question by the Distinguished Delegate of Oman, the Secretariat may make a proposal, but my understanding is that the decision is made by the Committee. When the Committee accepted by consensus the decision, it has accepted the amendment. It is not an amendment by the Secretariat, but it becomes an amendment of the Committee as soon as the Committee has decided upon it.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Going back to Rwanda, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

The draft amendment proposed is to replace the word "communities" with "land owners". Although this is a slight modification, it has its significance. The reason of the State Party's preference is because, as concerns diminish Ohinga land acquisition, Kenyan authorities, through the National Museums of Kenya and the Land Commissions, has been dealing with individual land owners of the affected land holding and not the entire community. The agreement to increase the buffer zone of the property was made with the family within the buffer zone adjacent to the Thimlich Ohinga World Heritage property. The State Party of Kenya through the National Museum of Kenya, entered into an agreement with the local land owners to give compensation for extra land. The land owners are those whose lands share a boundary with the perimeter fence of the Thimlich Ohinga site. The negotiations on land sale and their rights is thus restricted to the museum and the individual land owners. Other stakeholders are only involved at the acquisition formalization level.

Chair, the stakeholders at this level are the National Land Commission and the local administration. Therefore, no other community is involved where we are dealing with individual land and related processes in its acquisition. The correction might seem minor and not very critical for discussion. However, the challenge will be that the minor change from community to land owners will greatly help the State Party to better organize the site's land management and conservation, thereby avoiding unwarranted litigation which will likely arise, and delay arguments which have already been formalized between the land owners and the Government of Kenya. The generalization of the term "community" as regards Thimlich Ohinga is potential for disputes that can jeopardize the site's conservation and curtail positive action by the State Party. The issue is, therefore, the interpretation that the word can have in Kenya in the management of the site.

Chair, the specific issue in the draft decision is extending the buffer zone and, therefore, is about acquisition of land. The land acquisition is a per State Party's expertise in managing the site and in line with the provisions of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and the Land Act, 6 November 2012, providing for the individual land owners sharing boundaries with the site.

I thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Distinguished Committee members,

We'd like to point out the reason for the reference made to the "communities" in the initial draft decision, insisting on the importance of retaining these words as it is. We know that in the land acquisition process, the land owner will be the main stakeholder, but we want to stress that the process should guarantee the right of all community members. Indeed, Thimlich Ohinga is a place with a strong meaning of local communities. The association "local communities" includes a whole group of people, not only land owners. This is highlighted in the Statement of the Protection and Management Requirement, which was adopted with this Committee at the time of inscription in 2018, Decision **42 COM 8B.14**, and I quote: "The legal protection is further strengthened by traditional rules and taboos maintained by the community leaders, which insists in the protection of the property and its surrounding flora, fauna", and again, "The property serves as a meeting venue for community and remains a location for community rituals, in particular in time of crisis. These as well as community-based maintenance strategies need to be continued to retain the strong involvement and attachment of the community", I quote.

Mr. Chair, ICOMOS wanted to add that.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Draft Paragraph 3 relates to the efforts and progress made by the State Party to extend the buffer zone on the western side of the property boundary. In that regard, we would like to add that the actions of the State Party to acquire land not owned by the State, to extend the boundaries of the buffer zone are welcome, but ICOMOS has in the past, including in its evaluation of the nomination preceding the decision of the Committee to inscribe the property on the World Heritage List, indicated that ownership of land by the State is not a prerequisite for the extension of the boundaries of the property. ICOMOS, therefore, considers the word "communities", as proposed in the draft decision, as appropriate and aligned with the intentions of the Convention to maintain OUV. We also

consider it resonant with the 5 Cs Strategy adopted by this Committee, which aims to enhance the role of all concerned communities in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'd like to pass the floor to the Director, Mr. Lazare.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

M. le Président,

Je voulais juste rajouter que cette question, effectivement, est très importante.

Le Délégué, le Distingué Délégué du Rwanda, M. l'Ambassadeur, a effectivement raison de mettre cette question au centre, des propriétaires de ces espaces fonciers. Mais c'est vrai que Thimlich Ohinga est un lieu extrêmement important pour les communautés. Alors peut être que l'une des solutions, évidemment, que le Comité pourrait considérer, c'est effectivement de garder les deux, c'est à dire d'avoir à la fois les droits des "communautés" et les droits des "propriétaires". Et je crois que ça pourrait être une solution qui ferait qu'effectivement vous protégeriez d'une certaine manière les deux.

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président, mais bien sûr, c'est à vous, le Comité, de décider de cette question quand vous examinerez le projet de décision.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Director.

Do we have any comments or interventions from the floor? Okay, I see there are no interventions.

South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We would like to propose that the State Party be invited to clarify because we understand that there are provisions in terms of the Land Act, what "land owners" refers to. So, maybe if we can get clarification from the State Party. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. The concerns...

Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We would like to support our colleagues from Rwanda and from South Africa. As far as we understand, what we're discussing here is land acquisition. If one were to acquire land, this would mean the right to ownership of those lands. So, the rights of communities would not seem relevant here. We think it would be logical to talk about the rights of "land owners" here rather than "communities".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the State Party, Kenya, to respond to the question addressed by South Africa.

The Observer Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair.

In regard to the land ownership in Kenya, land is classified into three in terms of registration: public, private and communal. In regard to the property that is in question, the Party has had discussions with individual land owners on the acquisition of the land around the property, and the efforts are basically towards securing the buffer zone for

their site, which is in line with the provisions of the 2012 Land Act, that it will facilitate the process. And that's an effort that the Party has done so far. The land owner is part of the community, and it does not negate the involvement of community in regard to the process. It's just a process of fastening just based on the Land Act.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to go back to the Committee members if we have any comments on this.

So, I would like to invite you to examine the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.127** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Rwanda, coauthored by the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa.

The changes to Para 3 on replacement of the term "communities" by "land owners". The revised para reads as: "Welcomes the information provided by the State Party concerning the progress made to extend the buffer zone on the western side of the property boundary, encourages the State Party to ensure that the rights of land owners are respected in the processes of land acquisition, and requests the State Party to continue implementing the recommended extensions to the property boundary at its south eastern end, near the entrance to Koketch, and the extension and demarcation of the buffer zone, and to submit a proposal for minor boundary modifications once these are in place". Rest of the paras stay as they are.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 2, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we agree on this proposal? So, I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4 and Paragraph 5, and Paragraph 6, and Paragraphs 7 and 8, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as they are? I see no objections. So, adopted. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues,

I would like to invite you to adopt the whole draft decision and, therefore, I declare the Draft Decision. **45 COM 7B.127** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

7B.37 Stone Town of Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania)// La ville de pierre de Zanzibar (République-Unie de Tanzanie)

The Chairperson:

For the next property to be discussed, Stone Town of Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania), I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Zambia, to present to the Committee the reason why it made such request.

You may have the floor, Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Chairperson,

Zambia has requested the opening of the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.37** on the Stone Town of Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, for discussion, for reasons mainly related to the language of the text that was used, which we consider demoralizing on the part of the State Party of Tanzania in the context of the World Heritage Convention. We also note that there is some text which is creating some ambiguity. We, therefore, propose for the amendment of the decision so as to replace or remove some of the text.

Chairperson, we wish to acknowledge the fundamental obligation of the State Party of Tanzania in advancing the socio-economic development of her people, while also subscribing to the developmental challenges associated with

this ambition, which are, by no means, unique to Zanzibar. However, we also note that the State Party of Tanzania has intensified efforts in addressing these challenges in the recent years, efforts that should be acknowledged, encouraged and further supported.

Chairperson, in the text proposed for amendment in the draft decision, we are particularly concerned with the wording in Para 15 of the draft decision indicating an indication to Danger List the site. We are of the opinion that this step would be premature, given the ongoing size and diversity of concerted conservation efforts on the ground, which in our knowledge, are already bearing positive fruits. It is with this background that we have, therefore, submitted proposed amendments on this decision for consideration.

Finally, Chair, we wish to request that the State Party of Tanzania be allowed to take the floor to further elaborate on the proposed amendments.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat if they have any comment on this.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

Dear members of the Committee,

First, on a more general note, please allow me to inform you that, in response to the Committee's previous Decision **44 COM 7B.12**, the State Party invited, on 22 May of this year, a joint World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission to the Stone Town of Zanzibar World Heritage Property, which recently took place from 17 to 21 July. The mission report is not yet available, and its findings and recommendations could, therefore, not be analysed for the present report. We would like to seize this opportunity to thank the State Party for having facilitated this mission, and also for having provided additional information in its aftermath.

Now, regarding Paragraph 10, the Secretariat would like to stress and recall the importance of the ongoing dialogue between the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, including through the participation in the proposed Scientific Committee. Indeed, a meeting with that Scientific Committee took place on 16 January 2023, and the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies remain committed to continuing this dialogue for the benefit of the rehabilitation of the House of Wonders.

In that same spirit, if you allow me to suggest, on Paragraph 14, which has been added as a proposed amendment, we would like to recommend adding "the Advisory Bodies" to be inserted after "in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre".

ICOMOS would like to make a few additional observations.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Members of the Committee,

ICOMOS appreciates the opportunity to provide additional information to the Committee. The state of conservation of Stone Town of Zanzibar has been a cause of concern for a number of years. Since 2010, the state of conservation of the property has been assessed by four Reactive Monitoring missions. Additionally, over that same period, four Advisory missions have visited the property to provide the State Party with advice on specific challenges. Despite these efforts, the state of conservation of the property, today, remains a cause of great concern.

On specific amendment proposals, we would like to address specifically Paragraphs 3, 13 and 16.

Regarding the Stone Town Conservation and Heritage Management Plan referred to in Paragraph 3 of the draft decision, the State Party, in response to the Committee's request recorded in Decision **44 COM 7B.12** in 2021, submitted, in that same year, a draft Management Plan for review. The plan was assessed by ICOMOS in the form of a technical review dated November 2021. ICOMOS recommended that a number of critical aspects needed to be addressed to achieve a plan that was fit for purpose. In its state of conservation report submitted in 2022, the State Party reported that the plan was being revised based on recommendations of the technical review. Moreover, Paragraph 3 of the draft decision, as originally drafted, recalls the recommendation of the November 2021 technical review. An appropriate and functioning management plan can only be achieved based on a thorough understanding

of the attributes that contribute to the OUV of a property, and in the statutory context of the Convention, in alignment with the Operational Guidelines. The decision, as originally drafted before you, allows the Committee to provide guidance to the State Party on the appropriate steps it could take to revise the Management Plan.

On Paragraph 13, the State Party, in its 2021 state of conservation report, noted that 15% of the buildings in the property require immediate interventions to safeguard them, and that it has been struggling to secure funding for conservation works. The poor physical state of conservation of the property, therefore, remains of utmost concern to us. It is, therefore, respectfully advised that the Committee retain the original formulation of the paragraph, as this would be consistent with its past Decisions.

With regards Paragraph 16, Mr. Chair, members of the Committee, in 2021, this Committee in Decision **44 COM 7B.12**, Paragraph 11, recorded that, and I quote: "if not addressed, the lack of effective conservation management combined with the poor state of conservation of the property and development pressures, could warrant a future inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger in accordance with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines".

I would like to conclude with the following. Inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger is not what ICOMOS advises at this point in time, but it is appropriate to pre-warn the State Party that the property is close to meeting conditions that would warrant inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there are any requests from the floor.

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much.

Oman would like to thank the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS for their work. We also commend the work undertaken by the State Party. It has striven to fulfil the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies. The Management Plan for safeguarding the property, in particular, has been pursued. The State Party has been striving to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. We commend dialogue between the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the State Party. There has been significant sharing of information and a number of missions have been organized. We support the amendments proposed.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

I have a question to the State Party and two questions to, probably, the Secretariat.

The question to the State Party relates to the identification and analysis of attributes, something we have all been doing these past years within the framework of the Periodic Reporting. I was wondering if this is something that has been concluded yet, or if this is something that still needs to be, it still needs some work.

The questions to the Secretariat. We are a bit puzzled with the reference to being in line with the Operational Guidelines, so I would like to know why this is in the original draft decision. And also, there is a reference to the composition of the Scientific Committee. I am not really clear because I understood from what you explained a few minutes ago that you have met the Committee. So, I would assume that you are aware of its composition. If this is still something that needs more clarification, is this a point that needs to be considered by the Committee, or is it sufficient that the Secretariat is informed and that the Advisory Body can look into it?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa has considered carefully the draft decision and like the State Party of Zambia, which is proposing an amendment, our view is that Paragraph 15 does not reflect an appreciation of the efforts by the State Party as it predicts a negative outcome. South Africa believes that as much as Danger Listing is intended to be an important intervention as a tool to correct factors affecting the state of conservation of the property, these measures should be used carefully to avoid exacerbating the challenges that properties may already be experiencing. We also welcome the engagement that has taken place between the State Party and the Secretariat. However, where the State Party is continuously working to find solutions, as is the case of Stone Town of Zanzibar, the language the Committee uses should, thus, be encouraging. The mention of Danger Listing, we feel, is preemptive, especially before a property meets the conditions that justifies any instruction onto the Danger List. This can have unintended consequences for sites like Stone Town, which, we know, is very dependent on tourism. Danger Listing may cause unnecessary reputational damage and may result in tourism declines. We, therefore, urge the Committee to, thus, consider positively the proposal by the State Party of Zambia, as we believe the reference to Danger Listing is not appropriate at this stage. We also request Chairperson that you invite the State Party to clarify certain elements.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I will pass the floor to Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

La "ville de pierre de Zanzibar" est un magnifique exemple des villes marchandes côtières swahili. Nous notons avec satisfaction que l'État partie de Tanzanie a achevé en 2020 le plan de conservation et de gestion de ce site et a surtout mis en œuvre une nouvelle structure de gestion y relative. La Tanzanie s'est également engagée à mettre en œuvre des modifications législatives pour conformer et aligner le système juridique. De même, nous félicitons l'État Partie pour avoir élaboré une nouvelle proposition pour le développement du bazar Darajani et pour l'avoir soumise à une étude d'impact sur le patrimoine. Ajoutons que l'État partie mène activement des actions allant dans le sens de mieux protéger et préserver ce site des menaces périlleuses. Toutefois, des difficultés demeurent et c'est pourquoi nous soutenons l'appel à une mobilisation accrue de la communauté internationale afin qu'elle apporte davantage son soutien financier et technique à la Tanzanie. Cela permettra de mieux soutenir la mise en œuvre des mesures de conservation du bien.

Au regard de tous ces éléments, nous soutenons les amendements proposés par la Tanzanie.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do we have anyone from Committee members?

So now, I would like to invite the State Party to take the floor to respond to the Committee's questions and statements addressed by Zambia, Belgium and South Africa.

The Observer Delegation of Tanzania:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Since I'm taking the floor for the first time, allow me to express my gratitude to have this opportunity to clarify on the situation of Zanzibar Stone Town World Heritage site with respect to draft **45 COM 7B.37**.

I would also like to express my heartfelt condolences from the Government of the people of the United Republic of Tanzania following the disastrous earthquake that took place in the Kingdom of Morocco and the floods that hit the Republic of Libya, which led to the loss of thousands of lives.

Besides, I wish to congratulate you on the manner in which you are leading the deliberations on this Committee session.

Chairperson, we have noticed that draft decision is inclined to an intention to Danger List the Zanzibar Stone Town. To us, such an orientation could signal a serious deterioration of the Outstanding Universal Value of the site as we speak. To the contrary, my Government has taken major changes towards improvement of the conservation status of the site since our last reporting and the impact of these efforts is clearly evident. These updates were communicated to the World Heritage Centre, but unfortunately, they are not reflected in this decision. The provisions of this decision, therefore, appear to be contradict the actual situation on the ground.

Chairperson, the United Republic of Tanzania has declared full support and commitment, including increased and sizable spending, to ensure a full safeguarding of the Stone Town of Zanzibar. This has been fully communicated, well received and appreciated by the citizens of Zanzibar, including the local communities, who are now actively engaged in conservation activities. Several major conservation projects are also under way, some supported by external partners. It is our humble opinion that the strong political leverage that exists, coupled with the active conservation interventions on the ground should be upheld, encouraged and supported rather than unnoticed. Further to this, the identification of the properties that was mentioned earlier, the status was done since 2019.

Chairperson, in this regard, we would like to support the amendments proposed by Distinguished Delegate of Zambia. I humbly submit.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like also now to pass the floor to the Secretariat to respond to the question addressed by the State of Belgium.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

I will first leave the floor to ICOMOS. They will respond to most of the questions.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much.

Thank you very much, Honourable Delegate from Belgium,

You posed three questions regarding the Conservation Management Plan. That was the identification of attributes aligned with the Operational Guidelines. And then, you requested further information on the Scientific Committee. Is that correct?

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes.

ICOMOS:

So, with regards to the Management Plan, it was submitted, it was reviewed. And in that review, ICOMOS recommended that more attention be given to the identification of attributes as what had been identified was not adequate to provide for a clear understanding of conservation and management needs.

With regards to alignment with the Operational Guidelines, the same applied. ICOMOS recommended that the Management Plan be amended to, for instance, include reference to Paragraph 172 and Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines.

With regard to the Scientific Committee for the reconstruction, or sorry, rehabilitation of the House of Wonders, we have had one meeting on invitation of the State Party. That was in January this year, and we had discussions. Those discussions focused not primarily on the House of Wonders. Information has been submitted to the Secretariat. That was on 5 September and 13 September, this year. We've not had time to respond to those submissions yet, but we will do so in due course.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

You may have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I just wanted to add something, as I've been listening to the Committee members, I think the Committee has this important responsibility, of course, to mobilize itself to support any World Heritage property which is in need of a broader mobilization to support. And I think this is what you have been doing with regard to this property that you are examining. If you recall the past decisions that you have taken with regard to this property, where, of course, you have expressed a number of concerns, you have expressed a number of support, a number of requests to the counties. I think this draft decision was built in relation also with the past Decisions that you have taken. And I would like to just to reassure everyone that the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies have continued to support the State Party to continue improve the state of conservation. But the property is still in need of support. I think Paragraph 15 reflects the need to continue mobilize the international community, mobilize the Committee to continue support the State Party in its efforts to safeguard the OUV of this property. I just wanted to clarify this and then to assure you that's exactly what both the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body have been doing. I think it is an opportunity to continue supporting the State Party. That's the reason why Paragraph 15 is actually a very positive paragraph because it first recalls the need for a broad mobilization to preserve the OUV of this property.

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Director.

So, I would like to hear from the Committee if they have any comments or interventions.

South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We hear what the Secretariat is saying. We are just not sure whether it is appropriate. We, however, still maintain our support for the decision on Paragraph 15 that the threat of Danger Listing has to be removed. It's a very negative statement that really has consequences for the State Party. So, we propose that the amendment as proposed be accepted.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

I think we would like to join the statement made by the Director. It is in the spirit of the Convention to, as a global community, make sure that we can preserve the World Heritage of all mankind. So, in terms of what is now Paragraph 16 in the amendment, we, at the very least, would like to keep the idea of a broad mobilization.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to concur with South Africa's comment. I think it is premature to put that phrase there. In addition, we have just heard from the Secretariat or Advisory Body that they received the report in September, but they have not reviewed and, therefore, it is premature to judge without reviewing the reports.

Therefore, I would like to see the amendment as it is now.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

We are having States Parties discuss on the amendments. So, may I request the amendments to be put on the screen so that we can take a call on it.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

[interpretation from Arabic] Egypt. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Egypt would like to thank the Distinguished Minister of Tourism and Heritage of Zanzibar for the clarification provided on the state of conservation of the Stone Town of Zanzibar. We welcome the efforts of the Tanzanian Government in this regard and commend its commitment to improve the situation of the site. We believe that the reference to the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger is not the best approach to address the challenges facing the property, and does not convey a positive message of support towards the efforts exerted by Tanzania.

We support amending the draft decision to reflect the information provided by Tanzania to conserve the property.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Rwanda would like to support the amendment as presented by Zambia.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much.

We would also like to support the amendments tabled by South Africa. We'd like to thank the State Party for all of the efforts undertaken to protect this property. Yes, we don't want to see it inscribed on the Danger List. We would also like to support the Zambia's proposed amendment, and I'd like to echo all the previous speakers who have thanked and commended the dialogue between State Party and the Advisory Bodies, and we want to thank the efforts made by the State Party.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Dawlat Qatar.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

L'État du Qatar soutient la proposition proposée par *Zambia* et, bien évidemment, j'ajoute ma voix à tous les États membres qui ont remercié le dialogue entre l'Évaluation Body et l'État partie, les efforts vraiment proposés et faits par l'État partie.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

I'm carefully hearing the discussion between several Parties and also hearing the voice of States Parties. Firstly, we commend the State Party huge effort on the conservation of this important town.

Considering the discussion and considering the comment made by Belgium, we would suggest, in the final sentence, a new paragraph, a revised Paragraph 16. But should we make it now or later on the paragraph-by-paragraph part? How can we make it, Chair?

The Chairperson:

So, we will go when we move to the examination of the draft decision.

Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Chair.

We also believe that it's premature to propose listing this site on the list of in Danger.

So, we support the amendment on table.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chair.

It is not about support or not support, but we need to see the amendments on the screen because there are many amendments and many paragraphs. So please, Mr. Chair, if we can see the amendments as requested also by the Ambassador of India, and to go paragraph by paragraph to see what we can support and what we can amend.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Indeed, Your Excellency.

So, if there are no more questions, then we can move to the examination of the draft decision and examine paragraph by paragraph, but I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received amendments from the Distinguished Delegation of Zambia, which is supported by the Distinguished Delegations of Egypt, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Qatar, and from the floor, we have also received confirmation for these amendments from the Distinguished Delegations of Oman, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria.

There are amendments to several paras, so we will go para wise starting from Para 3, where points a), b), c) and d) are merged into one para.

The revised Para 3: "Notes the completion in 2020 of the Stone Town Conservation and Heritage Management Plan, the implementation of the new management structure, and the State Party's commitment to implement legislative changes to align the legal system with the STCHMP, and requests the State Party to resubmit the final STCHMP to the World Heritage Centre following its amendment, including placing the protection and maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value central to the aims of STCMHP, and embedding Heritage Impact Assessment as an essential component of the management system of the property;". End of para.

The next para for revision is Para 6 where there is just a slight change in the original text: "Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies:

- Point "a) The documentation of the "Safe Mobility Program for Stone Town" and the reported 5-year implementation plan," and
- Point "b) Detailed documentation for the proposed Malindi Bus Stand, before any decisions on its implementation are made that may be hard to reverse;".

The revised Para 7: "Reiterates its request to the State Party that the 2016 mitigation measures for the Mambo Msiige building be urgently implemented, and also that the recommendations of the 2019 Reactive Monitoring mission be implemented;".

Revised Para 8: "Thanks the Sultanate of Oman for its commitment to rehabilitating the House of Wonders and Palace Museum, and also thanks the World Monument Fund and Zamani Project Research Group for participating

in the joint expert's mission following the partial collapse of the House of Wonder and the World Bank for its support for the property through the Boosting Inclusive Growth in Zanzibar programme;".

Revised Para 9: "Notes the State Party's commitment to submit to the World Heritage Centre details for the reconstruction, restoration and reuse of the House of Wonders, the Palace Museum, the Bwawani Hotel and the Tippu Tip House, and requests furthermore the State Party to implement past Committee decisions in developing these plans;".

Revised Para 10: "Requests the State Party, specifically in regards to the House of Wonders, to submit the results of the requested research project to investigate the chronological history of the House of Wonders and its construction technologies through archival and on site investigations, to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, and urges the State Party to develop alternative proposals for the rehabilitation of the House of Wonders and constitute the proposed Scientific Committee, and submit these details to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies;".

Revised Para 11: "Recalling Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines requests moreover the State Party to engage in the rehabilitation of the House of Wonders and other projects and submit details of conservation approaches, contractual agreements and designs and timelines for the rehabilitation of the House of Wonders to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies and feedback to enhance the proposal before any further contractual agreements for implementation are entered into;".

The revised Para 13: "Expresses its concern at the continued perilous state of conservation of this property, as reflected in the disharmonious urban development and transformation;".

Revised Para 14: "Encourages the State Party, in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and other partners, to continue undertaking effective conservation measures towards improved management and governance of the property in addressing the prevailing urban development pressures". For this para, we had a proposal from the Secretariat to add; "in collaboration with Advisory Bodies" after "the World Heritage Centre". We could propose that: "in collaboration with Advisory Bodies and other partners;".

The revised Para 16: "Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2024, a report on the state of conservation of the property and on the steps taken to implement the recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session."

For this para, we have the support of Distinguished Delegations, as you can see on screen for the original para, whereas there was a proposal for retaining the original text by the Distinguished Delegation of Belgium.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to give the floor to Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

On this Paragraph 16, although we understand the basic idea of the draft, I mean the devised text, but we would suggest to retain the first part of the sentence from "considering" to "Outstanding Universal Value". Considering the I mean consistency with other paragraphs, including revised Para 14, we suggest this if the State Party of Tanzania feels helpful to have this text in the decision, because our point is to help the State Party and mobilize conservation efforts.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Just to make it clear that that was exactly also what we were thinking about. We were not proposing keeping the original paragraph, but rather do what Japan just proposed.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, we have like two positions. But let's examine the whole draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 2, there are no amendments. Do you agree on this? Adopt them as it is. I see no...So there are no objections...

India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

We would also align ourselves in support of this draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. With respect to Paragraphs 1 and 2, there are no objections. Then, adopted. *[gave]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we agree with this proposal?

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Considering what was explained to us by the Advisory Body, we would suggest maybe not stick to the a), b), c) system. So, we're perfectly okay with making it one sentence, but keeping what is now under b), just adding "further analysis and identification of the attributes which convey OUV".

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do we agree with this updated amendment?

You see like here, like Belgium wanted to retain the original text. And there are the proposal, we have a proposal like we have the previous proposal. And you wanted to keep the original text. So that's why I wanted to hear from the Committee members. Are we in line with this proposal?

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Can we? Because there's several deletions. Can someone or the Rapporteur read us the paragraph, please?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. The Rapporteur.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Para 3 now reads as: "Notes the completion in 2020 of the Stone Town Conservation and Heritage Management Plan, the implementation of the new management structure and the State Party's commitment to implement legislative changes to align the legal system with the STCHMP, and requests the State Party to resubmit the final STCHMP to the World Heritage Centre following its amendment, including placing the protection and maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value central to the aims of the STCHMP". And what the Distinguished Delegation of Belgium has asked to retain: "further analysis and identification of the attributes which convey OUV and embedding Heritage Impact Assessment as an essential component of the management system of the property". End of para.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, as we can see from the screen that the majority wanted to delete, and Belgium, you wanted to retain the text. So, are you okay with the deletion?

The Delegation of Belgium:

Actually, Chair, I'm not hearing any opposition to us proposing to keep it with the addition of the word "further", but I'm in your hands.

The Chairperson:

So, I would like to ask the Committee members if you are like in agreement with Belgium's proposal.

So, South Africa, Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines, sorry.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We support the proposal of Belgium in Paragraph b). It is logic after what we are asking for in Paragraph a), and also, we support the last amendment also presented by Japan and supported by Belgium, and the last paragraph.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Saint Vincent.

So also, I would like to hear from the rest of the Committee members.

Egypt. You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Frankly, I'm a little bit lost, and I cannot understand where we are right now. I would ask the Delegation of Belgium to explain exactly the amendment they are proposing to the text, because in the paragraph we are just looking at if it's only the word "further". So, I would appreciate if they can just explain to us the amendment they would like to present.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Belgium, you may explain, and also, I'd like to ask the Secretariat to highlight Belgium's proposal.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

What we are trying to do here is that we clearly heard from the Advisory Body that the State Party has been working on the identification of attributes, as we all have been doing these past years, but that it is not finalized yet. So, we just want to, therefore, include the original idea, but at the word "further", to make it clear that a lot has been done already.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair.

Due to a number of amendments on this paragraph, we can't really understand exactly what the paragraph says. I think the way it is organized. I have the support of what has been said by the Distinguished Ambassador of Oman. We can see the full amendment in paragraph, I couldn't understand.

Would you mind please to state it that way?

The Chairperson:

So, maybe we can project the amendment without track changes so that maybe it can be clearer.

Thank you. I'd like also to ask the Rapporteur to assist us and explain the changes.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

So, we have now merged the paras. I hope it's more readable for the Committee members now.

The revised para reads as: "Notes the completion in 2020 of the Stone Town Conservation and Heritage Management Plan, the implementation of the new management structure, and the State Party's commitment to implement legislative changes to align the legal system with the STCHMP, and requests the State Party to resubmit the final STCHMP to the World Heritage Centre following its amendment, including placing the protection and maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value central to the aims of the STCHMP", and this next phrase is what is supported by the Distinguished Delegation of Belgium, "further analysis and identification of the attributes which convey OUV", "and embedding Heritage Impact Assessment as an essential component of the management system of the property".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think the amendment proposed by Belgium does not make sense because we are talking about the STCHMP, and I think the OUV covers everything. So, I don't see why that part which says: "further analysis and identification of the attributes". It doesn't make sense really. And it makes the sentence not... it doesn't flow well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So now, since we saw the paragraph without the track changes, can we go back and see the proposed amendments by Committee members?

Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you.

Now, when the statement is written, it is a big paragraph, without...It would have been presented in two sentences to be clear. Following this idea, I also suggest that the first statement which requests the State Party to do all the placing of protection in the maintenance of the Outstanding Universal Value central to the aims of the STCHMP could exactly explain what is been added by the Distinguished Delegate of Belgium, so that we kindly request that does not bring any additional idea on what has been done, so that we request the first proposal be decided.

The Chairperson:

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to concur what has been said by Ethiopia. Let me say that I have no problem about the insertion from Belgium, but I think it is not there because it is now dividing the sentence. Therefore, if we put the suggestion of Belgium, we are using a), b), c) in a sub down there. So, it is requesting this analysis. That might help to clarify the paragraph.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I'd like to go back to Belgium. Do you agree with the Committee members to delete your proposal?

The Delegation of Belgium:

Well, if that's the majority, then of course we will. We'll go with the room, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, with this amendment, are we all in agreement? Any objections? So, I see no objections. And then, the amended paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5.

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, can the changes be incorporated in the paragraph which has been adopted as amended, so that we could have a look at it?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Absolutely. Is it clear?

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, we move to Paragraphs 4 and 5, there are no amendments. Do we agree to accept them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have an amendment. Do we agree on this proposal? I see no objections. The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, we have a proposal. Do we agree on this proposal? I see no objections. The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8, we have a proposal. Are we in agreement with this proposal? I see no objections. The paragraph is adopted.

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

We request that the name of the State Party of India also be reflected, supporting our brothers from Zambia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria appears twice.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, we're all in agreement with this amendment. So, I see no objections. The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, we have an amendment. Are we all in agreement with this proposal? I see no objections. The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 10, we have a proposal. Are we all in agreement with this proposal?

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Regarding the deletion of "advised by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies", we would suggest to keep it in in some way, but add to it "should the State Party so wish" so that at least if the State Party feels that the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies could be of help, they could refer to the Committee's decision to convince them to make themselves available.

And then, regarding the proposed Scientific Committee, it's our understanding that it is in place and that the Secretariat and the Advisory Body have been informed. So, we would suggest to delete the last part of the decision that refers to the Scientific Committee.

Thank you. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, are the Committee members in agreement with the Belgium proposal? So, I see no objections.

I would like to ask Belgium to reexplain your amendment, and please, mention it slowly so that they can let Secretariat type it.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

I think I can understand your question. I don't think the wording of the part of the "advice by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body" is okay. So, what the idea is that we feel that it would be good if the State Party could call on the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies if it so wishes, and that should, in a way, be included in the decision.

The Chairperson:

Does that appear to reflect your proposal?

The Delegation of Belgium:

The idea is there. But, and I'm not a native speaker, I don't think it's the most elegant way of phrasing it.

The Chairperson:

ICOMOS, you would like to say something?

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Maybe, we could go with the assistance of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies if the States Parties so wishes.

The Chairperson:

India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair, for giving the floor.

There is a little confusion. We would like the Secretariat to clarify the Para 10. It begins by saying and I will start from that "the results of the requested research project to investigate the chronological history of the House of Wonders and its construction techniques through archival and on-site investigations". So that's part a) of this paragraph. And then, it says that it is "the State Party to develop alternative proposals". So, I just wanted a clarification. What are these "alternative proposals" and whether there is any main proposal that was submitted by the State Party, which we perhaps have looked into or haven't looked into, just this clarification, please.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I will pass the floor to the Secretariat.

ICOMOS:

I would like to respond.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Yes, there have been quite a number of proposals for the House of Wonders during the years, and unfortunately, the collapse of a portion of the building changed the approach that's required to rehabilitate the building, hence, the word "alternative" in the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

Can I request ICOMOS to please speak in the mic?

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

I apologize. Should I repeat?

The Chairperson:

Yes, please.

ICOMOS:

Right. Excellency,

As I said, and I'll repeat myself, there have been some past proposals for the House of Wonders. Unfortunately, the situation changed when a portion of the building collapsed, and the State Party is now in the process of developing alternative proposals. This is a technically challenging rehabilitation project, and it's going to require investigation of the alternatives and their consequences.

I hope I have clarified the matter.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like His Excellency the Minister of Tourism of Tanzania to answer that because, according to my understanding, there are proposals and it is submitted to the World Heritage Centre, I am sure, and I would like to hear also from the World Heritage Centre, because this is now a bit confusing to submit a proposal, and we know there are proposals. After the collapse, the State Party developed the proposal, and it should be submitted to the World Heritage Centre. So, I would like to hear from both, from His Excellency the Minister and from the World Heritage Centre.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

Can we direct a specific question to the Minister?

The Delegation of Oman:

The question is whether they have a proposal for the rehabilitation or not. I know there is, but I want to make sure. And whether that proposal is submitted or was submitted to the World Heritage Centre.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

The State Party of Tanzania. You may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Tanzania:

Mr. Chairperson,

Based on the question that was asked, we would like to reassure your table, Mr. Chairperson, yourself and the Delegates, all documents and all findings have been working on along with the representatives of the NATCOM which is the National Commission of Tanzania, the Gentleman was just next to me, but also to the Regional office and to the Headquarters.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'll go back to the Secretariat.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

I would just like to clarify, I would like to confirm that on 5 September, as was previously stated, we have received a Global Strategy for the House of Wonders, which is currently under review, as was stated earlier, and so, this was not reflected, of course, in the draft decision. We also received, on 25 August, documents relating to Darajani and additional material was also received just yesterday, on 13 September. So, I would like to ask the Distinguished Delegate of Oman to bear with us and the Advisory Bodies to give us time to review these.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, are there any other comments? Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

In this regard, Your Excellency and Advisory Body, since there are something to be reviewed, and when we say here: "the State Party to submit an alternative proposal", I do not think it is suitable. Therefore, I would like to see that deleted because there are things that is submitted to you, and you need to review them. And if we say to resubmit, it means that you are going to reinvent the wheel. So, I would like to see that deleted. And I would like to emphasize the good relationship between Tanzania and the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies is very important to communicate. I think it is very important they sit and communicate and clarify things.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

Maybe I will give the floor back to the Secretariat, maybe to clarify something.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

This is just to help you in finding the suitable drafting. It is now clear that there are some materials that the Secretariat has received yesterday. So, you may wish to redraft the sentence by saying "also including the alternative proposals for the rehabilitation of the House of Wonders", and then it includes it, and the Secretariat will continue doing the revision that it started.

Thank you, Chairperson, but it is up to you, Committee members.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

After the explanation given by the State Party of Oman and also the Honourable Minister of Tanzania, since the documents for these so-called "alternative proposals" are not with us as of now, we would also support the Omani suggestion to have the same deleted.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do we have any other comment?

So, we'd like to ask the Secretariat to reflect the changes, the updated changes.

Now, India, Oman, is that okay for you?

The Delegation of Oman:

Can we clear it? Clear, the deleted thing and we see the paragraph. Please clear. Clean.

The Chairperson:

Can we have the paragraph without track changes?

Your Excellency, is it clear now?

The Delegation of Oman:

It is clear.

The Delegation of India:

It is clear.

The Chairperson:

The rest of the Committee members. Are we in agreement with this? Any objections? It seems we are all in alignment with this. So, I would like to ask the Secretariat to put it back again with the track changes. Thank you.

So, since there is no objection on this, I would like to adopt the paragraph as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 11, we have a proposal. Do we agree on this? It seems there is no objection on this. So, the paragraph is adopted.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency.

The Chairperson:

India, go ahead.

The Delegation of India:

With your permission, Excellency, I think the changes have been incorporated for which we had raised our flag.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see no more interventions and no objections.

So, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 12, there is no amendment. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 13, we have a proposal. Are we in agreement with this proposal? I see no objections. Then, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 14, we have a proposal. Do we agree on this proposal? I see no objections. Then, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 15, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 16, we have a proposal. Do we agree to this proposal? It seems there is no objection. Since there is no objection, then, the proposal is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Then, I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

If there is no objection, I declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.37** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Now I would like to invite the Director of the World Heritage Centre to read the list of the cultural properties inscribed in the World Heritage List located in the Africa region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following cultural properties located in the Africa region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Island of Mozambique (Mozambique)
- Sudanese style mosques in northern Côte d'Ivoire (Côte d'Ivoire)
- Historic Town of Grand-Bassam (Côte d'Ivoire)
- Asmara: A Modernist African City (Eritrea)
- Aksum (Ethiopia)
- Lower Valley of the Omo (Ethiopia)
- Forts and Castles, Volta, Greater Accra, Central and Western Regions (Ghana)
- Aapravasi Ghat (Mauritius)
- Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove (Nigeria)
- Sukur Cultural Landscape (Nigeria)
- Island of Saint-Louis (Senegal)
- Fossil Hominid Sites of South Africa (South Africa)
- Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba (Togo)
- Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and Ruins of Songo Mnara (United Republic of Tanzania)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If the Committee agrees on these state of conservation reports, I declare the Decisions read out adopted. *[gavel]*

ARAB STATES // ÉTATS ARABES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Also, we would like to revert back to the Director of World Heritage Centre to read the list of the cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Arab States region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You have the floor, Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following cultural properties located in the Arab States region, for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Historic Cairo (Egypt)
- Rabat, Modern Capital and Historic City: a Shared Heritage (Morocco)
- Gebel Barkal and the Sites of Napatan Region (Sudan)
- Kasbah of Algiers (Algeria)
- Ancient Thebes with its Necropolis (Egypt)
- Memphis and its Necropolis – the Pyramid Fields from Giza to Dahshur (Egypt)
- Saint Catherine Area (Egypt)
- Babylon (Iraq)
- Baptism Site “Bethany Beyond the Jordan” (Al-Maghtas) (Jordan)
- Petra (Jordan)
- Um er-Rasas (Kastrom Mefa'a) (Jordan)
- Byblos (Lebanon)
- Ouadi Qadisha (the Holy Valley) and the Forest of the Cedars of God (Horsh Arz el-Rab) (Lebanon)
- Tyre (Lebanon)
- Medina of Essaouira (formerly Mogador) (Morocco)
- Ḥimā Cultural Area (Saudi Arabia)
- Historic Jeddah, the Gate of Makkah (Saudi Arabia)
- Archaeological Site of Carthage (Tunisia)
- Medina of Sousse (Tunisia)

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If the Committee agrees on these state of conservation reports, I declare that the read Decisions are adopted. *[gave]*
Egypt. You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Following the adoption of the decision on the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties in the Arab States without discussion, I would like to underline the following points:

- First, as a committed member, mindful of the Committee's time and efficiency, Egypt has chosen not to initiate discussion on certain decisions pertaining to certain properties. Although we do have specific comments on certain paragraphs within these decisions, our intention is to provide a comprehensive response to all the points raised in these decisions in our forthcoming updated state of conservation reports. These reports will be preceded by a thorough Heritage Impact Assessment studies, ensuring a comprehensive and a well-informed approach.
- Second, the challenges of population growth and the urgent needs to address basic necessities compel States to take measures in pursuit of sustainable development. It is undeniable that finding the delicate equilibrium between preserving our rich heritage and fostering sustainable development represent a genuine dilemma confronting most States Parties to the World Heritage Convention today, as evidenced by widespread discussion during this current session. Egypt remains steadfast in its dedication to both preserving its World Heritage and promoting sustainable development recognizing the paramount importance of harmonizing these two essential goals for the benefit of our nation and future generations.
- Third, Egypt affirms its unwavering commitment to preserving its precious and unique heritage while continually striving to enhance its conservation and management plans. These efforts not only safeguard our heritage, but also enrich the lives of our local communities and preserve the urban fabric of sites, fostering a deeper sense of cultural pride in this World Heritage. Egypt remains vigilant in ensuring that no activity is undertaken that would diminish the Outstanding Value of our heritage, and we are dedicated to its protection and the well-being of future generations.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Egypt values its close cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS and appreciates the progress achieved recently through the recent exercise of preparing the Heritage Impact Assessment for the project in the property of Memphis and its Necropolis. We are willing to continue this close cooperation with the Centre and ICOMOS to overcome the challenges facing the implementation of the Convention in a constructive and cooperative manner.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

I think we have a request from the floor, from the NGO World Heritage Watch.

You may have the floor.

The World Heritage Watch (Observer):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The global values of Saint Catherine Area World Heritage site in South Sinai are seriously threatened by the massive Egyptian Government tourism development, implemented without prior consultation with either the 1,500 years old Monastery of Saint Catherine and the local Bedouin community, and without a published impact assessment. Much of the historic village and its biblical landscapes and vistas have been irretrievably destroyed, along with local Bedouin homes, essential services, schools and even the cemetery, further marginalizing this community.

The UNESCO office in Cairo, along with the Arab Regional Centre in Bahrain, should immediately organize an official assessment visit, followed by ongoing monitoring visits to the site, with a view to inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

ASIA-PACIFIC // ASIE-PACIFIQUE

7B.157 Group of Monuments at Hampi (India) // Ensemble monumental de Hampi (Inde)

The Chairperson:

So, now we have a request to open the discussion on the Group of Monuments of Hampi in India. I would like to know whether there are any comments or interventions from the Committee members.

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

As for opening for this debate and the draft amendment proposed by Oman, first, I would like to commend the work done by the ICOMOS and the efforts undertaken by the State Party to respond to the concerns previously expressed by the Committee.

Let me start by giving our general remarks on this subject. India has put a lot of efforts into fulfilling the obligations set out by in the previous decision of the Committee, and has provided most of the required documents. This includes a report on the state of conservation in March 2023 in response to the decision of the Committee and to several conservation issues raised by third-parties.

We propose three modifications of the original text.

In Para 5, amendment proposed with reference to direction of World Heritage Centre to not use material for road widening from within the World Heritage property. As has been submitted in the state of conservation, the collapse of Kamal Mahal Enclosure wall at this site was due to unprecedented rainfall in the region, and not due to the extraction of materials for road building. The area of the nominated property is protected and monitored against any form of mining or illegal activities.

In Para 8 and 9, amendments are proposed with regard to the Reactive Monitoring mission recommended by World Heritage Centre, and date of submission of SOC to be changed from 1 February 2024 to 1 December 2024. We believe more time is needed to address the concerns raised and take care of the ongoing issues. Various matters

highlighted in the World Heritage Committee communicate, dated 13/04/23, have been examined by the State Party, and communication initiated with the respective associated Department and stakeholders. In order to resolve matter, certain administrative measures have also been proposed by the State Party and are in the process.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat and ICOMOS to respond to this comment.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Distinguished Committee members,

The World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM duly noted the proposal of Oman introducing the amendments to this draft decision.

For the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM, the concerned initial draft elements are supposed to address the lack of detailed information from the State Party, notably on the reported work of widening the road inside the property near the Kamalapur Tank and corresponding Heritage Impact assessment in due course and especially before any irreversible actions are taken in the interests of preventing the erosion of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property.

Allow me also, Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Committee members, to explain that the Reactive Monitoring mission is a helpful mechanism, included in the Operational Guidelines, first and foremost as a means to reporting by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of specific properties and on issues posing potential threats to the OUV of the property.

They also stimulate close cooperation in the field among the Secretariat, Advisory Bodies and the concerned State Party.

If the State Party wishes to postpone the next reporting to the World Heritage Committee of 2025, instead of the one which will take place next year in 2024, the quick deployment of the Reactive Monitoring mission is all the more important, contributing to the evaluation of the state of conservation of the property presented to the Committee and to initiate discussions with the participation of all stakeholders.

With this being said, Mr. Chairperson, with your permission, ICOMOS may be invited to further provide explanation on the proposed draft decision.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much indeed. ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

Once again, members of the Committee,

The group of Monuments at Hampi World Heritage Property has, for several years, been affected by factors including the lack of an operational site management plan, the effect arising from the use of transportation infrastructure, ground transportation infrastructure itself and commercial development. Development pressures persist at the property. The property's vulnerability is exacerbated by a delay in the finalization and full implementation of the Integrated Management Plan, a commitment made when the property was removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2006. These issues need to be addressed and pursued with urgency, to ensure that robust management systems and plans are in place that can address the property's conservation, protection, development and management challenges.

The World Heritage Centre has not yet received the detailed proposal and Heritage Impact Assessment for the ongoing road widening activity between Kamalapura and Hospete for review by the Advisory Bodies, as requested by the Committee in 2019. This is worrying as the road near the Kamalapur tank has reportedly been widened already. In view of the vulnerabilities and pressures outlined in the state of conservation report, it is considered appropriate to request the State Party provide information on the widening of the road near the Kamalapur tank, along with a Heritage Impact Assessment as soon as possible. As this infrastructure project may have had an impact on the attributes of the property which contribute to the OUV of the property, it is also appropriate to request the project be halted to allow for consensus to be reached. The request that traditional materials for road works should not be extracted from within the property contained in Item 5 of the draft decision text reflects the archaeological sensitivity of this property.

A Reactive Monitoring mission to the property is proposed to address the gaps in information and the slow progress in achieving an operational site management plan, and to evaluate development projects within the context of its OUV, in line with the provisions of the Operational Guidelines. The justification presented for the amendment to postpone the proposed Reactive Monitoring mission is to give the State Party the necessary time to take care of ongoing issues, but it has not been communicated what such ongoing issues are. Postponing a Reactive Monitoring mission would be to the detriment of actions aimed at maintaining the property's OUV, and would delay constructive dialogue with and possible assistance to the State Party. The proposal to change the date for the State Party's next state of conservation report can be supported if in combination with the requested Reactive Monitoring mission, as this would enable the mission to visit the property, and its findings would then be available and could be integrated into the working documents for this Committee at its subsequent session.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My Delegation has examined the SOC report on the Group of Monuments Hampi, and we would like to compliment India for submitting the report and giving us an update information regarding conservation and development within the property areas. We have noted, as per the information available, that the State Party has already taken initiatives such as the finalization of the Integrated Management Plan, halting the road widening work, carrying out the Impact Assessment before any major infrastructure project to have sustainable solutions for mobility within property areas, etc. We are satisfied with the conservation approach of the Archaeological Survey of India towards the Conservation of Hampi Group of Monuments under the National Policy for Conservation. While we understand that the State Party has taken several initiatives, we would still like India to clarify why India, at this moment in time, does not want to invite Reactive Monitoring mission. In light of the interventions from the Evaluation Bodies, this mission may be able to solve the problems at hand.

So, I would like to ask a question to the State Party of India as to the reason why India does not want to invite Reactive Monitoring mission at this moment in time.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I'd like to thank India for the efforts it has made and congratulate the State Party for the efforts it has made. We'd also like to thank the Secretariat in the Advisory Bodies for their explanations.

India has provided exhaustive information on why the mission in the conditions stated in the draft decision is not possible. They've mentioned the deadlines or the period of time during which the mission would be carried out, and how this might affect some national events that are being held. Given these circumstances, we think it would be appropriate to postpone this decision to a later date following the assessments that will be carried out and following receipt of further information and a later report on the state of conservation of this property.

Therefore, I would like to support the amendments proposed by Oman.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Dear Committee members,

Thailand wishes to commend India on its efforts on the archaeological work of the Group of Monuments of Hampi. We have learned that the State Party of India has examined and earnestly taken concerns raised by the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies. Protection and monitoring mechanisms have also been put in place in order

to prevent any form of mining or illegal activities in the property. However, Thailand acknowledges challenges the State Party is facing and believes that more time should be given to India to engage in dialogues with relevant agencies and stakeholders as well as Advisory Bodies to address concerns and resolve the matters.

My Delegation, therefore, would like to extend our support for the draft amendment proposed by Oman.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous tenons tout d'abord à remercier l'ICOMOS, l'ICCROM et le Centre du patrimoine mondial pour les différentes observations et les recommandations émises à l'endroit de l'État partie de l'Inde pour une meilleure protection de l'ensemble monumental de Hampi.

Nous souhaitons souligner ensuite les actions mises en œuvre par l'Inde et qui devraient être mieux reflétées dans le projet de décision. En effet, il est positif que la partie indienne ait déjà conceptualisé certaines mesures administratives qui sont en cours d'élaboration. Nous pensons qu'il faudra plus de temps pour répondre à certaines préoccupations soulevées et parvenir à exécuter les actions y correspondantes. Enfin, nous notons que l'Inde est déjà engagée à protéger et surveiller la zone du bien contre toute forme d'exploitation minière ou d'activité illégale. Toute cette activité mériterait d'être clairement reflétée sur le projet de décision.

C'est pourquoi nous soutenons les amendements à y apporter.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to thank Oman for submitting this amendment to the current draft decision. We would also like to commend the State Party for submitting a very concise and comprehensive state of conservation report on this property. The Group of Monuments at Hampi is one of the rare archaeological sites wherein remnants of an ancient city in its entirety can be found. This state of conservation report has been duly reviewed and we have noted ICOMOS concerns for infrastructure development. Moreover, the report submitted by the State Party indicates that there is no damage to the historic structures and that original materials are not being removed to be used for any development projects. Additionally, we take note of the fact that any new infrastructure project will be subject to the Heritage Impact Assessment. Finally, we would like to congratulate the State Party for having completed the Integrated Management Plan, which is critical for the protection and for the management of this property.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for giving us the opportunity to make an intervention on this item.

South Africa would like to support the State Party of India and requesting that the Reactive Monitoring mission is not necessary in the light of the additional information provided by the State Party of India.

Mr. Chair, we understand the concerns raised by the Advisory Body, ICOMOS, regarding the implementation of the Integrated Management Plan and the Master Plan, including stricter monitoring and reporting regarding tourism development pressures, which may lead to activities which may jeopardize the OUV of this property, as well as the widening of the road near the Kamalapur and other developments which will require to follow the Heritage Impact Assessment process, as required by the Operational Guidelines.

In light of the information provided by the State Party in 2023, we would like to support the amendments as proposed by Oman, which acknowledge the work that the State Party has conducted over the last six months after the state of the conservation review was compiled.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I would like to thank you and the Secretariat for the presentation that they made, and the information provided therein, which is of great importance.

We have been looking carefully at this file, and we wanted to thank India for the information provided. I think that this enabled us to arrive at a position on this particular property. We understand that India has taken different steps to protect the OUV on the one hand, and also India has indicated that it has commenced various initiatives.

So, that is why we can support Oman's proposed amendment of postponing the date of the SOC report. And that hopefully will give the State Party the time required in order to implement all of these things. It means that the national initiatives can go ahead, and we think this will be a favourable outcome.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair for giving me the floor.

Nigeria concurs with the Distinguished Delegation of Oman and aligns itself to the amendment introduced to the DR on this item.

We note and commend the State Party of India in its efforts to meet up with the obligations as recommended by the Advisory Bodies, and for demonstrating that there is no damage to the property in its response to the issue raised. We also support the plea to shift the deadline set for the State Party to provide updated report to December 2024, as indicated in the proposed amendment, and therefore, request the Committee to adopt the draft decision, as amended.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to give the floor to Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Italy supports the proposal to postpone the Reactive mission. Also, to give advantage to the mission, for the further attention that can be put into by the State Party.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

I would like to join the numerous previous speakers in commending the State Party of India for its efforts in conserving this beautiful site. We also thank the Advisory Bodies for the valued work and the relevant reports that we have examined.

After examination of the file and all elements, we also came to the conclusion that more time is needed, and we, therefore, would like to express our support for the amendments that were tabled by the Distinguished Delegate of Oman.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We congratulate the State Party for the report and for all the information provided to clarify the state of the site. And of course, we understand the concerns expressed by ICOMOS, but the State Party explained very clearly the situation. And of course, we understand that the date of December is better to present the report. And of course, for the Reactive Monitoring mission, I think that the State Party needs more time to implement the measures, and we will see this later, in two years.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We'd like to thank the State Party, India, for all of its efforts to protect the property, and we want to thank the Advisory Bodies for all of their efforts and for their report.

We support Oman's proposed amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Chairperson,

We would like to thank ICOMOS and the State Party for their report and to commend the efforts by the State Party in preserving the Heritage site of Group of Monuments at Hampi.

After careful review of the documents, we would like to support the amendments proposed by Oman as we consider that more time should be given to the State Party to implement the measures.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I'd like to pass the floor to Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

We wanted to thank the State Party for all of its efforts, and we want to thank the Advisory Bodies, like ICOMOS, for their reports.

We wanted to support Oman's proposed amendment, just so as to give them more time, give India more time to submit its SOC and the update of the Evaluation Body's recommendations. That's why we can support that.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

Just as the previous speakers have said, we would be in favour of endorsing the Omani proposed amendments so as to give India more time to provide more updated information and to fulfil the recommendations that have been issued.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Ethiopia would like to join previous speakers in commending the State Party as well as the Advisory Bodies, and we support the amendment proposed by Oman to allow the State Party to have more time to respond.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you very much, Chair.

I would like to join other countries, other members of the Committee, to support the proposal made by Oman and on the proposed amendment to postpone the RMM mission, I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia, you raise...

It seems we don't have any other interventions, so I would like to give the floor to India to respond to the Delegation of Japan's question.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving India the floor and for Japan for asking India this question. We would also like to thank other members of the Committee for their generous support for India's continuing initiatives towards the conservation and management of the property.

Mr. Chair, India does not want a Reactive Monitoring mission at this moment, for we have, from time to time, taken a number of steps and initiatives necessary to maintain the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property, that is the Hampi Group of Monuments. The conservation of monuments is being undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India and the State Department of Archaeology, and the monuments are being conserved and maintained as per our National Policy for Conservation in 2014. We assure the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS that we follow the principles of anastylosis while preserving the monuments, and do not use historic building materials to supplant the supply of material required for any infrastructure projects.

The ASI and the Hampi World Heritage Area Monument Authority have already finalized the Integrated Management Plan, that is the IMP, and they have, we have committed to implement it. The process is also ongoing to align it with the Hampi Master plan.

India has also committed to undertake the Heritage Impact Assessments in case of any major infrastructure project and inform the World Heritage Centre, as per the Para 172 of the Operational Guidelines. As of now, the HWHAMA Authority is merely maintaining the infrastructure and undertakes necessary maintenance from time to time. India has often received third-party information through the World Heritage Centre that has been replied to, and this one we have received in fact, one very recently in April, that will also be replied to in due course of time, and this is obviously in conformation with the Paragraph 174 of the Operational Guidelines. Since we believe that a number of actions have been taken by the State Party; therefore, we think and we have requested that it is not necessary, at the moment, to invite the Reactive Monitoring mission. In addition, we have also requested for the SOC report deadlines to be shifted slightly because our country will be in the midst of the General Elections, which involves a billion plus people. That takes several months of preparation.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do we have any other interventions?

I would like to invite you to adopt the Decision **45 COM 7B.[157]** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Oman, coauthored by the Distinguished Delegations of India and Thailand, and from the floor, we have received confirmation for the amendment from the Distinguished Delegations of Russian Federation, Mali, South Africa, Qatar, Nigeria, Italy, Belgium, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Bulgaria, Mexico, Argentina, Ethiopia and Rwanda.

The proposed amendment is for Para 4, 5 and 8.

The revised Para 4: "Requests the State Party to provide information on the monitoring of the property, in particular the activities undertaken to address tourism development pressures, as well as the conservation strategy for the protection of the historic mandapas near the Virupaksha temple in line with the IMP as requested in Decision **37 COM 7B.61**";.

The revised Para 5: "Requests the State Party to provide detailed information about the widening of a road near the Kamalapur Tank, along with a Heritage Impact Assessment as requested in Decision **43 COM 7B.61**";.

And Para 8, the original Para 8 requesting the Monitoring mission is deleted, so the revised Para 8, which was the original Para 9, now reads as: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy, you had anything...

The Delegation of Italy:

No, no. It's Okay. I didn't see the name of my country. It's Okay.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, let's examine the draft position, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 3, there are no amendments. Do we agree to accept them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposal. Do we agree on this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposal. Do we agree on this amended paragraph? I see no objections. So, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6 and Paragraph 7, there are no amendment. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8, we have a proposal. Do we agree on this proposal? I see no objections. The paragraph is adapted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8, we have a proposal. Do we agree on this proposal? I see no objections. So, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues,

I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole and if there is no objection, I declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.[157] adopted** as amended. *[gavel]*

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to come back to the point that I promised to come, regarding the Bangladesh file.

After internal consultation with State Party and other States, we would like to open the draft amendment for discussion after lunch.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

Dear colleagues,

Due to some technical issues yesterday, two NGOs couldn't take the floor; and before we close our session for lunch, I would like to, with your agreement, give the floor and the opportunity to the NGOs express themselves.

The first one is WWF. If they can take the floor.

The World Heritage Watch (Observer):

So, since they are not in the room, it seems, can I make the statement on their behalf?

The Chairperson:

It was requested by them, so unfortunately...

WWF (Observer):

Hello. Can you hear me? Okay, sorry, I didn't have a proper micro.

Thank you, Chair.

Doñana is facing the worst moment since it was declared a National Park 50 years ago. Its biodiversity is dramatically disappearing as scientific evidences and voices are showing. There is no time for the dry marshes, the Mediterranean temporal lagoons and the species of Doñana. From WWF, we request UNESCO to monitor exclusively the implementation of the Recommendation, and to urge the Spanish administration to carry out together key actions to recover the hydrological functionality of Doñana.

In addition, we ask UNESCO to put Doñana in the List of Danger as soon as the law proposal to amnesty illegal farms that are stealing the water of this unique wetland in the world is approved, we expect it is going to be approved quite soon. The protection of Doñana was a milestone in the conservation of wetlands in Europe in the 20th century. We are now on time to avoid its collapse in the 21st century. It's more than urgent to act.

Thank you for giving me the floor.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to also give the floor to the Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation to intervene on Wood Buffalo National Park, Canada. You may have the floor.

I would like to invite you to take the floor. Can you use the next mic to you?

Fort Chipewyan Métis Association (Observer):

Hello, good morning. I wasn't made aware I was making the statement today as opposed of yesterday, but I still appreciate the opportunity.

"Good afternoon. My name is Carmen Wells and I'm here today as the Lands and Regulatory Director for the Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation.

Fort Chipewyan Métis, a Canadian constitutionally protected aboriginal rights holder in Fort Chipewyan, in northern Alberta, Canada. They are from the land, they live on the land, their food and water is from the land, it is their home. One of our elders recently told me as we talked about the environment, he told me: "Healthy land, healthy people", and that stays with me to this day.

Wood Buffalo National Park is within the traditional territory of Fort Chipewyan Métis, so it is part of their home. Wood Buffalo National Park is faced with increasing threats: seepage of tailings ponds, discussions of releasing treated oil sands affected process water into the mighty Athabasca, which flows into the Peace-Athabasca Delta and Wood Buffalo National Park, and climate change. Everything is connected, as the elders say. Fort Chipewyan Métis are worried about these increased pressures on their home. The Nation has always worried about being downstream from the Alberta oil sands and an underlying ongoing worry of a breach of those tailings ponds. And now, Fort Chipewyan Métis is faced with doubt, doubt of whether they should eat the fish they caught, the animals they have hunted, the water they have drunk from the land. Fort Chipewyan Métis has been working with the State Party, along with other neighbouring nations, on improving the health of the park, and our nation has been working hard to make sure our voice is heard with this process, that our concerns are being heard. We have made some positive strides. The Reactive Monitoring mission is fulsome. However, our community is on a tight timeline with climate change, with potential treated tailings water release. A tailings Risk Assessment has been delayed and needs to be brought in as a priority. We have to ensure the timelines become clearer and accountabilities are brought to the forefront before we run out of time."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

I would like to pass the floor to the World Heritage Watch to intervene on Hampi.

The World Heritage Watch (Observer):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The local community living at Hampi for hundreds of years and being an integral part of the Heritage is being completely disregarded in the processes discussed here, in contradiction to stated UNESCO policies, and has had almost no say in the classification and nomination process, and gets completely neglected in the conservation and management of the site. The scope of HWHAMA is only limited to the Group and Monuments and not the surrounding living landscape. HWHAMA has no taluk or village-level representative, and that creates a disbalance of power, dissemination among grassroot-level authorities such as village, panchayat and State and central level authorities, leading to imposed regulation and distrust in the community. Heritage management policies developed by HWHAMA show an exaggerated emphasis and reliance on infrastructure and resource intensive development plans, economic gain and enhanced investment in the core of their strategy that has resulted in overcommercialisation and the displacement of traditional livelihoods. The loss of traditional livelihood, overdependence on tourism, marginalization of local communities, and gentrification challenges are not addressed in the UNESCO policy framework.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'd like to pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre for some announcement before we close the session.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Just to remind you that we will have two side events during lunchtime:

- The first one, which will start at 1:30 in the Hegra Room, which is the Advisory Bodies space, and it will be on the "Launch of the World Heritage Online Maps Platform". It is organized by the UNESCO Secretariat and Flanders.
- And the second side event will take place in Rock Art Room. It will also start at 1:30 and it will be on "Fostering collaborations on heritage experts between Africa and the Arab world", it is organized by the Arab Regional Centre on World Heritage, the African World Heritage Fund, the ALIPH and UNESCO Secretariat.

So, you have the two side events, today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Director.

So, I wish you a wonderful lunch break. See you afterwards. *[gavel]*

The meeting rose at 1:08 pm. // La séance a été levée à 13h08.

FOURTH DAY
Thursday, 14 September 2023
EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING
3:24 pm – 6:31 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

QUATRIÈME JOUR
Jeudi 14 septembre 2023
HUITIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h24 – 18h31
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

7B. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) //
ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU
PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

ASIA-PACIFIC (Ct'd) // ASIE-PACIFIQUE (suite)

The Chairperson:

As you remember, this morning, it was requested that the discussion on the Sundarbans, Bangladesh be resumed at 3:00 pm today due to no progress on the Drafting Group. If the Committee members are okay, we will be proceeding with the examination of the draft decision.

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, but I did not really hear clearly. What is the item that you wanted to start?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

We will start on the Item 45 COM 7B.14 concerning the Sundarbans state of conservation report for Bangladesh, that was postponed from yesterday.

The Delegation of Japan:

Well, then, in that case, I have to make one point very clear.

This item, as of now, we have large disagreements on many of those items. That is why the Working Group was created. Now, it seems as if, you know... if we start this discussion, that will take a long time. As you may be probably aware, we have a large number of people who are here for one particular file. Therefore, if this discussion continues and if we cannot close a particular item, we will lose those people tomorrow afternoon. So, I think there are logistical problems, here; I have to make it very clear. Now, we have to do what we have to do this afternoon and we cannot spend too much time on this one. This is something that I have to say very strongly because, you know, yesterday we understand that there will be Delegations coming for inscription projects. Therefore, we are okay. If there is no time for our discussions, we can do it on the 24th but we also would like to make sure that the same is actually respected for different files as well. Otherwise, we will have a very difficult logistical problem.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

As you know, it was supposed to be discussed during this lunch break since yesterday. That was the announcement and agreement. But since we received some updates with the leading of the Drafting Group, they mentioned that there was no meeting and maybe the progress of the consensus are not working or, like there is no, you know, there is no consensus among the States Parties concerned in this Drafting Group.

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Actually, if we go to look at our calendar, we are advanced in our calendar and, therefore, there is no excuse that we postpone this. I am mixed up with the statement from His Excellency, the Ambassador of Japan, because he mixed about Item 7 and this item we want to discuss. Therefore, I do hope that we can open this and we finalize.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Excuse me. Yes, Sir. Mr. Chair, thank you.

So indeed, this Working Group was created in order to create a consensus to be beneficial for all of us and we think indeed, due to time constraints, there was no meeting taking place this lunch break and it was foreseen at 6:00 pm. As you know, it was agreed yesterday, and it was also discussed this morning in the Bureau. Having that said, we think it seems fair that this group is given a second chance, I mean, to have at least one more meeting so that we can continue to work again in the sake of finding a consensus in a very positive spirit. But of course, we are not insisting on this. It has to be carried by the group, by the whole Committee. But we think it makes sense to give them at least one more chance. We also think it would be a bit of a weird precedent to create a Working Group and then interrupting them after the first meeting, but that is another issue. But we want to hear from the room on this, and we are available in any way. But this is just to give you a bit of context.

Thank you, Sir.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Chair.

We would like to agree with Belgium that we give the Working Group an opportunity to deliberate on the item later this afternoon, hoping that tomorrow afternoon, we will then be able to deal with the item then. We would like to believe that as we agreed, in principle, that the Working Group should be able to deliberate on it. Let's provide them that opportunity to do so. We do appreciate that there was no time to meet since last evening and today's lunch, but there is commitment to be meeting this evening and therefore we will agree that the Working Group meets this evening and tomorrow afternoon. Then, they can provide progress.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also concur with what was mentioned by South Africa, Japan and Belgium. We think that it is only fair to give this Working Group the chance to complete the overall examination of this DR and to come with a solid proposal tomorrow afternoon.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

After having heard the statements that were made just now, we would also like to support any solution that would lead to consensus.

I have a question for the Secretariat: we are aware that the Working Group has always been able to hold meetings, side meetings. In other words, shouldn't it be possible for experts or other Delegations to join the Working Group that could be organized in parallel to our main Plenary session? Wouldn't that help us win some time back?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

I would tend to agree with what the Distinguished Delegate of the State of Qatar has said.

I would also want to know from the Secretariat: why can't these meetings happen in parallel? Because each Delegation constitutes with more than one person, so they could surely spare another person to hold these meetings in the Working Group parallelly and save time.

Excellency, I also want to take the floor to request you to, because we have been hearing the voices of NGOs and various civil bodies, should we not hear the voice of what Bangladesh has to also say about this? Therefore, I request that you give the floor to Bangladesh to answer the question, would they support a parallel Working Group?

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

So, I'm passing the floor to the Rapporteur to provide some..., to the Legal Advisor to respond to some comments from the Committee members.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, I believe that I should, first of all, recall Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, which says that you, Mr. Chair, have the authority, the duty, to direct the discussions and put questions to the vote. Ultimately, Mr. Chair, it is your decision to, in your capacity as the person who is directing the discussions of the Committee, to decide, of course, after hearing the views of the members of the Committee. And you may also decide, of course, Mr. Chair, to put this to the decision of the Committee itself, which remains the master of its own procedure. As to whether States that are not members of the Committee could be consulted with respect to this matter, I would point out that this is a matter that pertains to the organization of work and the conduct of the proceedings by the Committee, so this is a matter that is to be decided by the members of the Committee. Of course, the interests and rights of States Parties who are not members of the Committee may be taken into account in this decision, but this, I should insist, is a decision that rests upon the Committee itself and its members under your Presidency, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks for the Legal Advisor and all the colleagues who are trying to contribute to come to a consensus for this matter. I have consulted the State Party and I think we don't mind if we stick on a specific time. We don't want to come tomorrow, we say, because they haven't worked. They have gone for dinner, etc., etc. They didn't come to the Working Group and then we postponed again. So yesterday, we took a decision for 24 hours. Today again, we are postponing it and, therefore, I need, Mr. Chair, to take a decision, upon the consensus of the Committee, that we need this for tomorrow before afternoon.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

So, hearing from the Committee members and the consensus on giving the Working Group a chance to meet at 6:00 pm unless they want to meet now until the rest of the day, so they can proceed, and we can examine the draft decision tomorrow morning.

Sorry, because tomorrow, we're going to have only one session afternoon. So, it will be tomorrow afternoon. Belgium okay with that?

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

That seems like an excellent idea. I think our expert, Piet Geleyns, confirms 6:00 pm, as was initially foreseen, we can maintain that time schedule.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, the Working Group will take place at 6:00 pm, and I really appreciate the collaboration of all Committee members.

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Only clarification regarding the Advisory Body and the Secretariat because, yesterday, what delays or what delayed the matter is the argument between the State Party and the Secretariat, that's what delayed the things. Whether now only the meeting with the Member State, with the Committee or with the Secretariat. We need clarification because we don't want to go again. They start arguing. Each one wants to put its point of view.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

As I think, yesterday, we mentioned that the Secretariat and Advisory Bodies will be assisting any..., you know, they will be of help to the Working Group and the States Parties to clarify anything. So, I think it is not rather than an argument is more than will be assisting to the Working Group.

Thank you all.

7B.162 Borobudur Temple Compounds (Indonesia) // Ensemble de Borobudur (Indonésie)**The Chairperson:**

So, proceeding for the next property to be discussed, I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Thailand, which requested the state of conservation report on the Borobudur Temple Compounds in Indonesia to be opened for discussion, to present to the Committee the reason why it made such request.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Good afternoon, and thank you, Mr. Chair.

Dear Committee members,

Thailand wishes to refer to the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.162** regarding the Borobudur Temple Compounds.

According to the information provided by the State Party of Indonesia, the completed Heritage Impact Assessment, as requested by the Centre and the Advisory Body, was submitted to the World Heritage Centre in March earlier this year. That Heritage Impact Assessment was carried out in accordance with the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context*. Thailand is of the view that conducting an Impact Assessment is a matter of internal mechanism of a State Party as long as it is undertaken in compliance with acceptable standards and guidance provided by the World Heritage Centre. Therefore, my Delegation believes that rather than carrying out a new HIA, it is now the process of implementation of the one that has already been submitted. However, Thailand encourages the State Party of Indonesia to implement the updated Heritage Impact Assessment in alignment with the new *Guidance and Toolkit*, as well as to closely engage with constructive dialogues with the Centre and the Advisory Body to address any questions or concerns that may arise from this endeavour. The State Party should also keep the Committee and the Centre informed of any results and report of such implementation. In this regard, my Delegation would like to present the draft amendment, and we hope that the Committee members could support the proposal to provide proper recommendations and guidance for the State Party.

Mr. Chair, my Delegation would also like to request the State Party of Indonesia, upon the permission of the Chair, to make necessary clarifications if required.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I will pass the floor to the Secretariat and ICOMOS.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Distinguished Committee members,

We take note of the proposed amendments introduced by Thailand.

As you may recall, this property was discussed in previous sessions of the Committee and the main issue is related to a number of tourism development projects within and around the property.

The State Party's intention to deal with the tourism issues is appraised positively, as are their efforts including upgrading the Guidelines of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and the ongoing legislation to establish an integrated management body covering the whole of the Borobudur National Strategic Area.

Concerns remain in the way that the State Party has been advancing these projects, which is not in line with the Operational Guidelines of the Convention. The Operational Guidelines requests the prior submission of necessary documentation to the Secretariat, including an appropriate independent Heritage Impact Assessment.

The Heritage Impact Assessment submitted by the State Party on 10 March 2023 is acknowledged, however, please allow me to recall that Heritage Impact Assessment should be conducted before any irreversible decisions are taken. This is essential since Impact Assessment should serve to evaluate the potential risks to the OUV and identify alternatives or mitigation measures to achieve environmental, social and economic outcomes without jeopardizing the attributes of the property's OUV.

As concerns the amendment proposed on the draft decision Item 7, as decided at its 44th session in Fuzhou, the Committee welcomed the establishment of an integrated management body for the whole of Borobudur National Strategic Area.

Now, with your permission, Mr. Chairperson, ICOMOS may be invited to provide further comments on the state of conservation of this property.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. You may.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Since the World Heritage property of Borobudur was last discussed at the 44th extended session of the Committee, eight out of 11 proposed development programmes have been completed despite the Committee's request that work on these projects be paused. And I comment, with great respect to the Distinguished Delegate from Thailand, that when the State Party of Indonesia is a State Party to the World Heritage Convention, and when the property is inscribed on the World Heritage List, and when the Committee has made a specific request, the matter transcends being only an internal matter for the State Party, it becomes a matter for the Committee. Previously requested documents, including the Integrated Tourism Management Plan of Borobudur-Yogyakarta-Prambanan, the Borobudur Management Plan and an updated Heritage Impact Assessment prepared to address potential impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value were only provided after most of the projects were completed despite the Committee's request that these documents be submitted to the World Heritage Centre prior to adoption so that they could inform decision making. The Integrated Tourism Management Plan of Borobudur-Yogyakarta-Prambanan and Borobudur Visitor Management Plan date from 2020 and are to be updated to reflect current circumstances and should be reviewed by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies before they are finalized.

Honourable Chair and members of the Committee,

The proposed amendment to Item 5 of the draft decision is not appropriate and should retain the request that the State Party submit the original Heritage Impact Assessment. This is because the Borobudur World Heritage Strategic Tourism Development Review indicated that this HIA, which was conducted by an independent team from the State Party's own Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and Technology, found, and I quote, "that the evaluation results from the HIA are unacceptable and the full findings and recommendations of this HIA should be disclosed and considered". So, with that proviso, the additional suggestion made in the proposed amendment to Item 5, namely, the implementation of the findings of the subsequent HIA submitted in March 2023, is supported and it is suggested that this might simply be added to the original words of draft decision, Item 5. The establishment of an integrated management body for the whole of the Borobudur National Strategic Area, including the

involvement of relevant stakeholders, is a high priority. ICOMOS accepts the updated wording proposed in the amendment to Item 7, which reflects the current position. In light of the above circumstances, the draft decision also proposes that a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property occur as soon as possible to review the state of conservation of the property, assess the existing cumulative and potential impacts of construction projects on attributes which support the OUV of the property, propose any mitigation measures and to consider what advice or assistance might enrich the Management Plan for the property.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

I would like to see if we have any intervention from the Committee.

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Oman Delegation noted the strong commitment of the Government of Indonesia to preserve the border compound and its vicinity. The State Party has paid a great attention to ensure the utmost conservation of Outstanding Universal Values of the temple. This can clearly be seen from the full commitment of the State Party to protect and preserve the temple from any threat by introducing different policies, regulations, programmes and projects. Also, we would like to thank and welcome the State Party for working closely with several stakeholders to minimize the risk from any development in the broader region. For this, the State Party has set a number of regulations regarding the regional spatial planning, building and environmental planning. This will further control urban development within the property and its wider setting, especially that it takes into account the preservation of different values of the property. Additionally, we have welcomed the different protection measures taken by the State Party, including limiting the number of visitors to the temple, relocating the merchants and parking area from zone 2 to zone 3 development zone in Kujon, where also a new museum about Borobudur will also be constructed.

We have also noted and welcomed the different the efforts of the Government of Indonesia in conducting and submitting the 2022 Heritage Impact Assessment, which involved 33 experts from various fields of the science.

Mr. Chair,

We recognize all concerns raised by the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM. We, at the same time, thank the State Party for showing the strong willingness in taking further steps towards preserving and protecting the OUV of the property. As stated earlier, the State Party has taken the comments, concerns and recommendations raised by the Advisory Body into consideration. We believe that more time and dialogue between the State Party and the Advisory Body will lead to driving property all the efforts and intervention in a way that will not impact negatively the OUV and its attributes. Therefore, the Government of Indonesia has opened the door for the constructive discussions. However, we think the sufficient time is required to allow the State Party to move forward with all its efforts and ensure protection of the OUV of the property as well as its proper management.

For this reason, we support the amendment of the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

We have gone through the reports and the proposed amendments made by Thailand. We support the amendments to Para 5 and 7 related to Borobudur Temple Compounds.

We also have noted that the Government of Indonesia has officially submitted the complete Heritage Impact Assessment to UNESCO on 9 March 2023, which were prepared by 33 experts and guided by the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context*.

We have been informed that Indonesia is currently drafting a Presidential Regulation on the governance of the Borobudur area, which includes the establishment of an integrated management body overseen by the President of the country and involving a wide range of stakeholders.

As a result, we believe that the draft decision should reflect the fact that the State Party of Indonesia is making effort and putting forth a number of positive steps to improve the Borobudur area, while also preserving the OUV of the Borobudur Temple Compounds.

Having said that, we appreciate the work done by the Secretariat and the Evaluation Bodies.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

After studying the documents presented by the States Parties to the WHC, we would like to note that Indonesia remains committed to maintaining the OUV of the Borobudur Complex, and it is taking efforts to organize its regulatory legislation, programmes and projects. As far as we understand, work on preserving Borobudur involves a large number of Government agencies, including the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology.

Current policies of the Government of Indonesia include measures to decrease the numbers of tourists who are able to ascend to the temple, increasing green buffer areas as well as the development of an integrated management body. The Government of Indonesia cancelled the construction of a pedestrian bridge on the river bank in accordance with the recommendations of the Impact Assessment on OUV, which was presented to the Secretariat on 9 March 2023. Some of the new measures include removal of plants that are dangerous and could damage the construction of the buildings of the temple, increasing the number of security guards, introducing dynamic pricing to try to regulate the flow of tourists, a ban on bringing purses and umbrellas into the temple area. So many measures have already been taken, and we believe that these measures will have a positive impact on the state of conservation of the property.

We would like to thank the Advisory Bodies for their efforts and the attention that they have paid to this complex. Given everything that has been said and on the basis of the presented information, we support the amendments to the draft decision proposed by Thailand.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Nous tenons à saluer les efforts fort louables de l'Organe d'évaluation et le rapport sur l'état de conservation du bien dénommé "Ensemble de Borobudur". Nous souhaitons nous associer aux modifications proposées au Projet de décision **45 COM 7B.162** soumises par la Thaïlande, afin qu'il soit reflété dûment l'engagement du Gouvernement indonésien envers les principes de la Convention de 1972 en ce qui concerne le développement du tourisme, les pressions économiques et sociales dans et autour de l'enceinte du temple de Borobudur.

En effet, nous avons relevé que l'État partie de l'Indonésie s'engage à garantir que la complexité des activités visant à réaliser le développement durable ne compromette pas la VUE du bien. De même, une série de politiques, de réglementations, de programmes et de projets a été coordonnée lors de plusieurs réunions de cabinet pour faciliter des niveaux de soutien et de mobilisation sans précédent de collaboration interministérielle, y compris la préparation d'un rapport complet sur l'évaluation de l'impact sur le patrimoine.

En outre, il est important de noter que les institutions et mécanismes interministériels pertinents indonésiens sont non seulement bien établis, mais également activement opérationnels. Ils s'engagent à donner aux communautés les moyens de renforcer la cohésion sociale, de promouvoir la résilience économique et d'assurer la durabilité environnementale de manière globale. Ce sont là des efforts considérables qui méritent, à notre avis, d'être mieux reflétés dans la décision que le Comité est censé prendre concernant l'ensemble de Borobudur.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Salaam Aleykum.

We would like to support the amendment presented by the Kingdom of Thailand and we would like to ask the State Party the following questions:

- The first one is: what policy has Indonesia implemented to limit the number of visitors to the Borobudur Temple area in order to ensure the area's sustainability?
- And the second question is: what policies does the Indonesian Government implement to increase the Green Coefficient in Borobudur Temple area?

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Shukran Said Rais.

Mr. Chair,

State of Qatar commends the State Party efforts to harmonize the management of Borobudur Temple Compounds by updating Presidential Decree no. 1 of 1992. In addition, Qatar encourages the State Party to implement HIA in accordance with the newly provided *Guidance and Implementation Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context* and the constructive dialogue between the State Party and ICOMOS.

With that, Qatar supports the draft decision amendment.

Thanks.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We welcome the submission of the Heritage Impact Assessment by the State Party of Indonesia, which was prepared by about 33 experts.

As such, we support the amendment proposed by Thailand on Paragraph 5, which calls on the State Party of Indonesia to implement the Heritage Impact Assessment. We believe that the implementation of the Heritage Impact Assessment is key to sustaining the OUV. Hence our support for the amendment.

Chairperson,

South Africa also supports the amendment to Paragraph 7 as proposed by Thailand, which welcomes the intervention of the State Party through a Presidential decree and we believe that the proposed amendment will enable the State Party of Indonesia to streamline the activities of multiple stakeholders and, in turn, improve the state of conservation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I see no more questions from the Committee.

Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The State Party of Indonesia has prepared a number of documents, namely the Integrated Tourism Management Plan and HIA, and we would like to express our appreciation for providing us these documents and also the commitment expressed by the Government of Indonesia to preserve the OUV of the Borobudur Temple Compounds.

I would like as well to thank ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre for reviewing the aforementioned documents, and we took note of the concerns expressed.

My Delegation would like to ask the State Party to provide further clarification with regard to ICOMOS comments on the preparation process of the HIA study.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We would like to thank ICOMOS and the State Party for their report and to commend the efforts by the State Party in preserving the heritage site of Borobudur Temple Compounds.

After careful review of the documents and the proposal by Thailand amendments, we would like to support the amendments to Paragraph 5 and 7 as we commend the submission of the Heritage Impact Assessment as well as the overall efforts by the State Party in preserving this heritage site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no one from the Committee members, so I would like to give the floor to the...

Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Nigeria supports the draft amendment to this draft decision because we believe that the amendment will provide a balanced view as it is expressed now.

So, we are in this support, and we hope that the decision will be adopted as amended.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We'd also like to commend the ICOMOS for this report, as well as the State Party for all its efforts. The amendments proposed by Thailand for Borobudur Temple Compound cultural property are, to our view, pertinent since they provide updated information concerning the revision and submission to the Secretariat of the Heritage Impact Assessment. They also provide some important modifications on the proposed draft decision so as to better reflect the way forward for the establishment of a participatory management system.

Given the above, we would also like to support the proposed amendment.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to give the floor to the State Party to respond to the questions addressed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The Observer Delegation of Indonesia:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Before that, I'd like to commend Saudi Arabia for chairing this meeting.

In response to the questions of our colleague from Saudi Arabia and also from Egypt, beginning since early this year, the Government has decided that the maximum number of visitors that can ascend to the temple is to 1,200, which is 85% decrease in comparison prior to 2020. And second, we will give more priority to Buddhist spiritual tourists in order to enjoy the Borobudur Temple. Second, with regard to increase the Green Coefficient of Borobudur, the Government has decided, early this year, that the green belt or the green zone in zone 2, or the buffer zone, will increase from 92% to 96%. So, this is a major development that we are currently doing.

And in response to the colleague of Egypt, I would like to impress that probably this is the first time ever that an HIA is discussed by the President of Indonesia. So, on the 14 June 2023, the President instructed us to coordinate the development of the HIA, and that involved not only 33 experts but also 18 ministries.

I have been instructed by my Minister to say that Indonesia invites the members of the Committee to visit Borobudur in mid-2024, and we believe in the adage that "Seeing is remembering, remembering leads to believing". Indonesia invites members of the Committee to join the Guardians of the Borobudur Galaxy, where each member cooperates closely. We don't believe in Indiana Jones' mentality of one person can save the world. We believe in cooperation with Member States, and we hope that the Secretariat and the Advisory Body can help us in implementing the HIA.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no other interventions. So, I would like to invite you, colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.162** concerning this property, and before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Thailand, co-authored by the Distinguished Delegations of Qatar, Russian Federation, and from the floor, we have received confirmations from the Distinguished Delegations of Oman, India, Russian Federation, Mali, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Bulgaria, Nigeria and Greece.

The amendments proposed are to Para 5 and Para 7.

The revised Para 5, as you may see on the screen; "Further requests the State Party to duly implement the revised HIA in accordance with the newly provided *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*, as submitted on 9 March 2023;"

Moving to the revised Para 7: "Welcomes the States Parties' ongoing", should be "State Party's", "Welcomes the State Party's ongoing endeavour to harmonize the management of Borobudur Temple Compounds by updating the Presidential Decree no. 1 of 1992, and requests the State Party to prioritize establishment of an integrated management body for the entire Borobudur National Strategic Area, involving multiple stakeholders such as national and regional governments, private sector partners and local communities, and to oversee its development and operation;"

Remaining paras stay as they are.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

After listening carefully to the clarification given by the Delegation of Indonesia, My Delegation would like to join the list of countries supporting the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Italy, too, would like to be added to the other Member States.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Italy. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Zambia as well would like to be added to the list. Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thank you all.

So, I'd like to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

So, Paragraph 1 and 2 and 3, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them, and Paragraph 4, to accept them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposal. Do we have any objection? I see no objections. The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, there is no amendment. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, we have a proposal. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8 and Paragraph 9, Paragraph 10, there are no amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

I would like to invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole. And if there is no objection, I, therefore, declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.162** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

7B.43 Town of Luang Prabang (Lao People's Democratic Republic) // Ville de Luang Prabang (République démocratique populaire lao)

The Chairperson:

For the next property to be discussed, I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Thailand, which requested the state of conservation report on the Town of Luang Prabang (Lao People's Democratic Republic) to be opened for discussion, to present to the Committee the reason why it made such request.

You may have the floor, Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you again, Mr. Chair.

Dear Committee members,

Thailand wishes to refer to the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.43** regarding the Town of Luang Prabang.

My Delegation welcomes the commitment of the State Party of Lao PDR in safeguarding and preserving the country's World Heritage sites, as well as in exercising all available means to address concerns and recommendations of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies. We appreciate the important roles of Advisory Bodies in providing advice and recommendations on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the field of their expertise, as well as monitoring states of conservation, and to make a recommendation to inscribe a Heritage site to the List of World Heritage in Danger where necessary.

However, development plans and projects within the sovereign State Party should remain under that State consideration and decision. To request a State Party to relocate a dam, construction or similar development projects located outside the Heritage site might be overstretching the role of Advisory Bodies, and in this instance, the project is located 27 km away from Luang Prabang town, outside both core zone and buffer zone of the site.

In this regard, Thailand believes that striking a balance between the improvement of the living standards of the local communities pursuing its national economic development goals and the preservation of the World Heritage property is crucial. With regard to the site of Luang Prabang. Thailand takes note that several revisions of the Heritage Impact Assessment, as requested by the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, have been submitted to the Centre, focusing on both tangible and intangible heritage impacts on the site, including the potential impacts from the Luang Prabang Hydroelectric Power Project.

Furthermore, to address the remaining concerns, the State Party of Lao PDR is also preparing a new extended HIA, which is scheduled to be completed in January 2024. Therefore, Thailand encourages the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies to continue working closely with the State Party of Lao PDR on the development of HIAs and to provide technical support, where necessary, to ensure that the development projects will not pose any negative impact to the OUV of the property.

In light of the above, Thailand is of the view that no conclusion should be drawn at this session. We find it premature and unjustifiable to consider listing the town of Luang Prabang on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Doing so

would, moreover, discourage the State Party of Lao PDR from pursuing its efforts in addressing the concerns noted in the report of the Advisory Body.

As a result, Thailand would like to propose a minor modification to the draft decision to reflect the progress being made by the State Party and kindly request the Committee members to extend their support to the draft amendment.

Mr. Chair, my Delegation would also like to request the State Party of Lao PDR, upon the permission of the Chair, to make necessary clarifications if required.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

I'd like to pass the floor to the Secretariat and ICOMOS.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Distinguished Committee members,

The proximity of the planned hydropower site to the World Heritage property and concerns raised by the Mekong River Commission in 2019 and 2020 on its potential ecological and social consequences urged the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to pay particular attention to this project and its possible developments.

A series of dialogues have been engaged with the State Party of Laos since 2020, including a Reactive Monitoring mission of April 2022, to explore the ways to ensure the sustenance of Outstanding Universal Value of this property, especially by means of an independent Heritage Impact Assessment.

Distinguished Committee members,

The draft decision, Para 3, recognizes and commends for the efforts of the State Party of Laos in preserving its remarkable townscapes and architectural features.

However, as the OUV of this property clearly indicates, the natural environment of the Mekong and Nam Khan Rivers, associated religious and cultural practices and livelihoods of local communities, are also integral part of vibrant urban fabric, conveying it a unique spirit of place.

Potential combined effects of the hydropower project on the setting of the Town, therefore, remain great concern, considering already existing and numerous dams upstream and downstream of the property, as shown on the maps of the slide.

This is the rationale behind, Mr. Chair, the initial draft Paragraph 5 suggesting to explore an alternative to the Luang Prabang Hydropower Project and taking necessary precautions for the other on-going dams and hydropower projects in Laos, including the ones reported near all other World Heritage sites.

In concluding, the World Heritage Centre looks forward to the forthcoming new revised Heritage Impact Assessment commissioned by the State Party of Laos, of which interim report was received by us on 31 July 2023.

Mr. Chairperson,

Now, with your permission, ICOMOS can be invited to provide further explanation on the draft decision on this property.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chairperson.

The April 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission to the Town of Luang Prabang conducted in-depth analysis of the property's preservation governance and of development projects. The mission recognized that the physical attributes, such as townscape and architectural features, remain substantively intact, but found that they remain fragile and at risk. But the mission found that other attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, in particular, the natural, environmental and intangible features of the property and its setting are threatened and require strong measures.

Honourable Chair and members of the Committee,

With respect the proposed amendment to Item 4 of the draft decision is not appropriate. It would undermine the very intent of the Reactive Monitoring mission and the role of the Committee in receiving and endorsing the mission outcomes. ICOMOS, therefore, advises that Item 4 of the decision should continue to "Welcome and endorse" the findings and recommendations of the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission, as is the case with most of the Reactive Monitoring mission reports before this session of the Committee.

The Committee has previously recommended that the State Party halt construction activities for the Luang Prabang Hydropower Project until the completion of the technical studies and their review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. It would, therefore, be appropriate for the Committee to express deep concern about the progress made with the site preparation for the Hydropower Project without a clear assessment yet that there would be no threats to the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

The original HIA for the Luang Prabang Hydropower Project submitted by the State Party in November 2021 was reviewed by both ICOMOS and IUCN, informed by the views of independent experts who were commissioned under the International Assistance Programme. The review concluded that the HIA does not provide an appropriate analysis, including suspected cumulative impacts of numerous dams upstream and downstream of the site, combined with climate change effects, the modification or collapse of geomorphology and terrestrial and aquatic environment of the property and its surroundings. All this amounted to potential for impacts on spiritual practices, beliefs, traditions and other integral aspects of the property's OUV.

The Reactive Monitoring mission of April 2022 concluded there is no firm evidence that the Hydropower Project will not impact the OUV of the property. Further HIA documents, provided in December 2022 and January 2023, do not provide definitive answers.

So, the State Party's recent decision to commission an HIA from independent cultural heritage experts is very welcome. But pending the submission of the new HIA, the State Party should not be pursuing further advancement of the Luang Prabang Hydropower Project or any other new hydropower project or dam structures in areas where there could be potential impacts on the property.

It's in light of the above facts and circumstances that the proposed amendment to Item 5 of the draft decision is not appropriate and would fail to prioritize the protection of attributes that support the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

Active pursuit of Luang Prabang Hydropower Project before the HIA is completed constitutes a significant threat to the property, and this is why the draft decision suggests that the Committee might review whether the property meets the conditions for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger at its 46th session.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

So, I would like to ask the Committee if they have any comment on this or intervention.

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

This is one of the rare occasions where we cannot agree with the assessment and statement from ICOMOS. I want to make it clear.

Now, as discussed in relation to Victoria Falls, a hydropower plant is very important in other aspects. It is an important means to mitigate climate change, and also, it is an important means to supply electricity not only to Laos but also to neighbouring nations. This is a very important project in the first place. We also note that the hydropower plant is 27 km away from the site of property. Of course, HIA is very important, and I thank the Evaluation Bodies for their work, but at the same time, we understand that another independent HIA is going on with a final report expected in January 2024.

Taking all of these elements into account, it is premature to say the State Party of Laos has to stop pursuing the hydropower project and relocate this project and other projects to other sites. This is asking too much.

And secondly, in this context, if this is definitely premature to refer to the possibility of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. As we discussed before, there are many different needs, and we have to look at those things and take those things into consideration all together. One side of the assessment is not appropriate.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Oman has noted also the great effort made by the State Party to ensure the utmost conservation of the property's Outstanding Universal Value and its attributes. Also, we would like to thank and welcome the State Party for addressing most requests and recommendation from previous decision of the World Heritage Committee. Additionally, we welcome the new initiative to carry out a new Heritage Impact Assessment, HIA, which, we believe, that is a great step toward the full preservation and protection of the property and its attributes. We believe that more time and dialogue between the State Party and the Advisory Body will lead to drive properly all the efforts and intervention in a way that the OUV or its attributes will remain intact.

In addition, we do encourage continuous discussion with and the Advisory Body, and, therefore, Oman supports the amendment of the draft decision.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Belgica.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

I think we can join what was explained by the Ambassador of Japan that we need to make decisions based on facts, and HIA that is being prepared is probably what we need to wait to make sound decisions. But that also means that while we are waiting for the HIA be ready and submitted that we also feel that the State Party should halt all works so that they can continue when we all have been able to look at the conclusions of the HIA.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you Chair.

With respect to the town of Luang Prabang, we would like to note the following.

Not a single research study has identified any real risks to the OUV of the property, and this has to do with the fact that the hydropower dam station is located far beyond the extent of the property and even on the Mekong River, which goes through the buffer zone. Even given this, the project is not affecting the flow of the river. There are some positive notes having to do with the construction of the station, which will help improve quality of life, create new opportunities for business, improve infrastructure, improve navigation on the Mekong River, increase the revenue of the local population and, last but not least, lower their dependence on fossil fuels. All of this can help promote economic development of the town, of the region and the country as a whole as well.

So, we would like to join in supporting the amendments to the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

South Africa supports the amendments made by Thailand and further requests the Committee to take note of the efforts made by the State Party in updating the management plan, including completing a survey and analysis of the property to assess the current state of conservation and change over the last 20 years.

We have also noted that, in addition to the implementation of the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban landscape, the State Party continues, among others, to oversee and monitor building and development projects in the property.

South Africa, therefore, encourages the Committee to note and acknowledge these efforts, and allow the State Party to submit the updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

Qatar appreciates the effort of the Advisory Body findings that was highlighted in the Reactive Monitoring mission to the Town of Luang Prabang in Lao People's Democratic Republic. And also, we recommend the continued efforts by the State Party to address those findings, of course, and we recommend the State Party to continue the implementation of hydropower. Of course, any countries need the hydropower for the development, *développement durable*, of course, and as well as we encourage the State Party to continue the dialogue.

Qatar supports the amendment proposal.

Thanks.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

I appreciate the efforts made by the Advisory Body and the Secretariat. After going through the report and after speaking extensively with the State Party of Lao People's Democratic Republic and listening to them, holding informal discussions with them, we have come to the conclusion that we will support the amendments presented by Thailand and also support the positions taken by the State Party of Japan in this regard.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would also like to thank the Advisory Bodies for their presentation.

In the same time, we would like to commend the States Parties' efforts, as well as its intention to submit an extended HIA, and we note with satisfaction the ongoing efforts of Lao People's Democratic Republic to effectively manage this property.

In this regard, we would like to encourage them to continue the endeavour, and we would also like to join previous speakers in supporting the proposed amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

We would like to thank the Advisory Bodies for their efforts, but we'd also like to support the amendment put forward by Thailand.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As our Delegation mentioned earlier yesterday, this is a typical case of need to strike a balance between conservation and socio-economic development, especially when the State Party has made significant efforts in updating management plans and has proved that the hydropower projects will not affect the OUV of the property.

We, indeed, appreciate the efforts of the Advisory Bodies and support the draft amendment to the DR as presented by Thailand.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more questions. I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat to respond to some inquiries from the Committee.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I think, first of all, Secretariat and Advisory Bodies are here to support the State Party in accompanying them in exploring the way to preserve the World Heritage property while ensuring the necessary support and to provide better conditions of life to the local populations alike. So, of course, the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies are ready to continue, as we did in the past, its utmost efforts in accompanying the State Party, for instance, through the International Assistance Fund that we provided for conducting the past HIA, and also the funding that we have been providing for 15 years within the framework of the France-UNESCO Convention funding for the management of this property.

So, having said so, I think, I will, with your permission, Mr. Chair, invite ICOMOS to respond to some of the points raised by the members of the Committee.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. You may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Could ICOMOS, first, just clarify with respect to the intervention by the Distinguished Delegate from Japan that, indeed, the hydro power station would be located quite distant from the property, but the hydro power station is on the mighty Mekong River, which runs adjacent to the property and downstream? The potential for changes to the river is substantial, as the State Party of the Lao People's Democratic Republic acknowledges in terms of its approach to Heritage Impact Assessment, and the danger is to the ecology and to the traditions of the local people and, indeed, the images on screen before the members of the Committee, in the French version of the presentation, show, for example, major changes to an island that have taken place in the river adjacent to the property, which has the effect of changing the traditional practices of the people and, therefore, affecting an attribute of OUV. So, ICOMOS particularly acknowledges the approach taken by the State Party to commission a new HIA, which engages with those intangible aspects that are part of the OUV that could be affected by this project, and it is not good practice to be progressing the project, as the Honourable Delegate from Belgium has highlighted, until the results of that HIA are known.

And finally, Mr. Chair and Distinguished members of the Committee, among the various interventions from Committee members, there would appear to be, including the introductory remarks by the Distinguished Delegate from Thailand, there would appear to be no suggestion that the findings of the 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission are, in any way, called into question, and, therefore, ICOMOS would advise again that it is appropriate to retain the words "Welcomes and endorses" at the commencement of Item 4 of the draft decision.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair, and apologies for asking for the floor again.

I just want to remind colleagues in the Committee that, at the previous session on the point 7, we also recommended that the State Party halt construction activities until the State Party has undertaken the following and submitted them to the World Heritage Centre. So, it's not that unusual for the Committee to ask this.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

I'm sorry to take the floor again.

All I want to say is, of course, certain aspects are the target of the observations. But there are other aspects. Hydropower generation is generally recommended in the context of the climate change negotiations. And also, this provides electricity to other countries in the region. Any country has to take all those things into consideration and make a decision. This is a big decision to stop a project and promise to relocate anything which could happen in the future. This is a big decision. This kind of decision cannot be taken on one aspect of this. So, what I'm saying is, you know, the language used in this amendment, in this resolution, draft resolution is too harsh. You say: "Stop, stop this plan and relocate everything". Isn't that too much?

So, I'm sorry to say this, but this is very rare in my past experience, this is very rare, but I cannot agree with the observations made by this time.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

I see no more interventions. So, dear colleagues...

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

I commend the Ambassador of Japan for having articulated the position so well.

Excellency,

In the Global South, socio economic development impacting the lives of millions and millions of people, and their aspirations play a very important role. We are trying to find a balance between our commitments to the World Heritage Convention and to the aspirations of the people. In that regard, Excellency, as I had mentioned before, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has sent very high-level Delegation and officials to Riyadh, which shows how committed the country is to the World Heritage Convention. In that regard, Excellency, I echo what the Ambassador of Japan has said.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

I see no more interventions from the floor. So, I would like to invite you, my dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.43** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Thailand, co-authored by the Distinguished Delegations of Egypt, India, Japan, Oman and Qatar, and from the floor, we have received confirmation from the Distinguished Delegations of Russian Federation, Argentina, South Africa, Greece and Nigeria.

The amendment is for Paras 4, 5 and Para 9.

We start with Para 4, as you see on the screen: "Acknowledges the findings and recommendations of the 2022 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, and the continuing efforts by the State Party to address those findings, and invites the State Party to continue implementing all mission recommendations and in particular to:". There are points a), b) and c) which remain as they are.

Para 5 revised: "Recommends the State Party to continue its efforts in the HIA for the Luang Prabang Hydropower Project and other future and similar projects so that they pose no threat to the World Heritage properties, their associated values or their environmental setting and notes that previous studies and the Heritage Impact Assessments were submitted in November 2021, December 2022 and January 2023 respectively;"

Para 6, 7, 8 remain as they are.

The revised Para 9: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above for examination by

the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session, considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilization to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value." End of para.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

Saudi Arabia would like to thank the State Party for its efforts. We would also like to thank the Advisory Bodies and say that we support the amendments made to the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

We ask you to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 3, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as they are? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposal. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have an amendment. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, Paragraph 7, Paragraph 8, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, we have a proposal. Do we agree with this amendment? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

So, I ask you, my dear colleagues, to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

And if there are no objections, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.43** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Asia-Pacific region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may have the floor, Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following cultural properties located in the Asia Pacific region, for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion, are the following:

- Jaipur City, Rajasthan (India)
- Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi (Kazakhstan)
- Bagan (Myanmar)
- Kathmandu Valley (Nepal)
- Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha (Nepal)
- Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore (Pakistan)
- Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty (Republic of Korea)
- Itchan Kala (Uzbekistan)
- Samarkand – Crossroad of Cultures (Uzbekistan)
- Temple Zone of Sambor Prei Kuk, Archaeological Site of Ancient Ishanapura (Cambodia)
- Angkor (Cambodia)

- Ancient Building Complex in the Wudang Mountains (China)
- Historic Centre of Macao (China)
- Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace, Lhasa (China)
- Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an – Tian-shan Corridor (China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan)
- Hill Forts of Rajasthan (India)
- Historic City of Ahmadabad (India)
- Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple, Telangana (India)
- Mountain Railways of India (India)
- Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: the Subak System as a Manifestation of the Tri Hita Karana Philosophy (Indonesia)
- Meidan Emam, Esfahan (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Trans-Iranian Railway (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu (Japan)
- Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining (Japan)
- Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape (Lao People's Democratic Republic)
- Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro (Pakistan)
- Historical Monuments at Makli, Thatta (Pakistan)
- Baroque Churches of the Philippines (Philippines)
- Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications (Sri Lanka)
- Rangiri Dambulla Cave Temple (Sri Lanka), and last
- Historic Centre of Bukhara (Uzbekistan)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Director.

If the Committee agrees on these state of conservation reports, I declare the Decisions read out adopted. *[gavel]*

Now, I would like to give the floor to the State Party of Pakistan. They wanted to intervene in Item no. 47.

You may have the floor, Pakistan.

The Observer Delegation of Pakistan:

Thank you, Chair.

We commend your able stewardship of the session, and we are grateful for the wonderful hospitality extended to us by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The conservation of the Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore is an undertaking that we have assumed earnestly. The conservation plan is being implemented in accordance with international standards and UNESCO guidelines.

Apart from stipulated reporting, we have maintained avenues of engagement with the WHC Secretariat and ICOMOS. This includes, pursuant to decision of the 44th session, constitution of a multistakeholder committee that, among others, comprises the President of ICOMOS Pakistan and UNESCO Country Director, who have also been on board during the conduct of feasibility studies for the remaining recommendations of the 2018 RMM. The recommendations are being implemented, including mitigation measures concerning operation of Orange Line Metro with a view to preventing any damage to the property's OUV.

Subsequent to the state of conservation report and the inception report presented last year, Pakistan has also submitted, on 2 August, a comprehensive report comprising outcomes of feasibility studies, detailing all the actions that have been undertaken by the authorities to ensure the effective conservation of the site.

As also expressed in previous sessions, we are of the view that State Party is required to intimate the WHC in advance only about any major restoration or new construction which may affect the OUV of the property. We

understand that is not the case here. Besides, no new construction or restoration project has been undertaken in the Royal Kitchens since 2020.

We would welcome an RMM to Lahore at an appropriate time after WHC/ICOMOS experts have provided feedback on the comprehensive report.

On Moenjodaro as well, we appreciate close engagement and interest of the Committee, as well as the two emergency missions dispatched to the site in the wake of last year's floods. Pakistan will also consult with the WHC to prepare and launch, together with UNESCO, an international appeal to secure funds and technical resources for a multi-annual preservation project, as recommended.

We look forward to continue working closely with the World Heritage Centre, the Committee and the Advisory Bodies.

I would request this statement to be placed on record.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I will pass the floor to the Philippines to intervene on Item 171.

Philippine, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the Philippines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Philippines congratulates the Chair and the Bureau members and thanks the Holhe Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for its gracious hospitality.

We appreciate the Committee's constructive recommendations embodied in the adopted decision. The recommendations are being given serious consideration, particularly the implementation of further mitigation measures against potential adverse impact on the OUV of the property to complement ongoing mitigation measures, such as pedestrianization of Intramuros and the buffer area, imposition of vehicular weight limits and new traffic routes, and regular inspection and repair of heritage assets, among other measures.

We also note the Committee support for developing nations efforts in balancing the important concepts of preservation of the OUV vis a vis the socio-economic development of the affected population.

Finally, the Philippines takes this opportunity to convey its sympathies to and solidarity with the peoples of Morocco and Libya.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to Kazakhstan to intervene on Item 42.

The Observer Delegation of Kazakhstan: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Distinguished Chair,

The Delegation of Kazakhstan congratulates you on your excellent organization of the work of the Committee, and we would like to like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the successful conduct of this event.

Distinguished members of the Committee,

The Delegation of Kazakhstan would like to thank the Committee members, the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO and ICOMOS for reviewing the report on the condition of state of conservation of the Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yahawi. This is a very important and first Kazakh property in the World Heritage List. Now, we are marking the 20th anniversary of this inscription, and this is why on Sunday, we will be conducting a side event on historical city urban landscapes, and we would like to invite everyone interested in this topic to attend. We will be able to notify you of the exact time after the organizers let us know.

In the context of the adopted decision, the Republic of Kazakhstan would like to reaffirm its intention to continue efforts to conserve the OUV of the Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, while working constructively with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS.

Thank you very much and I wish you a successful rest of the work of the Committee. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to China.

The Observer Delegation of China:

Mr. Chair,

Congratulations to you for your able running of the session.

My Delegation appreciates the Committee's attention and the support to the state of conservation of a total of five properties related to China, including the cross-boundary property of the Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor. We thank the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN for their professional monitoring work. Pursuant to the Committee's concerned decisions adopted at the current session, the Chinese Government will strengthen collaboration still further with the World Heritage Centre, as well as the Advisory Bodies to enhance the conservation of the properties.

With regard to the cross-boundary property of the Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor in particular, the Chinese Government is willing to work together with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in facilitating the preparation of the management plan, improving the monitoring and early warning mechanism, and enhancing the visitor management with the aim to properly protect, transmit and present the valuable heritage of the Silk Roads as the road of mutual learning, the road of cultural dialogue and, of course, the road of peace.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

7B.179 Ancient City of Nessebar (Bulgaria) // Ancienne cité de Nessebar (Bulgarie)

The Chairperson:

And for the next property to be discussed, Ancient city of Nessebar, Bulgaria, which is property proposed for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, I now invite the Secretariat and ICOMOS to present the report on the state of conservation of the Ancient City of Nessebar.

You may have the floor, the Secretariat.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Distinguished members of the Committee,

The World Heritage property "Ancient City of Nessebar" has been in Reactive Monitoring since 2010. The main factors affecting the property include management systems, illegal constructions and reconstructions, marine transport infrastructure, urban development pressure and impacts of tourism.

13 years ago, the World Heritage Committee, in its Decision **34 COM 7B.81**, urged the State Party to immediately adopt all necessary measures aiming to ensure the safeguarding of the Outstanding Universal Value, including the integrity and authenticity of the property, as well as the management plan and the urban master plan.

At its last session in 2021, the Committee requested the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, the Conservation Management Plan, Detailed Development Plan and General Development Master Plan for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th, meaning the current, session, with a view to considering, in the absence of substantial progress, the possible inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

In total, the possible inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in the absence of substantial progress, has been considered by the Committee on four occasions since the 34th session in 2010.

As of today, important and long overdue actions to establish a spatial planning and management framework and the above-mentioned instruments, essential for adequate protection and management of the property, are far from being implemented, and no timeframe for the finalization of the key instruments, including the Conservation and Management Plan, has been set.

The State Party invited a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property pursuant to the World Heritage Committee's decision **44 COM 7B.154**. The main purpose of the mission, which took place in January 2023, was to ascertain the progress made by the State Party in implementing the above-mentioned decision and the recommendations of the 2018 joint WHC/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the property, as well as to assess the overall state of conservation of the property and whether the property fulfils the criteria for

inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

The mission confirmed the findings of the 2018 World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission that the attributes underlying the Outstanding Universal Value of the property have deteriorated and, in some respects, eroded beyond recovery. The mission has concluded that the state of conservation of the property is impacted by a number of negative factors which represent ascertained and potential dangers to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in accordance with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines, which threaten its authenticity and integrity, and which warrant its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

ICOMOS, you'd like anything to add?

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The 2018 and 2023 Reactive Monitoring missions both observed that the vernacular architecture, one of the key attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, had been severely undermined and that the urban fabric had lost its coherence and authenticity. The tangible traces of numerous civilizations are barely discernible, superseded by inappropriate and out-of-scale development. The archaeological vestiges suffer from lack of care and from encroaching urbanization. The harmonious relationship between the homogeneous ensemble and its natural setting has suffered from the progressive erosion of its link with the exceptional configuration of the rocky peninsula. The dominance of the medieval churches over the vernacular urban ensemble is no longer distinguishable, and the vibrant urban organism has been severely affected by a tourism based mono economy that has turned the Ancient City into a crowded tourist attraction in summer and an almost empty place in winter. Some progress has been made by the State Party, but this is insufficient and too slow to redress the ongoing threats to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Ancient City of Nessebar. The draft Strategy for Cultural Heritage for Nessebar is acknowledged. However, it does not reflect the extreme vulnerability of the property, and the emphasis on balanced development remains focused on tourism, which, along with related urbanization and changes, has been the major cause of the erosion of the property's attributes.

An action plan with priorities based on the gravity and urgency of issues to be tackled with clear timeframes, actors and responsibilities, a budget to support the implementation of actions, and an adequate monitoring system needs to be urgently elaborated. ICOMOS observes that serious deterioration in the coherence of the town planning and urban space, significant loss of historic authenticity and of cultural significance, the lack of a conservation policy and the threatening effects of town planning have occurred over the years.

In the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS view, inscription on the World Heritage List in Danger, which has been on the table since 2010, would be highly beneficial for devising a vision of the future of the Ancient City of Nessebar, based on its Outstanding Universal Value, and for developing conservation and management measures that are urgently needed to recover the attributes of the property's Outstanding Universal Value.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see... Anyone of the Committee would like to take the floor and have an intervention?

Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to thank the Secretariat and ICOMOS for their presentations.

As for the content of both the national report and the joint mission report, we noticed some inconsistencies regarding the management plan of the property. More specifically, the Advisory Body has noticed the lack of conservation and management plan, while the State Party gives its reassurances that there is no threat for the property and its buffer zone as for their protection.

In this context, we would like to address the State Party and ask about the existing mechanism to ensure the protection of the property until the elaboration and adoption of a conservation and management plan are completed.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

We commend the State Party of Bulgaria for the important results already achieved in addressing the request of the Committee, particularly the establishment of the High Level Interinstitutional Commission, the submission of the proposal for a minor boundary modification to include underwater archaeology within the boundaries of the property as far as progress on underwater archaeological investigations, inventory of cultural heritage and building permits, prevention of new development, traffic regulation and conservation of the churches.

About the Integrated Development Strategy for Nessebar 2021-2027, it has been noted by the Advisory Body that it is too much focused on tourism, and probably, it requires further work to be considered fully compliant with the objective of preserving the World Heritage property. But we are convinced that the process has started well and must be further encouraged.

For this reason, we support the amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have examined this dossier and, first, would like to thank sincerely the Evaluation Body for the excellent work.

Because we have made our amendments, I would like to explain the reason, justification for these amendments.

We propose that the State Party be granted up to two-year extension to implement the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee. In this period, the State Party intends to finalize all the procedures and means from the strategic documents for Nessebar, such as the Conservation and Management Plan, including the underwater cultural heritage in regard with the proposed minor boundary modifications. For the elaboration of the Conservation and Management Plan, the State Party needs to have at least 18 months, which is a main motive for our proposal.

The Republic of Bulgaria is continuously implementing the decisions of the World Heritage Committee and the recommendations of the mission to the Ancient City of Nessebar. The prescribed measures for the protection of the World cultural Property and its Outstanding Universal Value have been subsequently translated into State policy in coordination with the local authorities, in order to ensure the sustainable conservation and development of the Ancient City of Nessebar and the property's Outstanding Universal Value. Bulgaria's long-term efforts for the presentation of the Ancient City of Nessebar have been proven over the years. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the difficult political crisis during which several elections were held over two years, the majority of the recommendations of the previous joint missions and decisions have been implemented. In the national report. We have seen that no new investment intent has been allowed since 2015, when the preservation regimes have been adopted. Illegal houses are being subject to court decisions, and inappropriate modifications to buildings are included in national programmes for voluntary funding. The State Party has invested resources to preserve and conserve the medieval churches that are integral part of the OUV of the property.

The Minister of Culture was here with us a few days ago. He has spoken to us, showing his clear and strong commitment to the preservation of this wonderful property. This symbolizes the strong commitment by the State of Party of Bulgaria and that is why we submit those amendments.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Mali, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Nous tenons à exprimer nos remerciements au Centre du patrimoine mondial et aux Organes consultatifs pour le travail effectué concernant l'ancienne cité de Nessebar.

Nous demeurons préoccupés par la principale recommandation émise pour ce site.

Nonobstant les difficultés auxquelles elle est confrontée, la République de Bulgarie s'efforce de mettre en œuvre les décisions du Comité et les recommandations des missions en cours dans l'ancienne cité de Nessebar. Un certain nombre de mesures a été adoptée pour la protection du bien et de sa VUE, en coordination avec les

autorités locales et en conformité avec les souhaits de conservation et de développement durable. Soulignons que pour la mise en œuvre de la Décision **44 COM 7B.154** du Comité, la Stratégie du patrimoine culturel de la municipalité de Nessebar 2023-2032 a été préparée. De même, un comité interministériel de haut niveau, assisté d'un groupe de travail, a été créé par l'État partie. Ce comité est en activité en vertu d'une décision prise en Conseil des ministres dans le but d'adopter des politiques, des mesures, une vision et une stratégie concernant le site. Soulignons le fait que les lignes directrices pour l'aménagement urbain sont contenues dans les prescriptions de conservation faisant partie des régimes de conservation approuvés du bien et s'appliquent à ces éléments constitutifs. Soulignons en outre que l'État bulgare et la municipalité financent des études archéologiques sous-marines régulières dans la zone aquatique de l'ancienne cité de Nessebar. La municipalité finance également des études archéologiques de sauvetage, des projets de conservation et de restauration. Un projet de Plan général de développement de la municipalité de Nessebar doit être révisé après avoir été renvoyé par le ministère de l'Environnement et de l'eau et complété par les exigences fixées par l'Institut national pour le patrimoine culturel immobilier. Conformément aux dispositions de la loi bulgare sur l'aménagement du territoire, l'admission, l'élaboration et l'adoption du plan d'aménagement détaillé seront possibles après l'entrée en vigueur du plan d'aménagement général.

Comme nous pouvons le noter, des efforts constants sont donc déployés pour préserver ce site. Un grand nombre de recommandations issues des missions effectuées en 2017, 2018 et 2023, ainsi que des missions précédentes, ont été mises en œuvre. L'État partie de Bulgarie pourrait en outre, si nécessaire, nous édifier davantage.

En raison de tout ce qui précède et tenant compte des informations sur la mise en œuvre d'une grande partie des décisions du Comité du patrimoine mondial et des recommandations des missions, nous estimons que les efforts de l'État partie méritent d'être pleinement pris en compte et que d'autres missions d'évaluation pourraient se rendre sur place pour statuer sur les progrès réalisés dans le processus de préservation de l'ancienne ville de Nessebar.

C'est pourquoi nous soutenons les amendements proposés au Projet de décision **45 COM 7B.179**.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Oman welcomes the effort also undertaken by the State Party of Bulgaria in response to the previous Committee decision and the recommendation of the Advisory Bodies. We also commend Bulgaria's long-term efforts for the preservation of the Ancient City of Nessebar, which have been proven over the years and have been well noted by the Advisory Bodies in their report. The latest report of the joint mission of the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS also acknowledges the importance of the action have been taken by the State Party.

The request of minor modification of the boundaries of the site to include the underwater archaeological remains of Ancient Town, submitted to the World Heritage Centre for the consideration by the Committee in this session, which is a great action from the State Party to preserve the Outstanding Universal Values of the property.

With this strong commitment from the State Party, we believe more time is needed to address all the recommendations of the Committee and the Advisory Body, and elaborate a conservation and management plan for the property which would include the underwater archaeological Heritage area.

We believe that it is important to rather encourage than discourage the State Party and, in this regard, my country supports the draft amendment presented by Japan.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. [interpretation from Arabic] Egypt. [end of interpretation from Arabic]

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Egypt would like, first of all, to thank ICOMOS and the State Party for their reports. We have reviewed carefully, and we would like to commend the State Party on implementing several recommendations as adoption of the Cultural Heritage Strategy for Nessebar Municipality for ten years and the Integrated Development Plan of Nessebar Municipality from 2021 to 2027. Moreover, we acknowledge that guidelines for urban design in the Ancient City of Nessebar have been adopted and applied to urban structures, buildings and archaeological remains, among others. In addition, the Municipality of Nessebar also finances rescue archaeological surveys, conservation projects and restoration of movable cultural property.

Finally, we have noticed that a proposal for a minor boundary modification had been prepared for the Ancient City of Nessebar in order to include the underwater archaeological cultural properties as part of the OUV of the site. We would be grateful if the State Party provides more clarification about this topic.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you. Saudi Arabia.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Thank you.

The World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies and the State Party must be appreciated for the efforts undertaken, as well as future efforts which will be taken to preserve the OUV of Nessebar.

We support the amendments tabled by Japan.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We also would like to thank the Secretariat and ICOMOS for the reports that have been put before us.

We also recognize the efforts undertaken as part of the Integrated Development Plan, as well as the efforts undertaken to preserve the attributes of the OUV. We also note the participation of the community, in line with the 2011 Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscapes. We believe it's important to highlight the implementation of such a recommendation. We should also like to acknowledge the efforts undertaken to implement the 2005 Convention on Underwater Cultural Heritage.

This is why we support the amendment tabled by Japan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

After having studied the report and the recommendation of the Advisory Bodies, as well as the commitments made by the State Party, we would like to thank the State Party for the efforts undertaken. And, as far as we can tell, we may require further information in order to make a decision.

This is why we support Japan's amendments.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Nessebar has been inscribed on the List for 40 years already, and during these four decades, we've always seen a very strong commitment from the Government of Bulgaria to the preservation of Nessebar. So, in light of all what has been said and also the arguments that were put forward by the State Party, we believe, indeed, that some extra time should be allowed.

We, therefore, strongly also support the Japanese amendment that was tabled to this purpose.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

We would like to thank the Advisory Bodies for their report and their work.

We also wish to acknowledge the efforts undertaken by Bulgaria in order to ensure the protection of the site. We also understand that more time is required and, therefore, we would like to support the amendments tabled by Japan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

I see no further interventions unless Belgium, they have something to add.

So, I would like to pass the floor to Bulgaria to respond to the questions addressed by Greece, Mali and Egypt.

You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Dear Chairperson, Esteemed colleagues,

We thanked the Delegations for their pertinent questions and statements.

Bulgaria reiterates its commitment to the preservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Ancient City of Nessebar. The celebration, this year, of the 40th anniversary of its inscription on the World Heritage List obliges us even more.

Despite the dire consequences of the pandemic years, followed by a two-year political crisis in Bulgaria, our country has implemented the majority of the recommendations of the Committee's decisions of 2021, including a high-level Interinstitutional Commission established by a decision of the Council of Ministers.

During this period, the plan, with specific measures for the preservation and development of the site with a two-year deadline for its implementation, was adopted. One of the major recommendations of the Committee was the minor boundary modification of the property, to include the underwater archaeological remains of the Ancient City. This proposal is to be approved during the current session, and the modified boundary shall be reflected in the new Conservation and Management Plan. According to the national legislation, the procedure for this plan takes up to a year and a half, and our country has already adopted the initial Terms of Reference for that plan.

Meanwhile, since 2014, no project for intervention leading to the changes in the spatial characteristic of the urban development environment are allowed and, therefore, the condition of the Ancient City of Nessebar is being preserved since then.

Taking into account the presented information, we are confident that the efforts of the Bulgarian side for the preservation of the World Heritage site will be objectively assessed. Moreover, we count on the World Heritage Committee members to give us the opportunity to continue the progress in the conservation of the ancient city of Nessebar.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'd like to see if we have any more questions or interventions.

So, I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat to elaborate on some of the matters that were mentioned by the Committee members.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

With regard to the amendment proposed by the Delegation of Japan, the World Heritage Centre would like to comment on the proposed amendments to Paragraph 4 and to clarify, in particular, regarding the proposed deletion of the mention of the attributes underlying the OUV of the property that, I quote, "in some respects eroded beyond recovery", end of quote, it is important to underline that the State Party itself reports statistics, quoted in detail in the 2023 Reactive Monitoring mission report, showing that the great majority of the traditional houses of the Ancient City of Nessebar, incorporated in the nomination file in 1983, are compromised or severely compromised, many of them beyond repair. The comparative photos on the slide in English that you can see on the screen illustrate this point; hence, the expression of "utmost concern" proposed in Paragraph 4.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson, and I respectfully request you to give the floor to ICOMOS for additional comments.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Distinguished members of the Committee,

When the World Heritage Committee is faced with a decision concerning the inscription of a cultural property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, the essential question to address is whether or not the property meets the condition of Article 11.4 of the Convention and Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines.

The Reactive Monitoring mission held in 2018 and 2023 clearly indicates that this is, indeed, the case for the ancient city of Nessebar, where attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value continue to be eroded.

The inscription of the World Heritage List in Danger represents a powerful instrument of the Convention to assist States Parties to recover and preserve the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties, as it has been demonstrated by many decisions that this Committee has taken on the progress being made by properties inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger, and by the successful outcome achieved for the Tombs of Buganda, Kings of Kasubi.

In any case, ICOMOS remains available to the State Party for any advice and support, if so requested.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Sorry, I'm not good at handling this, I'm sorry. Okay, well, thank you very much.

On the issue raised by the Secretariat with regard to Paragraph 4, the question of deleting "utmost" and also the last part, if it is okay for you, I would like to ask you to give the floor to the State Party to respond to this.

And another thing, yes, indeed, we, in this particular case, we fully understand the concerns of ICOMOS on this particular property. It is also true that it has been there for quite some time, but that was affected obviously by COVID-19 and also the political situation in the country.

Now, I understand that the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria is in full commitment to this, and they have started, you know, good measures to respond to your concerns. Therefore, we think it's very appropriate to wait a little bit more time before we make a decision on the In Danger Listing.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. I'll give the floor back to Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

We believe that each ^[inaudible] as proposed, because this is what we mentioned in the mission of 2018 and what was discussed in 2019.

This is the reason.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more interventions. So, I would like to invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.179** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Japan, which is now supported from the floor by Distinguished Delegations of Italy, Mali, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Qatar, Belgium and Argentina.

The amendments are to several paras.

We will start with Para 3. The revised Para 3: "Takes note of the progress made by the State Party in addressing the Committee's previous decisions and the mission's recommendations, but notes with concern that some issues continue to remain unresolved;".

Revised Para 4: "Notes with concern that the 2023 Reactive Monitoring mission confirmed the findings of the 2018 Reactive Monitoring mission that some of the attributes underlying the Outstanding Universal Value of the property have deteriorated;".

Revised Para 5: "Also notes that important actions to establish a spatial planning framework and instruments essential for adequate protection and management of the property are being implemented, and encourages the State Party to finalize the Conservation and Management Plan in 18 months;".

New Para 6 that has been added: "Also encourages the State Party to invite a series of consultative missions of Advisory Bodies in order to assist the CMP elaboration;".

Para 7 remains same as the original Para 6, and Paras 7 and 8 are deleted.

In Para 8, there are four points: a), b), c), and d).

- In point c), there is a minor change: "Approve and enforce the General Development Master Plan for Nessebar Municipality and consequently the Detailed Development Plan for the Ancient City of Nessebar, with all necessary support from the national authorities and incorporating all relevant Committee's and missions' recommendations,".

The revised Para 9: "Further requests the State Party to implement the recommendations of the 2023 Reactive Monitoring mission, as well as previous recommendations of the 2018 Reactive Monitoring mission;".

Para 11 is completely deleted.

And now, the total number of paras are 10.

The final para, revised Para 10: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and submit to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies, the Conservation and Management Plan, including the heritage under water Detailed Development Plan and the General Development Master Plan for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session, with a view to considering, in the absence of substantial progress, the possible inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger." For this last line, Mr. Chair, I would like to propose a slight change. If we could adopt the standard language of the SOC report that can be placed on the screen, with permission of the Distinguished Delegation of Japan and Committee members, you can compare both. What we use currently is, as you see below: "considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilization to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value, including the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger." So, if we could replace the last three lines with this, which is what we use in the standard SOC report now.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

We have seen the documents that were provided to us by the State Party of Bulgaria, who had come and met us and briefed us about the various steps that they have taken. After making a detailed consideration of that, we had also shared a note verbale with the State Party of Bulgaria co-authoring this amendment. Therefore, I don't think that note reached the Rapporteur, and that's why our name is not appearing.

So, I'll take this opportunity to request the Secretariat to kindly add India's name also to the Japanese amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

After listening carefully to the clarification given by the Delegation of Bulgaria, my Delegation would like to join the list of countries supporting the amendments to the draft resolution.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Greece also would like to be added as supporting country to all amended paras and, in addition to that, to the new Para 6.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also would like to have our name added to those countries supporting the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Noted. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Chair.

South Africa would also want to be added onto the amendments to the decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Sir.

Just to say that the last amendment proposed by the Rapporteur is absolutely fine.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

I see no more interventions... Nigeria, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Nigeria would like to be added in support of this draft amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, we shall proceed to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

I'd like to give the floor to the Rapporteur before we proceed. There is, it seems, a language error in Paragraph no. 6.

The Rapporteur:

The Paragraph 6, we can add: "the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies" as per standard language.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

So, let's proceed examining the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

So, Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 2, there are no amendments. Do we agree to accept them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we have agreement on the proposed amendment? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have a proposal. Do we agree on the proposed text?

India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just a need of clarification.

Para 6 reads: "Also encourages the State Party to invite series of consultative missions;". We just wanted a clarification. What does it mean? How many consultative missions? Over how much time period? Are we specifying, or are we just leaving it open ended like this?

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

I would like to pass the floor to Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much because this is a slightly complicated issue.

I think the State Party of Bulgaria requires a different type of missions, and that is the reason why.

Now, Mr. Chair, if that is what I believe, but if it is okay with you, you can probably give the floor to the State Party of Bulgaria for more clarifications.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. I would like to hear from Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

The idea is to invite consultation mission in view that this site has a submerged part, which is under the Convention of 2001, and the part which is under this Convention. So, the management plan that have to be prepared will embrace property which is more complex that usually. This is the idea.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

India, is it clear now?

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much for this clarification. Fair enough.

The Chairperson:

So, do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. So, adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, no amendment. Do we agree with the proposed text as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph...

Paragraph 8, we have a proposed text. We have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal? Yes, I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 10, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with the proposed amendment? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

So, dear colleagues, I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

And, therefore, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.179** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

7B.189 Venice and its Lagoon (Italy) // Venise et sa lagune (Italie)

The Chairperson:

So now, moving forward to the next property to be discussed, Venice and its Lagoon (Italy), which is a property proposed for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, I would like to invite the Secretariat and ICOMOS to present the next report on the state of conservation to the Committee.

You may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

"Venice and its Lagoon" was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1987 and recognized as meeting all six criteria on the basis of which cultural properties can be considered as being of Outstanding Universal Value. The property comprises the city of Venice and its lagoon.

Since 2014, this property has been the subject of continuous and close monitoring by the World Heritage Committee in accordance with the mechanism provided by the World Heritage Convention for properties that are considered to be under threat. Since 2016, the World Heritage Committee has consistently reviewed the state of conservation of the property and considered inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The long-standing, complex issues that the property is facing are, I'm going to list four:

- First, negative impacts of mass tourism reflected in the continued decline in local residents, leading to the alteration of the spirit of place and the loss of historic authenticity;
- Second, fundamental deficiencies in the urban planning and management mechanisms, the lack of integrated management, and a long-term strategic vision for preservation, resulting in inappropriate developments in and around the property, including industrial infrastructure and high-rise buildings;
- Three, human interventions causing damage to the lagoon ecosystem (including the large ship traffic, cruisers and oil tankers entering the lagoon, causing pollution and altering the morphology of the seabed);
- And four, climate change induced frequent high tides, severe weather events, and constantly rising sea level.

Individually and cumulatively these threats are causing irreversible impact to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The impacts of these complex issues are interrelated and cumulative; and as confirmed by the last joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/Ramsar Advisory mission to the property in 2020, they are causing irreversible change to important attributes and, therefore, pose both potential and ascertained threats to the property's Outstanding Universal Value, consistent with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

At the last session of the Committee, in 2021, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies recommended to the Committee that Venice and its Lagoon be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger because of these crucial issues, which were leading to a significant loss of historic authenticity and a major loss of cultural significance.

The Committee chose not to follow the recommendation of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger and, therefore, did not request a Desired state of conservation for the removal from this List. It did, however, request the State Party to develop a proposal for a set of corrective measures – a request usually made when a property is inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger – so, it requested to develop a proposal for a set of corrective measures with a timeframe for implementation, and requested the State Party to engage in dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies with a view to developing those corrective measures.

To the invitations for dialogue sent to the State Party in September 2021 and again in June 2022, the State Party replied in February 2023, proposing to organize a meeting prior to this 45th session of the Committee to present the activities underway to implement the last decision of the Committee in July 2021.

In the meantime, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies have reviewed the State Party's state of conservation report, which was submitted in November 2022, and consider that the state of conservation of the property has not improved since 2021, and that the implementation of the Committee's past recommendations is progressing only very slowly and certainly not rapidly enough to avoid further erosion to the Outstanding Universal Value.

The identified challenges and issues have economic and social impacts on the local population and demand a concerted and coordinated multi-sectoral approach, engaging a number of different stakeholders; an approach that goes beyond simple mitigation measures focused on solving individual problems. The current recommendation to inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger is not an attempt to diminish the State Party's efforts at the national, regional and local levels, and could instead raise awareness and provide a much-needed opportunity for a cooperative joint effort of all stakeholders to safeguard this property for future generations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to ICOMOS if they have any additions.

ICOMOS:

Shukran, Chair. Thank you very much,

Members of the Committee,

The Venice and its Lagoon World Heritage property is, as stated in the description of its Outstanding Universal Value, I quote, "the result of the interaction between people and the ecosystem of their natural environment over time.", end quote. This inseparable whole now faces threats from factors affecting the authenticity and integrity of the property, as already noted by the World Heritage Centre.

These fundamental and serious concerns have been subject of repeated discussions by the Committee since 2014.

Some factors are individually problematic and are being addressed, such as temporarily solving the challenge of large passenger ships entering the Giudecca Canal and the implementation of flood barriers – which, I should note, themselves may have hitherto unmeasured impact on the marine environment of the lagoon. However, collectively, the current factors represent a growing and increasingly urgent threat to the attributes which support the property's OUV.

One of the major threats or factors threatening the property is its over-exploitation for tourism, which adversely affects the social and environmental values of both the settlements of Venice and of its Lagoon, as well as the quality of life of the property's communities. The State Party has started to respond to these threats, but these responses, such as the experimental one-year long day-tourism levy and future control of conversion of housing for tourism rentals, come very late, and more urgent action is required not only to control ever-increasing tourism impacts, but, actually, to redress continuous cumulative impacts arising from a long process of over-tourism.

This threat is compounded by a lack of an integrated vision on the future of the property, illustrated by uncoordinated development projects within the property itself and within its immediate setting, including completed and proposed high-rise buildings and transport infrastructure. The State Party has now initiated an Impact Assessment process and a parallel project to establish the visual setting of the property, but some of the projects being assessed have already been approved – highlighting that the current management system cannot adequately counter the negative effects of the continuing deterioration of city and lagoon, which directly result from human intervention.

In summary: mass tourism, continuing development and the impacts of climate change-related consequences, including also human impact on the Lagoon environment, threaten irreversible changes to the OUV of the property.

The list of corrective measures submitted by the State Party in response to the most recent Committee decision unfortunately fails to respond to the cumulative complexity of these challenges. As mentioned by the Centre, it is unfortunate that the State Party did not make timely use of the opportunity to develop the corrective measures in close collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, to provide a clearer and more holistic response to the challenges faced in maintaining the OUV of the property.

ICOMOS and ICCROM, in agreement with the analysis and conclusions of the World Heritage Centre, considers that the property continues to face ascertained and potential danger as defined in Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines and that the property warrants inscription on the List of the World Heritage in Danger.

This inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger would trigger mechanisms for mobilizing the entire international community to support the State Party, as well as a call for commitment and dialogue. It is intended to assist the State Party by highlighting the true crisis that is unfolding and to create a mechanism for inter-sectoral cooperation, ensuring that all stakeholders and beneficiaries of the OUV of the property are focused on the urgency

of their cooperation to ensure the protection and management, and therefore, the future, of the Venice and its Lagoon World Heritage property.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to open the floor, starting with Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have examined this dossier and, first, would like to thank the Evaluation Bodies sincerely for the excellent work. We understand their concerns.

In Venice, the State Party and the Venice local authorities have taken a number of concrete and valuable measures, supported by a considerable financial commitment by the State Party, and significant progress has been achieved in the recent years, particularly in the last half a year despite the tough challenges faced by the property, for example, banning of large ships from entering the historic city, the implementation of MoSE system to safeguard the city and all its islands from exceptional high waters, and additional glass barrier to protect the Basilica of San Marco, the lowest point of the city, the renovation of hundreds of new social housing units allocated to local residents, and various other measures to support the local community.

Particularly, two days ago, a new pioneering measure has been approved by the local Government of the city of Venice to tackle overtourism. Starting from spring 2024, the municipality will introduce an experimental system to manage tourist flow, discouraging day trippers from visiting Venice on peak dates by having them pay an entry fee. Revenues will be invested in managing the tourist entry system and in the conservation of the city Heritage. This could become, in perspective, a model to follow for other cities facing overtourism. I am sure that the State Party of Italy is fully available to explain those measures in more detail, should members of the Committee so wish.

Regarding the proposed development initiatives, the recent relevant Heritage Impact Assessment are still ongoing and, therefore, it seems a little bit too early to determine whether any of them constitute in themselves a threat to the OUV of the property. When available, the HIAs will provide ICOMOS with all the relevant information for a truly thorough, complete and updated evaluation of the state of conservation.

In the meantime, we should take note that the State Party of Italy is eager to invite a joint new World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Advisory mission on the property, aiming at taking an updated stock further to the 2020 mission of all the measures adopted in the subsequent years by the relevant Italian authorities, precisely to address the recommendations of the Committee.

Taking note all of those points, Mr. Chair, Japan considers it appropriate to give the State Party of Italy more time to implement and complete those measures before considering its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This is the essence of our amendments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Mr. Chair,

I thank you for giving me the floor and I would like also to thank the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, as well as the State Party, for all the efforts to dialogue, to find solutions for this important, extraordinary and famous site.

My country, represented by the experts here with me, would like to note the fact that since the inscription on the World Heritage List in 1987, the Italian Government has paid a great attention to protect and preserve the OUV of Venice and its Lagoon. The State Party has also shown a strong commitment to ensure the utmost conservation of the OUV of the property. This can be noted through introducing conservation policy, management programmes and monitoring activities. The Delegation of Oman recognized all concerns raised by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in terms of continuing development, impact of climate change and mass tourism. However, we believe that the State Party has shown a strong willingness and commitment by tackling further steps toward preserving and protecting the OUV of the property. In this regard, the State Party has made significant decisions to mitigate development activity within the boundary of the property.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to emphasize on the fact that the issue of climate change is global, and it is already affecting tangible cultural heritage sites in many areas of the world. Thus, it is out of control of the capacity of the State Party, as it is the case with Venice and its Lagoon. However, and in order to mitigate such effect and to depict relationship between various stress and their impact on cultural heritage, it is always recommended to conduct periodical Environmental Impact Assessment.

We, therefore, share the view that listing the property in Danger must be deferred, and that continuous dialogue with the State Party should be exhausted. We also believe that sufficient time is required to allow the State Party to move forward, with all its efforts to ensure the protection of the OUV of the property as well as its proper management.

For this reason, we encourage the State Party to work on the update of the management plan and to address the issue related to the governance and management system of the property and the establishment of its buffer zone, to update the Morphological Plan of the Venice Lagoon and related Sludge Protocol, to complete the Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan for the City of Venice, to improve the ecosystem of the lagoon and to develop World Heritage-focused Heritage And Environmental Impact Assessment.

In brief, Oman supports the amendment and look forward for more cooperation.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. I would like to, now, turn to India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

India would like to commend the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies for their hard work and detailed reporting in this matter.

Excellency,

The World Heritage property of Venice and its Lagoon represents a symbol for the World Heritage Convention. For this reason, we appreciate the interest and involvement of the international community and the constant concern for its safety. At the same time, we cannot but commend the tremendous efforts by the State Party of Italy in addressing all the factors affecting the property. We have taken note from the report that the main potential impacting factors have been taken on board by the management system of the property. For each of them, a number of actions have been taken with a consistent investment of funds, like in the case of the MoSE, the MoSE System, realized to prevent the historic city of Venice from high tides, whose implementation bears a cost of €6 billion.

Mr. Chair,

The commitment of the State Party of Italy is indisputable considering the relevant actions taken. I am sure the State Party is willing to enlighten us on the most recent one concerning the regulation of the tourist flows, and I request that they be given the floor to answer this question on tourist flows.

For these reasons, in order to facilitate a better assessment and a complete information, we join ourselves to the suggestion of a new Advisory mission to be hosted by the State Party of Italy.

Mr. Chair,

We believe that this World Heritage property will strongly benefit from this monitoring process and, therefore, we consider the proposal of entering the List in Danger to be premature.

For this reason, we support the amendment proposed by Japan, and I will say one statement in the Italian language: "*La India sostiene l'Italia*".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chairperson for giving me the floor.

My Delegation has thoroughly examined the document, and we would like to appreciate the work done by the Advisory Bodies.

We commend the State Party's sincere and concrete effort to preserve this very complex property. We also share the spirit of the amendments proposed by Japan, since we consider that the State Party has consistently followed up the recommendation of the World Heritage Committee.

For this reason, we consider that the original draft decision does not fully reflect the objective progress achieved. We highlight that the efforts made by the State Party have been continuous and sustained by facts. For example, on the development project, we learned that there is an ongoing Heritage Impact Assessment whose results are expected by the end of the year. It would be useful to request the State Party to provide the Committee with further information on the matter. In terms of conservation measures, Ethiopia also welcomes favourably the glass protection barriers installed around San Marco Basilica to prevent it from damages caused by high water.

In light of these examples and of others that have already been mentioned, we consider the proposal to Danger Listing the property as unjustified at this stage and, while we strongly support the amendment proposed by Japan, I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Nous tenons à remercier les Organes d'évaluation pour le rapport concernant Venise et sa lagune, qui est un site emblématique iconique de la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Nous demeurons préoccupés, à l'instar de l'État partie de l'Italie, par les effets liés au développement continu, aux impacts du changement climatique et au tourisme sur le bien. Le défi pour Venise, comme pour de nombreux autres centres urbains vivants, est de trouver le juste équilibre entre les impératifs de conservation et les besoins socio-économiques et culturels de ses habitants. Si l'on souhaite réduire considérablement la portée de l'industrie du tourisme et promouvoir le retour des résidents permanents, il faudra procéder à certaines formes de modernisation et de développement des nouvelles infrastructures.

En tout état de cause, conformément aux procédures établies dans les Orientations, nous soutenons l'idée d'une mission de suivi réactif et encourageons la partie italienne à inviter une mission consultative sur le bien avant d'envisager sa mise sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en danger. Une telle alternative permettra d'avoir une évaluation de première main sur les impacts exacts du développement une fois les EIE réalisées. Nous pourrions aussi évaluer les efforts complémentaires déployés par l'État partie pour lutter contre les effets du changement climatique et le tourisme de masse dans un cadre holistique.

L'État partie de l'Italie pourrait nous édifier davantage, le cas échéant, et il sera toujours loisible au Comité, si cela restait d'actualité, d'envisager une éventuelle inscription du bien sur la Liste des biens en péril.

Pour l'instant, nous sommes d'avis qu'il faut soutenir les amendements proposés en faveur de la non-inscription du bien sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. I will pass the floor to Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As acknowledged in the report of the Advisory Body, the State Party has taken several very important and effective measures for the implementation of the World Heritage Committee's recent decisions, and for this reason, it is to commend.

The main listed factors affecting the property, common to many World Heritage sites, are tourism, climate change, development projects and decrease of the number of residents. For each of them, the State Party presented concrete measures involving a very considerable amount of financial resources.

With reference to climate change, let us just mention the construction of MoSE, one of the most impressive works ever, worldwide, that, as mentioned, costs €6 billion. Though it has to be completed, we would like to emphasize that it has been so far proven to be a fully operational and remarkably effective tool.

As for the other tourism factor, we recently learned with great satisfaction, from the media, the official approval of the experimental system addressed at regulating the tourist flows and reducing the tourism type "Hit and run". Let me remind you also, Mr. Chair, the very positive and lasting effects of the landmark ban on large tourist cruise ships from the historic city of Venice since 2021.

Therefore, Greece warmly congratulates the State Party for such a constant progress carried out also at a very challenging time.

We strongly support the amendments submitted by Japan, as well as the proposal to invite an Advisory mission to the property in order to update on the ground and to facilitate the best exchange of information between the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Body, and the State Party.

In conclusion, we are sure that the State Party is fully available to provide any further detail and explanation concerning this emblematic property to the Distinguished members of the Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to Bulgaria. You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We would like to thank the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the State Party for the efforts in preserving the heritage of Venice and its Lagoon.

After reading the SOC report and other relevant documents, we noticed that the SOC report does not identify specific threats to the property, in particular within its boundary, that originate from proposed developments and are currently having a significant impact on its overall OUV. We strongly believe that there is no ascertained threat seems to have been demonstrated, so there is no objective motive to include this site into the List of Danger.

For this reason, we support the amendments proposed by Japan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Now, to South Africa, you have the floor.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for giving us the chance.

South Africa would like to acknowledge the unique situation in which the State Party of Italy finds itself in managing the fragile state of Venice and its Lagoon.

Climate change, as we know, is an existential crisis that confronts not only the site but the sites of all the States Parties. In this regard, the Committee will recall that during the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee, the State Party was requested, in line with Decision **44 COM 7B.50**, to develop corrective measures, in consultation with the Secretariat, to mainly address the threats posed by climate change and also the issue of mass tourism for consideration by the Committee at its 46th session. Over the last two years, the State Party of Italy has continuously worked to put in place some of these corrective measures to ensure protection of the OUV. For instance, we are informed that in order to reduce the number of mass daily tourists accessing the site, a new ticketing system has been introduced as a pilot study.

Additionally, South Africa commends the State Party on their efforts to strengthen the overall management of the property and to develop a long-term vision and strategy, balancing tourism and other activities which are more environmentally and socially sustainable. This may, if successful, be used as an example by many other ancient cities.

Mr. Chair,

South Africa acknowledges that a few developments proposed in the property are still at the Heritage Impact Assessment phase, and the State Party will timeously inform the World Heritage Centre when these reports are completed. In this regard, it is necessary for State Party to keep an open and active line of communication with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies throughout the year to come.

In light of the conservation measures that are already being implemented by the State Party, South Africa would like to suggest that the State Party of Italy invites an Advisory mission to the site at their earliest convenience in the course of 2024.

As such, we, therefore, would like to support the amendment to the draft decision presented by the State of Party of Japan.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I will pass the floor to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chairman,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has reviewed the amendments presented by Japan with respect to Venice and its Lagoon. We also looked at the related documents and held discussions with the State Party on the problems they're encountering.

We commend the efforts and interventions made by the State Party to address some of the concerns which have affected the site. We note, in particular those implemented and those being implemented to address the effects of climate change through the installation of tide barriers, for example. The exclusion of large ships from the San Marco Basin is a good start to address the threats to the marine environment. Controls of human traffic has commenced, and we anticipate continued progress in this regard.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines believes that the State Party is committed and should be given the time to continue its plans and to prepare and submit the requested Progress report by December 2024, following the visit of the monitoring mission.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thinks it's a bit premature to inscribe Venice on the World Heritage in Danger List, and as such, we support the amendment as presented at this time.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar:

I would like to thank the Evaluation Body and the Secretariat.

Qatar, of course, joins the other States Parties in the commend the State Party for the efforts done and for the multiple measures already taken, especially in times such as time pandemic and its effect in negative terms of social and economic crisis.

Mr. Chair,

The huge work done by Italy in addressing the numerous recommendations of the Committee is only to be strongly commend. We trust, Mr. Chair, in the continuous engagement of Italy in the conservation and protection of this extraordinary common heritage. We appreciate the numerous actions realized with the financial means made available by the State Party, and we join the other Distinguished Delegates in supporting the amendment of Japan.

Thanks.

The Chairperson:

Shukran. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

We would like to congratulate the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies for their work.

We must recognize all of the measures which have been adopted by the State Party, as well as the efforts implemented, which have already been mentioned by previous speakers.

We would support requesting a new Advisory mission.

We know that the State Party is fully committed to implementing all of the necessary measures, and that is why we support Japan's amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to quote Salvatore Settis: "We are facing a number of threats to our World Heritage, with real estate speculation and a number of issues related to mass tourism, and this is affecting cities in terms of cultural and societal aspects".

Mexico recognizes the concern of residents of the site as well as international experts, but we also recognize the efforts undertaken by the State Party to preserve the lagoon and to prevent it from being lost, alongside all of its importance in terms of culture and society. We understand that Italy, alongside the international community, should pursue its efforts to ensure the coexistence of humans and nature, which is the basis of our Convention. We need to ensure that citizens are also protected within this framework.

This is why we believe that Italy will continue to undertake the necessary efforts. We understand that 50,000 residents want to ensure the protection of their cultural heritage is of importance for Italy, but it is also of importance for all of us, all of those of us who've been able to enjoy the site, it is an invaluable symbol of cultural heritage.

Therefore, we believe it's important to take into consideration the amendment put forward by Japan.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Saudi Arabia.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Saudi Arabia like to join our colleagues in commending the State Party for all the works done and expenses invested in conservation of the extremely fragile property. Saudi Arabia is aware of the great challenge faced to maintain such a complex property.

It came to our knowledge the measures taken by the State Party to address the identified factors affecting the property, and we, therefore, join Japan and support the amendments.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Rwanda, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

Rwanda has taken good note, and commend the State Party of Italy for the investment put in place to protect this heritage site. This is also important to note that the conservation measures that have been put in place are bearing fruits as we speak today.

Therefore, the Delegation of Rwanda hereby strongly supports the amendments to the draft decision presented by Japan.

I thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Chairperson,

We wish to commend the State Party of Italy on the efforts made to mitigate negative impacts on the OUV of Venice and its Lagoon, with valuable guidance from the Advisory Bodies. We are of the view that the State Party should be supported in their continued efforts to safeguard the property.

We are, therefore, in agreement with Japan's submission on the proposed amendments to the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

You know, perhaps everyone in this world has heard of Venice. There is no one who has never heard of this beautiful city. Venice has become synonymous with beauty. And I love speaking about this because I come from Saint Petersburg, a Russian city which is known as the Venice of the North. So, it is unsurprising that the attention of the expert community and of the public as a whole is trained on today's discussion.

"Venice and its Lagoon", a World Heritage property, has encountered a crisis which is affecting its conservation. Climate, social, economic and logistical factors have caused difficult conditions to form on the ground, which may affect the OUV of the property. We would like to note the series of measures and significant financial investments by the State Party and the international community to eliminate some of the key threats to the property. We understand that implementing these measures requires a significant amount of time because it would require changing the fundamental way the life in the city is organized. As we know, the issue of the conservation of Venice has been on the Agenda of the Committee for years. In recent years, the property was visited by Reactive Monitoring missions and the Advisory mission, and in this connection, Distinguished Chair, we would like to ask you to give the floor to the State Party, the State Party itself, so that it could let the Committee know about whether it would agree to the mission proposed by Japan, and what issues could be looked at by this mission.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Egypt. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS for their reports on the World Heritage site of Venice and its Lagoon, and I would like as well to commend the State Party of Italy on its sincere commitment and efforts to improve the state of conservation of Venice and protect its OUV.

The site has been affected by climate change like many other sites in the world. However, recommending to inscribe it on the List of World Heritage in Danger, despite the huge efforts made by State Party in addressing the issue, would convey a negative message rather than assisting the conservation efforts of the site and is not the best approach: encourage the State Party to apply the necessary corrective measures.

My Delegation agrees with the need to invite a Reactive Monitoring mission to visit the site and assess its overall state of conservation.

Therefore, Egypt supports the proposed amendments submitted by Japan on the draft resolution.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

So, since we don't have any more questions and, also, the evening session technically is over, but I will pass the floor to Italy to respond to the questions addressed by India, Mali and Russian Federation, and then, we will resume the discussion tomorrow.

So, Italy, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I start with the question by India about the management of tourist flows. Yesterday, the day after yesterday, on 12 September, the City Council of Venice approved an innovative regulation. This measure sets out the guidelines for introduction of a new system for managing tourist flows, defining general principles and exclusions like workers, students and, of course, residents, controls and sanctions through a multi-channel and multi-language platform that will be made available shortly. The aim is to disincentivize daily trippers, the "Hit and run" tourism, in certain periods, in line with the fragility of the city. The test for 2024 will last about 30 peak days defined with a special calendar in the coming weeks and, in general, it will focus on spring bank holidays and summer weekends.

In parallel, we have also to take note of economic incentives that are already in an experimental phase for those who book in advance public local transport and city museums, especially not in the peak days.

But even more important for us, is to mention a spatial monitoring and planning tool that is the Smart Control Room, an innovative digital brain and integrated control centre which studies, interprets and analyses data to create a scenario to improve the mobility and safety of the city and its territory. It is able to monitor tourist flows, movement on the roads and water transports, parking as well as weather forecasts. Such data are analysed by a pool of experts to optimize public services based on the citizens' need. The Smart Control Room is operational 24 hours a

day and is constantly being integrated with new functions, thanks to more than 700 cameras and more than 50 sensors of pedestrian density.

Passing to the alternative between Advisory mission and Reactivating Monitoring mission, the question by Russian Federation, we have been asking already in the last months to the World Heritage Centre and to ICOMOS to come to Venice for an Advisory mission, because the last mission dated back to 2020, the beginning of the 2020 year. So, in these three years, ICOMOS has not have the chance to see how MoSE works. So, they are invited to experience a test of the MoSE system; they have not seen the barrier posed to prevent the Basilica of San Marco; they have not seen an experience inside the Smart Control Room. So, in our opinion, it is much better to have the Advisory mission in the spirit as it has been asked in the last months.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

So, before we close the session, I would like to pass the floor to Mr. Director Lazare for some general announcements.

You may have the floor, Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Italy, do you want to take the floor now?

The Delegation of Italy:

We would like to go ahead and to finish this, this point, if it is possible. I think, it is not difficult and If all the other members agree, it's very bad to restart tomorrow afternoon if we can make the last final efforts.

The Chairperson:

Okay. I'll pass the floor to Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

I will second that request, Mr. Chairperson.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

You mean continuing the debate and discussion?

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

We can check the amendments that have been proposed and pass on the decision.

The Chairperson:

I would like to inform you that the interpreters, they will not be able to work after 6:30, that's why we are stopping here. We have a legit protest. So, we will resume tomorrow then.

And, giving you the floor back to you, Mr. Lazare, for the general announcements.

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

I would like to support the request that we continue five, six minutes. I think, sometimes, the interpreters can wait for five minutes for us. I am kindly... but I think the decision should be taken now as I think we are approaching a consensus.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Mr. Chair,

We would also like to support the proposal to continue in the discussion and conclude with the amendments this evening.

The Chairperson:

Okay. We have the blessing to proceed. So, do we have any interventions?

Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

No. I just wanted to request that we should carry on our discussions.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

All right, then let us proceed with examining the draft decision.

So, I invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.189** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Japan, which is now supported from the floor by Distinguished Delegations of Oman, India, Ethiopia, Mali, Greece, Bulgaria, South Africa, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Qatar, Argentina, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Rwanda, Zambia and Egypt.

The revisions are to Para 3: "Welcomes the State Party's efforts to implement previous Committee decisions and several of the 2020 mission recommendations, including:".

- Points a) to e) stay as they are.
- There's an additional point f): "Adopting an experimental system for managing tourist flows based on an entry fee and a compulsory booking method;".

The revised Para 4: "Considers nevertheless that further progress still needs to be made by the State Party in addressing individual threats and the cumulative impact, and therefore requests the State Party as a matter of priority to:".

- Points a) to f) stay as they are.

Revised Para 6: "Also considers that a strategic long-term vision for the long-term preservation of the property has to be further developed, and that integrated coordinated management at all stakeholder levels needs to be further strengthened, and therefore urges the State Party to:".

- All points below this to remain as they are, a) to d).

Revised Para 7: "Further considers that reported large scale development projects that are currently being investigated for implementation in the property hold potential, individually and cumulatively, to have an adverse impact on the OUV of the property, and therefore expresses concern that these projects, when implemented, will add to the possible deterioration effects of human intervention, climate change impacts and mass tourism, which could threaten to result in irreversible change and substantial loss of historical authenticity and cultural significance, which are an integral part of the OUV of the property, if appropriate measures are not implemented;".

Revised Para 8: "Expresses concern that, despite the progress assessed in the implementation of previous Committee decisions and mission recommendations, some important issues remain to be addressed, related in particular to mass tourism, development projects and climate change;" Rest of the para is deleted.

Revised Para 9: "Further considers that the corrective measures proposed by the State Party need to be further developed, and therefore also urges the State Party to continue in the implementation of previous Committee decisions and recommendations of the 2020 Advisory mission, a structured consultation process with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;".

There is an addition of Para 10: "Encourages the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage *slash* /ICOMOS *slash* /ICCROM Advisory mission to the property to assess the overall state of conservation of the property and to engage with the State Party in its efforts to address the issues which could have a potential impact on the preservation of the property;".

And the last Para 11: "Finally requests The State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

End for amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Sorry, Mr. Chair,

I would like Nigeria to join the list of countries that have supported this draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also would like to have our name added to the members of the Committee supporting the amendment presented by Japan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Same for Belgium. We'd like to be added.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see there is a consensus on the amendments. I propose that we adopt the amended draft decision as a whole. Is there any objection?

So, Nigeria, you have anything to add?

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Sorry, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

So, since there is no objection, I declare that the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.189** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

So, I'd like to pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre for some general announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I have a few announcements for the Committee.

Following several requests concerning the order of examination of nominations, I would like to inform you that the World Heritage Centre has put online a provisional timetable by day, including the request to change the order of examination already endorsed by the Bureau. So, the timetable is to be found on the web page concerning this session as it is shown now on the screen. So, you will have it.

I also would like to inform you of two side events which will start in a few minutes:

- The first one will be in Rock Art Room, and it is organized by the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage. It is the screening of the winning short films of "My Heritage" competition.

- The second one will take place also in a few minutes at Hegra Room, which is the Advisory Bodies space, and it is entitled "Everything you want to know about the Advisory Bodies". So, it's a kind of a question-and-answer event. It's organized by the three Advisory Bodies.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Director.

Belgium. You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes. Thank you, Chair.

Just to remind the countries that are part of the Drafting Group for the Sundarbans, that we are starting with the Drafting Group immediately, now, after closing of the session.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Belgium.

And really appreciate the cooperation of all Committee members working in the Drafting Group.

So, tomorrow, I would like to remind you that we don't have a morning session. We will start at 3:00 pm. *[gavel]*

The meeting rose at 6:31 pm. // La séance a été levée à 18h31.

FIFTH DAY
Friday, 15 September 2023
NINTH PLENARY MEETING
3:25 pm – 4:40 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

CINQUIÈME JOUR
Vendredi 15 septembre 2023
NEUVIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h25 – 17h40
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

7B. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) //
ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU
PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

NATURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE NATUREL (suite)

ASIA-PACIFIC (Ct'd) // ASIE-PACIFIQUE (suite)

The Chairperson:

Good afternoon, dear colleagues.

Dear colleagues,

Please note that the Bureau at its fifth meeting this morning, this afternoon, actually, recommended to the Plenary that concerning the two properties located in Ukraine, Kyiv and L'viv, as you know, this is a very delicate matter and, therefore, my intention is, first of all, to deal with the two properties together and to call for the Delegation to refrain from extended debate unnecessarily after the joint presentation by the Secretariat and ICOMOS. I will, therefore, ask the members of the Committee to limit their interventions to the strict minimum. I trust that you will all support my proposal.

Also, once we have completed the examination of Item 7B, we will resume the debate on general Item 7, which could very well be this afternoon, as agreed and also in case the discussion on Item 7 is not finished by midday on the 16 September, we will resume it after the examination of all nominations.

The Bureau also recommends that, should the general discussion on Item 7 finish this afternoon, we will advance in the interests of time.

The following items are ready this afternoon or tomorrow morning: general Item 8 related to the nomination process. This is only the general discussion on Document 45.COM/8, which remains open until the 24 September for the adoption of the draft decision. This is not the concern of the examination of the individual nomination files under the Item 8B, which only starts on the 16th in the afternoon, as scheduled and updated on the website.

Therefore, it is proposed to examine the sub-items in the following order:

- Item 8A on Tentative Lists
- Item 8D on clarification of the boundaries are by States Parties
- Item 8E on review and approval of retrospective Statements of OUV, to be followed by
- Item [9]A on the Upstream Process

I will advise the Committee as we progress in our work today.

I also wish to inform you that we received two new requests from States Parties to move the timing of the examination of their nominations to allow their respective Ministers to attend. In this regard, we speak about Mongolia and the Republic of Korea who requested that the nominations of the "Stone Monuments" and "Gaya Tumuli", respectively, to be examined as a first item of the session in the afternoon of Sunday 17 September.

7B.14 The Sundarbans (Bangladesh) (Ct'd) // Les Sundarbans (Bangladesh) (suite)

The Chairperson:

Dear Colleagues,

As you remember, yesterday, it was decided that a Drafting Group established on the Sundarbans (Bangladesh) would provide the outcomes of its work when we resume the session today.

I would, therefore, like to invite the Delegation of Belgium to inform the Committee about the progress of the group's work.

You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

I am happy to report that the Sundarbans Drafting Group managed to conclude its work yesterday evening, as was requested by the Committee.

Our work was made a lot easier because, shortly before the meeting, the State Party of Bangladesh, the Secretariat and IUCN had a good talk about the draft decision. In fact, they managed to find common ground on a lot of points. So, we started working from that.

Chair,

This discussion within the Drafting Group was extremely constructive; so, I would like to thank all participants to the Drafting Group for this, and of course, this thanks also extends to the State Party of Bangladesh, the Secretariat and IUCN.

As for the amendment that is before the Committee today, it, in large part, goes back to existing language within the SEA and the SEMP, i.e. documents that already exist, and in terms of the reporting timeline, the Drafting Group proposes an intermediate Progress report to be discussed by the Committee at its 48th session and the actual SOC report at its 51st.

Chair,

I sincerely hope that the consensus that was found among the members of the Drafting Group will inspire the Committee during its discussion of Item 7B.14.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Belgium, and thank you to all who have participated in this Drafting Group.

So now, Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Good morning to everyone.

Your Excellency,

Thank you very much for this good news..., good afternoon, sorry, good afternoon..., for this good news.

I would like to start by thanking both the State Party and the Secretariat, as well as the Advisory Body, in addition to Belgium to chair this.

Actually, it should be, this is a model, whenever there is any dispute or misunderstanding, I think the dialogue is the most important between all the Parties.

Therefore, I appreciate what we have reached now, and I would like also to give the floor, with due permission, to the State Party, whenever you feel it is appropriate.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do we have any other comments or interventions?

Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen. May the peace of God be upon you.

We would like to thank the Consultative Bodies, ICOMOS, and Belgium, and the Secretariat for having set up this Working Group to discuss this item.

We would like to endorse the conclusion of these, this meeting.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Italy wishes to commend the excellent work done by the Working Group, and we are very honoured to have been part of it and to support the proposed amendment. In doing so, I would like to emphasize that what we called a "compromise result" can indeed be a best practice case, which demonstrates that when the States Parties engage in an open and constructive discussions among themselves as well as with the Advisory Body, it can lead to what is not a compromise, but is a decision based on updated information, facts and transparent dialogue.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I would also like to congratulate the Working Group and also the flexibility shown by the State Party to reach a consensus.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

[interpretation from Arabic] Egypt. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

My Delegation also would like to thank the Delegation of Belgium for conducting the work of this Working Group and to reach a compromise text, and I would like also to thank the Advisory Bodies and to commend State Party for its strong commitment.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar*.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, says Qatar.

We are very pleased with this positive result, and we thank the Drafting Group headed by the Delegation of Belgium. We thank all the countries that have participated in this group and have managed to reach this excellent conclusion. They've applied good practice; they've searched for consensus, and they've been successful. We hope that the same spirit will continue throughout the work of the Committee. We will be working, of course, in close collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, and we support these amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

We would like to congratulate all the members of the Working Group for their hard work and commitment towards getting a consensus. We would like to congratulate the State Party of Bangladesh for having taken these extraordinary steps given the conditions that are for the safeguarding of their property.

Excellency,

I would like to also congratulate the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies for their reporting and for their commitment to such issues.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very, very much.

And our thanks to Belgium for their very strong support and for all of the other participants who managed to come to an outstanding consensus. We really think this is an excellent example of consensus building work, and obviously we are all very, very pleased when we come to this kind of outcome, and we support the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any more interventions? So, I see none.

Therefore, I now invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.14** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any further amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received the amendment as submitted by the Drafting Group chaired by the Distinguished Delegation of Belgium. A copy of the same has been distributed to all the Committee members, and we have now received confirmation from the floor from Distinguished Delegations of Saudi Arabia, Italy, Oman, Ethiopia, Egypt, Qatar, India and Argentina.

We will display the cleaned-up amendment on the screen for adoption.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I see no more comments...

Argentina. So, Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Greece would also like to be added to the supporters of Oman's amendment. Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, my dear colleagues,

If there are no objections or comments while examining the draft decision, then I, therefore, declare that the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.14** adopted as proposed by the Drafting Group. *[gavel]*

And congratulations again to Belgium and all involved Parties in this negotiation.

Also moving forward to another property to be examined and proposed for the inscription on the list of the World Heritage in Danger. I now invite the Secretariat...

The Delegation of Oman:

Mr. Chair,

I requested you to give the floor to the State Party, please, after the adoption of the Bangladesh...

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Excuse me, Mr. Ambassador from Oman. Bangladesh, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Bangladesh:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished members of the Committee, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I sincerely thank the members of the World Heritage Committee for a factual, rational and forward-looking consensus decision on the Sundarbans.

We are particularly happy that the decision captures the efforts made by Bangladesh to conserve the OUV of the property. This should be the case for all States Parties.

I particularly thank the Sultanate of Oman and my dear friend, Ambassador Hamed Al Hamami, for his support in authoring the draft amendment. Also, those friends of Bangladesh in the Committee who were ready to co-author the draft amendments. I further thank the Working Group, chaired by Belgium, for their work towards building a consensus and, in the same note, I also thank the World Heritage Centre and IUCN for their technical views.

We take the decision as a recognition of Bangladesh's efforts to conserve the World Heritage site. The decision also recognizes the required balance between the Convention and the right to sustainable development of the States Parties.

The Sundarbans is the largest mangrove forest in the world and our shared resource. It is a carbon sink, a natural green coastal boundary of the southwest region of Bangladesh. Sundarbans is a relief to the natural disasters.

Let me reiterate Bangladesh's resolve to protect this heritage site, as we are committed to combating the adverse impacts of climate change under the leadership of Honourable Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina.

I thank you all.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

Also, we have a request from the floor from the National Committee for Saving the Sundarbans that would like to take the floor.

Is the National Committee here? It seems they are not here.

So, we will move forward with examining the remaining of nominations, sorry, SOC reports.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (Ct'd) // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD (suite)

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

7B.57 Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape (Türkiye) // Paysage culturel de la forteresse de Diyarbakır et des jardins de l'Hevsel (Türkiye)

The Chairperson:

So, regarding the next proposed property for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, I would like now to invite the Secretariat and ICOMOS to present the next property on the state of conservation of "Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape".

You may have the floor, Secretariat.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

"Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape" was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2015 meeting criteria (iv).

As seen in the map, on your screens, the attributes of the property include the Amida Mound in İçkale (Inner Castle), the Diyarbakır Fortress and City Walls, a 5.8 km-long ring consisting of bastions walls, gates and towers, the Hevsel Gardens, a part of the Tigris River and Valley, the Ten-Eyed Bridge, and the spring of Anzélé. The property has two buffer zones: an inner and an outer buffer zone. The inner buffer zone is encircled by the City Walls, which are part of the inscribed property. The inner buffer zone contains the historic city of Diyarbakır Suriçi District with many historical buildings and the ability to directly affect the condition and views to the City Walls. The outer buffer zone surrounding the outside of the property to protect the immediate setting of the property. At the time of inscription, it was recognized that the ability to view the walls within their urban landscape and settings is significant, as are the hydrological and natural resources that support the functional and visual qualities of the property. The Hevsel Gardens historical and functional links to the city had also been maintained until then. At the time of inscription of the property in 2015, in its Decision **39 COM 8B.32**, the World Heritage Committee had recommended

strengthening the legal protection of the buffer zone, reinforcing the provisions of the Suriçi District Conservation Plan to protect the urban fabric, and strengthening mechanisms for considering heritage impacts in development approval processes.

A few months after the inscription, in December 2015, an armed conflict erupted and lasted until March 2016. As a result, the inner buffer zone containing the historic city of Diyarbakir Suriçi District was exposed to widespread attacks and security operations resulting in the destruction of parts of the historic city. At its next session, in 2016, the World Heritage Committee underlined the importance of preventing any further damage to the property.

The following year, in 2017, the Committee requested a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to, and I quote, "evaluate the nature and extent of any threats and to propose measures to be taken", in 2019 (Decision **43 COM 7B.90**) and in 2021 (Decision **44 COM 7B.56**). So, the first request was in 2017, and it was reiterated in 2019 and in 2021. In 2021, on the occasion of requesting again the Reactive Monitoring mission, the Committee also requested that the mission "evaluate the overall state of conservation of the property". The mission was first invited by the State Party on 5 August 2019 to take place in March/April 2020. However, because of the sanitary crisis, it was impossible to conduct the mission in 2020 and the State Party reiterated its invitation in December 2021. The mission took place from 28 November to 3 December 2022 and the mission report is now on the World Heritage Centre website and is presented at this session.

The mission's experts observed a large number of urban restoration, rehabilitation, renewal and landscaping projects either already implemented or in the process of being implemented in both the property and its buffer zones since the property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2015. The majority of these had not been subject to an independent Heritage Impact Assessment. While some of the projects already implemented have had a positive or neutral impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and the attributes that convey it, the majority of them have had a direct or indirect negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value as defined at the time of inscription.

Since 2017, the World Heritage Committee has repeatedly requested the State Party to carry out Heritage Impact Assessment for urban design, landscape and infrastructure projects which may have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, in accordance with the *ICOMOS Guidance on HIAs for Cultural World Heritage* in force at that time, and before such projects are implemented. However, with the exception of the Rail/Tram line project and the Dicle River Rehabilitation project, which commenced prior to the completion of the HIA but were halted prior to its completion, so, with this exception, all urban design, infrastructure and landscaping projects have been or are being implemented without a Heritage Impact Assessment prior to the beginning of the works. A Heritage Impact Assessment document submitted to the World Heritage Centre following the mission concerned seven projects that had already been implemented.

At its two previous sessions, the World Heritage Committee requested the State Party to halt all projects that could affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property until the recommendations of the Reactive Monitoring mission are known and adopted by this Committee, and to halt the implementation of the 2016 Conservation Plan and revert to the 2012 Conservation Plan until the revised conservation plan has been submitted to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for review.

Yet, the State Party submitted to the World Heritage Centre, as an annex to its 2020 state of conservation report, only the implementation provisions of the 2012 Conservation Plan containing the 2016 amendments and indicated that, despite the revision of the 2012 Conservation to cover urgent needs such as transportation, reconsideration of open spaces, security, and rehabilitation of the area after the 2015 armed conflict, large parts of the 2012 Conservation Plan still remained valid.

Then, following the mission, in early 2023, this year, the State Party submitted the implementation up to 2020, showing that successive revisions had continued to take place up to August 2020 without submission to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies and compliance with the Committee's decisions. Therefore, to date, the complete Conservation Plan, as revised and under implementation, has not yet been submitted to the World Heritage Centre.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the ICOMOS if they have anything to add to this.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Members of the Committee,

The 2022 World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission to the World Heritage property "Diyarbakir Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape" found that the property and its buffer zone has incurred

significant loss of historic urban fabric, endured changes to its social fabric and that its management system is not adequate – all of which amounts to a significant threat to its authenticity, integrity and OUV.

ICOMOS has, for a number of years, also followed reports of large-scale interventions in this property and its buffer zone with growing concern. These concerns are confirmed by the mission report.

The vast scale of a mixed development around the Ten-Eyed Bridge – a key attribute of the property – and the Tigris River banks impacts negatively on this component of the property.

The Diyarbakir city walls, another attribute of the OUV, encircle the inner buffer zone, the historic walled city, which has recently been subject to large scale demolitions and new construction. The inner buffer zone plays a crucial role in supporting the integrity of, and hence, the property's Outstanding Universal Value. The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value indeed mentions, and I quote, "the fortified city and its associated landscape that were an important centre and regional capital during Hellenistic, Roman, Sassanid and Byzantine periods, through the Islamic and Ottoman periods to the present", end quote.

A recently constructed Vehicle Road and Touristic Tour Route has disrupted the relationship between the City Wall and historic inner city further.

The Hevsel Gardens, also an attribute, is noted in the nomination dossier, and I quote, "that it is what makes the city of Diyarbakir outstanding, and it has been the lifeline of this city over millennia".

The consolidation of land parcels and introduction of alternative agricultural practices in the Hevsel Gardens, since its inscription in 2015, has severed social connection between the Gardens and the city, leading to a continued erosion of the OUV.

ICOMOS does not contest the need for urban renewal and disaster-risk reduction, that has led to the inner buffer zone being altered, but considers that urban renewal and disaster-risk reduction is possible without the large-scale transformations that have been implemented and are planned both in the property and its buffer zones.

The negative impacts of large-scale interventions are compounded by the potential threat posed by a management system, which the mission reports as unable to safeguard the OUV.

Current development plans and projects further threaten the integrity and authenticity of the project.

ICOMOS concludes that the OUV of this property is facing ascertained danger due to:

- A serious deterioration of architectural and town-planning coherence in the buffer zone, with deleterious consequences for the OUV;
- serious deterioration of urban and rural space;
- significant loss of historical authenticity; and
- loss of cultural significance.

The property also faces potential danger arising from the lack of an appropriate conservation policy and the threatening effects of town planning, due to lawfully designed developments permitted under existing planning controls.

The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, therefore, recommend that it is crucial for the safeguarding of the OUV of the "Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape" that the Committee enter the property onto the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to commend the work done by the Advisory Bodies and the efforts undertaken by the State Party to respond to the concerns previously expressed by the Committee.

After reviewing all the related documents and the draft decision, Oman proposed a draft amendment to the original text and the draft decision.

Let me give you some remarks on this subject.

As mentioned in previous state conservation report of the property, revisions were made to the 2012 Conservation Development Plan in 2016 to enhance areas accessibility while addressing security concerns following terror incidents. These amendments include urgent consideration, such as transportation, re-evaluation of open spaces, security enhancement and area rehabilitation, all aimed at preserving the original fabric and mitigating the negative

impact terror acts. Therefore, it is impossible to return to 2012 Conservation Plan by halting the implementation of the revised 2016 Plan. Also, practically, the 2012 Plan is not implementable due to destruction and infrastructure improvement which changed the topography. Furthermore, as asserted in the draft decision and the mission report, no mass demolition occurred in the Suriçi region. The conflict that began in Suriçi buffer zone continued from 2015 to 2016. As consequence of this conflict, 3,957 out of 9,246 buildings were damaged. Urban design and rehabilitation projects in the buffer zone district became imperative for the security of the local population following the terror incident. Following that, restoration works in the damaged registration structure was started and illegal structures and unregistered structures were removed from the site.

Acknowledging the fact that the report of the Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring mission was dispatched approximately eight months after the mission took place and just before this World Heritage Committee meeting, we believe that the State Party should be given the opportunity to respond to any conclusion and recommendation of the mission report before any decision is included the site on the List of World in World Heritage in Danger.

Furthermore, we do think that the Esteemed members of the World Heritage Committee should also have the opportunity to evaluate the recommendation in the report before making any decision.

Given the issue mentioned above, it is advisable to request the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation and the implementation of the mentioned requirement with view to consider possible inscription of the property in the List of World Heritage in Danger, for example, in the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. [interpretation from Arabic] **Egypt.** [end of interpretation from Arabic]

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like, first of all, to thank the World Heritage Centre and the ICOMOS for their report on the Diyarbakir property.

We have noticed that the Reactive Monitoring mission to Diyarbakir was conducted in November to December last year. However, the report of the mission was transmitted to the State Party on 8 August, which is only five weeks before the current session of the World Heritage Committee. It is evident that the relevant authorities of State Party had insufficient time to respond and to implement the ICOMOS recommendations, or discuss them in detail with the World Heritage Centre.

We believe that the State Party should be given enough time to work on the recommendations and to inform the Committee in due course to elaborate on this matter before deciding on inscribing the site on the World Heritage List in Danger.

Therefore, it would be better to postpone the discussion on this issue to the next World Heritage Committee session, which will be held in less than a year.

My Delegation co-authors the proposed amendment on draft decision presented by Oman.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Salam Aleykum. Jumua Mubaraka.

Nigeria is in favour of amendments proposed to the draft decision on this Item.

Our reason being that the State Party of Türkiye has responded to the issues of factual errors in the report while we believe that state of conservation mixed certain realities on the ground. An example is the inexactitude of the fact that the archaeologists are absent on the site.

While commending Türkiye for all the efforts and thanking Advisory Bodies for the extensive report and oversight, we invite the Committee to adopt the DR, as amended.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

State of Qatar would like to highlight that the Reactive Monitoring mission report sets the base to inscribe the property to the World Heritage in Danger List.

It is notable in the mission report that it was mostly focused on the damage occurred in the Suriçi region, which is in the buffer zone. The decision to inscribe the property consists of the Inner Castle, Diyarbakir City Walls, Hevsel Gardens, the Tigris rivers and the valley, and the Ten-Eyed Bridge; therefore, Suriçi is not part of the core zone. We acknowledge the undeniable links to the Fortress and the Hevsel Gardens, and that Suriçi has never met the requirement of integrity and authenticity from the beginning of the nomination process and was, therefore, not included within the boundaries of the World Heritage property, which ICOMOS had no objection to this at the time of inscription.

For this, the State of Qatar would like to request a clarification from ICOMOS on this aspect.

With the above being said, we are of the opinion that the damage occurred in Suriçi cannot form the basis of an argument to inscribe the site to the Danger List.

Finally, Mr. Chair, we suggest that this issue needs further evaluation, and it would be better to discuss this matter in the next session.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for giving us the floor.

Türkiye has recently suffered a serious earthquake and a similar event recently took place in Morocco. We would like to express our condolences to the Governments and peoples of these countries. I'd also like to express our condolences to those in Libya. There have been many victims of the flood there. There's been much destruction. We send our thoughts to all the families and friends of the victims.

We welcome Türkiye's hard work in doing everything it can to safeguard this property in spite of the difficult circumstances linked to the earthquake. We think it should be commended that the State is very carefully paying attention to the recommendations issued by the World Heritage Centre and by the Advisory Bodies, it is open to dialogue, and it is willing to take on board the various concerns that have been expressed.

We consider that there is not yet enough information for us to take a decision with respect to the "Diyarbakir Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape". I do not think we are yet ready to add this property to the Danger List. Therefore, we agree with Oman that this file should be deferred to the next session.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson, for the opportunity.

South Africa supports all the amendments by the Sultanate of Oman as proposed.

We have looked at the amendments and are satisfied that they are in the interest of the site, as they mostly seek to use a more positive language while still raising the concerns of the Committee.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretariat and ICOMOS for their very intensive work on this particular property.

Now, I think, we are in general agreement with the amendment proposed in terms of the conclusion.

I understand that the report was made available to the State Party of Türkiye in August, and they also came up with a lot of factual points on those items. And therefore, I would simply assume that there has not been enough time for them to discuss further with the Evaluation Body, and therefore, perhaps it would be a little bit premature to come to a conclusion at this time, and perhaps we should discuss it next time.

Now, having said that, there are two things that I wanted to say in addition to what I said.

The first of all, in relation to Sub-paragraph c) of Paragraph 7, for example, there are two different versions written there. ICOMOS and the Secretariat are saying that this was actually large-scale demolition. On the other hand, the State Party of Türkiye is saying this is a destruction as a result of the incidents that started. So, I would assume that those are the terrorist attacks and things like that. Now, with this huge difference in perception, I think, we find it a bit difficult to come to a conclusion. So, if State Party of Türkiye has any clarifications to make, we would welcome that.

And I have another question in relation to Paragraph 9. I understand the State Party of Türkiye, Türkiye, will revise the management plan and, in that case, I do not really understand why they have to delete Sub-paragraphs a) and b) because "Fully review the management system of the property" and "Examine whether current legislation and management regulations can effectively protect the property", those things are, I think, within the framework of the revision of the management plan. So, I'm not sure if those amendments are actually necessary. From that perspective, I would appreciate if, Mr. Chair, you can give the floor to the State Party of Türkiye for those issues.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Indeed, Your Excellency. Thank you. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

We echo the State Party of Japan and we have studied this file in detail, but we would like to listen to the explanations sought by Japan from the State Party of Türkiye.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We also think that it would be worthwhile hearing further explanations from the State Party of Türkiye.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

We commend ICOMOS and the Advisory Bodies and the State Party for all of the efforts undertaken.

We are of the opinion that we ought to give the opportunity to the State Party to continue working on the management plan, and therefore, we would be in favour of the Omani proposed amendment, as has also been expressed by the other speakers, wondering whether we might be better placed to discuss this at our next session.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you for giving me the floor, Mr. Chairperson.

Having examined the document, my Delegation would like to thank the World Heritage Centre for the report, commend the work done by the Advisory Bodies as well as the State Party's effort undertaken to safeguard and rehabilitate the property.

My Delegation also believes it is better to postpone this discussion in order to address factual errors and allow the State Party enough time.

This is why my Delegation supports the amendment proposed by Oman.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no further requests. So, I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat to respond to the State of Qatar's inquiry. You may have the floor.

So, ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

The 2022 Reactive Monitoring mission noted as primary concerns that large-scale landscaping and construction interventions at the Ten-Eyed Bridge had dramatically changed the setting of this attribute inside the property and that, also, deleterious interventions to the banks of the Tigris River had been implemented, which would have a deleterious effect not only on the Tigris River as an attribute, but also on the Hevsel Garden's functioning. It also reported changes to agricultural practices in the Hevsel Gardens and consolidation of historic plots, which changes the fabric of the Hevsel Gardens and their social use. The mission also reported ongoing demolition and reconstruction or conversion of urban neighbourhoods in the historic Suriçi, which correctly, as stated, is in the buffer zone.

ICOMOS, however, considers that because the City Walls are an attribute of the property's OUV and are intrinsically linked to the urban environment they were constructed to protect and to the landscape setting, both the Hevsel Gardens and the City Walls should be read within the context of that historic urban fabric. Suriçi therefore plays a crucial role as setting for the Diyarbakir City Walls and the Hevsel Gardens. ICOMOS, in that regard, respectfully advises that it might be in the interest of the maintenance of the integrity of the OUV to remove the word "visual" in Paragraph 7 c). Past Committee Decisions reflected in the original draft of this decision before the Committee requested that the State Party revert to implementing the 2012 Conservation Plan, as has been noted. ICOMOS appreciates that it may not be possible for the State Party to revert to the 2012 Conservation Plan, as the plan does not anymore reflect the current urban structure of the inner-city buffer zone.

ICOMOS remains at the disposal of the State Party in this regard.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the State Party, Türkiye, to respond to the questions addressed by Japan and Mexico.

You may have the floor, Türkiye.

The Observer Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Since this is the first time we're taking the floor, we would like to congratulate you and the Saudi authorities for their hospitality and excellent organization.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Delegations of Oman, Qatar and Egypt for their amendments to the draft decision as well as to other Committee members for their support.

The delay in transmitting the documents left very little time for our relevant authorities to conduct a thorough assessment of the findings and adequately respond to the comments, and I would like to also point out that the report is 97 pages long, with 24 recommendations. It's also unfair to expect the Committee members to reach a hasty decision on this complex issue at this juncture.

I would also like to bring to your attention that most of the concerns raised in the Reactive Mission report are centred on the Suriçi region, which is a buffer zone, not the core zone. While Suriçi has undeniable connections to the Fortress and Hevsel Gardens, the damages inflicted upon the neighbourhood as a result of the terrorist attacks that occurred eight years ago have no direct impact on the OUV. Amendment 7 c) talks about "large-scale demolition", but the destruction due to the incidents of 2015 and 16, yes, led to a virtual destruction of social relationship between the local community and Hevsel, but this relationship contributed to the visual integrity of the property and not the OUV at the time of inscription, because it is the buffer zone.

And on another note, certain recommendations and requests by the WHC and the ICOMOS, such as reverting to the 2012 Conservation Plan, have been consistently repeated, and we are glad to see that ICOMOS has now accepted that it is in line with our arguments, impossible to return to the 2012 Plan because of the changes in the current layout of buildings due, again, to the 2015 and 16 terrorist incidents. However, if the Advisory Bodies could specify which parts of the 2012 Conservation Plan they believe would be valuable additions to the current Conservation Plan, we are open to considering their incorporation during the revision process.

Given these circumstances, we believe that it would be in the best interest of all Parties involved, including Türkiye, Committee members and Advisory Bodies, to postpone the decision as to whether the site should be inscribed on the Danger List in order to allow for a detailed discussion of this issue before and during the upcoming session of the Committee.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Actually, we raised our plate before the intervention of ICOMOS and the State Party, but we are very happy because we listen to ICOMOS, and we are very happy to listen to the State Party and to the explanations which are very useful for this file.

And for all these reasons, we support the amendments presented by Oman, and we think that we should postpone until the State Party have the time to address the issue and the challenges.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We want to thank ICOMOS and the State Party for those additional items of information, and in this regard, we'd like to echo what was said before and support Oman's amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

Now that we have heard the State Party, the report was presented to them, as a State Party has said, and its 97 pages long, with 24 recommendations. So, of course, we have to consider that, perhaps, the time is not enough for them to act on it.

And therefore, based on what we have heard, we would also support the amendments presented by the State Party of Oman for postponing this till the next session of the Committee.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Yes, thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman,

After having heard the explanations on this and from the Advisory Body and from Türkiye, we think we are now in a position to support this proposed amendment from Oman.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

I would like to make one observation and another question.

The one observation is that it seems that in relation to Sub-paragraph c) in Paragraph 7, there seems to be considerable differences. Not just one difference is whether this was a large-scale demolition or destruction from the terrorist attacks. This is one difference. Another difference is whether this will have an impact on the OUV, or simply visual integrity of the property.

Now, on those two things, I have an impression that we don't have enough material to make a judgement. In cases like this, perhaps, we should be able to avoid the clear statements in either way. I will come to this point later, but in any case, that is the observation that we had.

Now, the second point, this is a question, because probably, because the Distinguished Ambassador of Türkiye didn't have enough time, she didn't respond to my second question, which is related to Paragraph 9. My question essentially was if Türkiye, the State Party of Türkiye, will revise the Management Plan, then they might probably have a look at the management system of the property as well as the legislation, the current legislation and management regulations, and therefore, it may not be necessary to delete a) and b) in Paragraph 9. So, I just wanted to that clarification. Perhaps we need this clarification when we talk about the amendment paragraph by paragraph.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, I'll pass the floor back to Türkiye to respond to your question. Türkiye, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With regards to the question raised by Japan, we would be happy to maintain the paragraphs a) and b) because there will be a revision of the Management Plan as suggested.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Japan, does that answer your question?

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes, indeed. Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see there are no more comments or interventions.

So, I invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.57** concerning this property, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Oman, supported by the Distinguished Delegations of Egypt and Qatar, and now from the floor, we have received confirmations for this amendment from the Distinguished Delegations of Nigeria, Russian Federation, South Africa, India, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, South Africa, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Argentina. And I think, also, the Distinguished Delegation of Japan but we are looking point wise at the amendments for that.

So, we will start with the proposed amendments starting from Para 4. There is just a slight change in the last three lines, "notes the conclusions and recommendations contained in its report, and requests the State Party to implement them as appropriate;"

The next revision is in Para 6: "Expresses its concern that the State Party has not halted all projects that could affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and also reiterates its request to the State Party to:

- a) Halt all projects that could affect the OUV of the property, including further demolitions and developments in its buffer zone;"
- Point b) is deleted.

Paragraph 7 revised: "Also expresses its concern about the changes brought about by the implementation of projects in the property and its buffer zone since its inscription, which have eroded its OUV, in particular:"

- Points a) and b) are retained as per the original draft decision.
- Point c) is revised: "The destruction as a result of the incidents that started in the neighbourhoods in the southeastern part of Suriçi *in bracket* (buffer zone) and continued between 2015 to 2016, which has also led to a virtual destruction of the social relationship of the traditional local communities with the Hevsel Gardens, and despite this being a fundamental relationship that contributed to the visual integrity of the World Heritage property at the time of inscription,". We received a change here from ICOMOS to delete "visual", and also, the Distinguished Delegation of Japan wanted to intervene in this.
- Point d) is retained, as is.
- Point e) is deleted.

Moving to the next revised para, Para 9, "Notes that the Management Plan for the property is still not fully implemented and has resulted in a range of disparate projects, some of which have and continue to undermine the OUV of the property and urges the State Party to:"

- The original amendment had deleted Points a) and b). The Distinguished Delegation of Japan has suggested to retain that, which was also agreed on by the State Party.
- Point c), "Revise the Management Plan and ensure the participation of local authorities, organisations and communities, including scientists and agricultural groups, in the management and decision-making processes,"
- The last point under this para, "Submit the revised Management Plan to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies prior to its adoption;"

After that point, the Para 10 and Para 11 in the original amendment and Para 12 have been deleted and the final revised Para 10, which was the original Para 13, "Finally requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session, considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilization to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value, including the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger."

End of the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali, you may have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je souhaite qu'on ajoute le Mali à la liste des pays ayant soutenu les amendements proposés.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Having listened to the debate carefully, the State Party of Zambia is also joining itself to the rest of the Delegates.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Chair.

Thailand too would like to join our names to the list of co-sponsors.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more requests or interventions.

So, let's proceed and examining the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

So, from Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 3, there are no amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposal. Do we agree on this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we do not have amendments. Do we agree to adopt it as it is...

Japan, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Well, I'm sorry, it was about Paragraph 4.

If you rule that the hammer was already done, so we can't say anything. That's fine.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, Paragraph 5, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? So, I see no objections. The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections.

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Can you go to Paragraph c)? Is it okay to discuss Paragraph c), now?

The Chairperson:

Indeed.

The Delegation of Japan:

Okay. Thank you very much.

Now, as I said earlier, there are two different observations here.

You know, large scale demolition and reconstruction activities are mentioned by the Evaluation Bodies. At the same time, there is a reference in the amendment, there is a reference to the "destruction as a result of the incident that occurred between 2015 and 2016". So, there are two observations. Now, given the differences in the observation at this moment in time and knowing that ICOMOS report is there, but also there are factual clarifications made by the State Party which have not been answered at this moment in time, I don't think the Committee should take a particular view on this one. We should simply say that "destruction" and without any qualifications. So, from that

perspective, we can say "destruction" and delete all the rest, and that goes to, which I mean, a few lines later. We don't have anything, any explanation at this moment in time, perhaps in the next Committee meeting when we discuss it, we can have a more clear view about this particular part. All we have to do, at this moment in time, is to say that there is a "large-scale destruction". Perhaps we can have: "large-scale destruction, which has led to the virtual destruction of the social relationship of the traditional local communities with the Hevsel Gardens", and then, after that, my understanding is that the State Party of Türkiye wanted to delete "OUV", and instead, they wanted to have "visual integrity". But at the same time, as I understand it, the Advisory Body wants to delete "visual". If both sides are okay here to: "the integrity of the World Heritage property", that would probably be the best solution.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much.

We do accept the amendment that stated by Japan, to delete the first part and we keep the word "destruction".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

The rest of the Committee, are they okay with this proposal?

So, I see no objections to Japan's proposal. Hence, if there is no objection, Paragraph 7 is adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 8, do we have a proposal on Paragraph 8? Paragraph 8, there is no proposal. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objection. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text?

Japan, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

In light of the intervention by the Distinguished Ambassador of Türkiye, perhaps, we can agree that we can, I mean, we can keep a) and b) as they are.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Given the request of the Delegation of Japan, do we agree with this proposal to keep a) and b) as is? I see no objection.

So, what about the rest of the Sub-paragraphs c) and d)?

Is there any objection? We are all in agreement with the proposed text. So, I see no objection. The Paragraph 9 is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 10, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. So, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph...

Belgium, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, apologies, apologies, Chair.

We couldn't see it, Paragraph 10 at the moment you adopted it, and we have a small problem of wording.

We're not native speakers, but we feel that the last part of the Paragraph 10, "including the possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger", the way it is written now on the screen does not seem to make sense, and I would, maybe, like to ask the assistance of the Secretariat or the Advisory Body to propose a better wording. I think

in the past we have used: "with a view" or something like that, "with a view to consider possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger". But I'm in your hands.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Rapporteur.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would just like to explain to the Distinguished Delegation of Belgium that this is the standard that we are using now, in the recent SOC reports. What he was probably referring to was the previous version. Even in a decision yesterday, we replaced it by this particular text, which is a standard text for all SOC reports.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, Belgium, are you okay with the explanation of the Rapporteur?

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Great.

So, I see no objections on the proposed paragraph and the text, the Paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues,

I would like to invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

And if there is no objection, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 7B.57** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

We have a request from the floor, Earth Alliance. You may have the floor.

Also, we have a request from the World Heritage Watch. You may have the floor.

The World Heritage Watch (Observer):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On behalf of 84 NGO members of the Diyarbakir Conservation Platform, I would like to mention two important issues related to the property's OUV that are not included in the decision:

- 1) In the buffer zone of the property, 24,000 people living in the inner city Suriçi have been forcibly displaced by security forces and forced to live like refugees in their own city. Their property rights were taken away through expropriation decisions. They could never return to their homes. This forced migration cut the connection between Hevsel Gardens and those living in the inner city. This, in turn, contributed to the transition to industrial agriculture in the Hevsel Gardens. In order to ensure the comprehensive preservation, these families must be able to return to Suriçi and exercise their right to rebuild their homes.
- 2) Additionally, the Tigris River, from its source to the portion within the World Heritage site, has not been granted river status. A significant portion of the problems existing in the Dişkale Valley, within the World Heritage site and along the river bank, stem primarily from the absence of a legal status. The State Party should enact legal regulations that grant river status to this section of the Tigris by including it in the Coastal Protection Laws. The Dişkale Valley should be registered as a National Heritage. Legal regulations must be performed to protect both the Dişkale Gardens and the Dişkale Valley as a whole. May I add, on behalf of World Heritage Watch, that we have documented the comprehensive destruction in the core and buffer zone in our annual reports since 2016, including extensive photographic documentation and most recently in this year's report, all of which have been sent to all States Parties and can be downloaded from our website.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

7B.59 Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra (Ukraine) // Kyiv : Cathédrale Sainte-Sophie et ensemble des bâtiments monastiques et Laure de Kyiv-Petchersk (Ukraine)

7B.60 L'viv – the Ensemble of the Historic Centre (Ukraine) // Lviv – ensemble du centre historique (Ukraine)

The Chairperson:

I now invite the Secretariat to present the next reports on the state of conservation of two properties located in Ukraine: Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings; and L'viv – the Ensemble of the Historic Centre, since the two draft decisions will be examined together. As this is a very delicate matter, my intention, first, is of all to deal with the two properties together, and to call for Delegations to refrain from extending the debate unnecessarily after the joint presentation by the Secretariat and ICOMOS. I will, therefore, ask the members of the Committee to limit their interventions to the strict minimum.

I trust that you will all support my proposal, and now, I would like to give the floor to the Secretariat.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The two reports have been presented before you in Documents 7B.Add.

The Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies recommended the two properties to be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with Article 11.4 of the World Heritage Convention and Paragraphs 177 to 179 of the Operational Guidelines, as optimal conditions are no longer met to fully guarantee the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to ICOMOS.

ICOMOS

Thank you, Chairperson.

ICOMOS and ICCROM confirm the position as just stated by the Secretariat.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeeelan.

So, I would like to invite you to adopt the related Draft Decisions **45 COM 7B.59** and **45 COM 7B.60** concerning these properties, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for this draft decision.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, dear colleagues,

Russian Federation, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Russian Federation supports the need to protect for all of humanity OUV and properties with OUV and Kyiv is an important property. I'm referring to "Saint Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra". Likewise, we also support, of course, the safeguarding of L'viv.

We consider that these two sites should be included in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

However, the Russian Federation would like to distance itself from the decision for the following reasons.

First of all, we can't fully agree with the grounds for this decision, nor with certain wordings. It is clear to us that the language of this decision does not align with the language used in the Convention and with the Operational Guidelines. Likewise with former decisions, there is no alignment. There is a certain legal framework in place for conservation of properties, and that is not fully respected in this decision. In the decision, we don't see the technical procedures that are covered by Paragraphs 193 to 196 of the Operational Guidelines. The World Heritage Centre has not said who the third-parties refer to is or are. Likewise, 179 of the Operational Guidelines has not been sufficiently referred to. There is some reference in the decision to the actions of the State Party, and this hasn't been sufficiently covered. Likewise, Paragraph 179 of the paragraph and certain subsections have not sufficiently been covered.

There are some issues on the Ukrainian side with respect to the protection of this property. This does not match up with previous decisions taken by the Committee, and with other rules for protection of the safeguarding of cultural property. The authenticity of the property is being lost and the spiritual and historical value of this property are being undermined due to the actions of the State Party.

The Russian Federation would like its position to be reflected in the report from this meeting.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I propose that we adopt these two draft decisions together and as a whole. I see no objections.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decisions **45 COM 7B.59** and **45 COM 7B.60** adopted. *[gavel]*

Belgium, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to make a short statement on behalf of five Committee members.

"Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Japan are deeply worried about the many challenges the World's cultural Heritage is facing in regions affected by conflicts all over the world.

Today, the Committee took the only possible decision that is to inscribe the "Historic Centre of L'viv" and "Saint Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings in Kyiv" on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

We would like to commend Ukraine's tireless efforts to preserve its cultural heritage in difficult circumstances, and welcome the decisions that were taken by the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, to enable enhanced protection to a number of Ukrainian sites, as well as its dedicated Declaration on the Protection of Cultural Property in Ukraine, both adopted in its third extraordinary session, last week.

We emphasize that it is not Ukraine's sole responsibility to protect these sites. Since its properties are inscribed on the World Heritage List, their protection and preservation is a global responsibility in accordance with Article 6, Paragraph 1 of the 1972 Convention. We noted with deep concern that the inscription on the World Heritage List and the In Danger Listing of Odesa, in January, did not stop the destruction caused to the Historic Centre. We, therefore, underline the importance of Article 6.3 of the 1972 Convention, a Convention that brought this Committee here for the 45th time in its history, and which we collectively pledged to uphold. Today, we express our hope that the In Danger Listing will effectively contribute to conserve Ukraine's heritage in the spirit of our Convention.

Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Japan stand with Ukraine and support the statement of the group of friends earlier stated."

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Now, we have a request from Ukraine.

Ukraine, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Ukraine:

Dear Mr. Chair, Mr. ADG for Culture, Director of the World Heritage Centre, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Since this is the first time I am taking the floor on behalf of the Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, I would like to thank Saudi Arabia for an excellent organization of the session, and all the States Parties are now our friends for the statement made.

Under the ordinary circumstances, States Parties make every effort to avoid placing sites under the List of Danger, but the situation in Ukraine, provoked by Russia's war of aggression against our country and by Russia bombing Heritage sites in Ukraine, shows that optimal conditions are no longer met by fully guaranteeing the protection of the Outstanding Universal Values of the property, in accordance to the Paragraphs 177 and 179 of the Operational Guidelines. It is threatened by the potential danger due to the outbreak of the illegal, unprovoked, unjustified war of aggression of Russian Federation against Ukraine.

We agree on the approach of this decision, but we are concerned that the decisions do not reflect the main reasons why the sites are classified in Danger, named Russian aggression.

My dream is that every child in our country would know the names of our cultural sites, but my reality is that every child knows the names of each Russian military airport, names of Russian rockets, and the time which a missile takes to reach our cities. I pray that, one day, each participant of this Committee would be as brave as Ukraine to stand on the bright side of the truth and name things in their own names.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

So, now moving to the rest of the properties located in Europe and North America, I now invite the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr. Eloundou Assomo, to read the list of the properties located in this region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

You may have the floor, Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following properties located in Europe and North America region for which the report are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Historic Centres of Berat and Gjirokastra (Albania)
- Fertő / Neusiedlersee Cultural Landscape (Austria, Hungary)
- Paris, Banks of the Seine (France)
- Gelati Monastery (Georgia)
- Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt (Germany)
- Budapest, including the Banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter and Andrásy Avenue (Hungary)
- Historic Areas of Istanbul (Türkiye)
- Derwent Valley Mills (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
- Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
- The English Lake District (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
- The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement (Argentina, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Japan, Switzerland)
- Historic Centre of the City of Salzburg (Austria)
- The Great Spa Towns of Europe (Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
- Historic Centre of Sheki with the Khan's Palace (Azerbaijan)
- Old City of Dubrovnik (Croatia)
- Venetian Works of Defence between 15th and 17th centuries: Stato da Terra – western Stato da Mar (Croatia, Italy, Montenegro)

- Historic Centre of Český Krumlov (Czechia)
- Historic Centre of Prague (Czechia)
- Le Havre, the City Rebuilt by Auguste Perret (France)
- Nice, Winter Resort Town of the Riviera (France)
- Historical Monuments of Mtskheta (Georgia)
- Upper Middle Rhine Valley (Germany)
- The Porticoes of Bologna (Italy)
- City of Valletta (Malta)
- Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor (Montenegro)
- Dutch Water Defence Lines (Netherlands)
- Auschwitz Birkenau – German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (Poland)
- Centennial Hall in Wrocław (Poland)
- Tarnowskie Góry Lead-Silver-Zinc Mine and its Underground Water Management System (Poland)
- Royal Building of Mafra – Palace, Basilica, Convent, Cerco Garden and Hunting Park (Tapada) (Portugal)
- Cultural and Historic Ensemble of the Solovetsky Islands (Russian Federation)
- Kizhi Pogost (Russian Federation)
- Petroglyphs of Lake Onega and the White Sea (Russian Federation)
- Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro, a landscape of Arts and Sciences (Spain)
- Aphrodisias (Türkiye)
- Arslantepe Mound (Türkiye)
- Göbekli Tepe (Türkiye)
- Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), and finally
- Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey including Saint Margaret's Church (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, dear Director.

If the Committee agrees on these state of conservation reports, I declare that the Decisions read out adopted. *[gavel]*

So, I'd like to pass the floor to Albania.

The Observer Delegation of Albania:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Congratulations on your election and many thanks to Saudi Arabia for generously hosting the session.

At the outset, I would like to thank the World Heritage Committee members for their excellent and dedicated work.

I would like to underline Albania's appreciation for the close cooperation, in a spirit of constructive and ongoing dialogue with the World Heritage Centre. We would also like to thank the Advisory Bodies for having invested considerable efforts in offering expertise and assisting us in our efforts to preserve the OUV of the "Historic Centres of Berat and Gjirokastra".

Albania welcomes the recommendations of the decision just adopted. We are committed to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the 2021 joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/IUCN Reactive Monitoring mission, including the drafting of a comprehensive long-term development strategy for the property, including tourism management. Albania is committed to take the necessary measures, in close coordination with all relevant stakeholders and civil society, to continue improving the conservation and management of the property with a view to our common objective: protecting its OUV.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Azerbaijan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Distinguished Committee members, dear Delegates,

Over the last few years, Azerbaijan has diligently addressed various conservation issues and recommendations related to the "[qCentre] of Sheki with [the] Khan's Palace" considering recent Committee decisions.

Azerbaijan has undertaken substantial efforts in restoring numerous historical buildings that are important to OUV elements of the site. New restoration projects, important scientific and research activities and archaeological works are underway within the property. These initiatives pursue the preservation of the Castle walls, Khan's Palace and other monuments that are integral part of the property.

The Committee's request to strengthen the protection and the conservation of the property's overall historic urban landscape has been duly considered by the State Party, Azerbaijan, and substantial progress has been made in the area as well. It is worth noting that the "[Historic Centre] of Sheki with [the] Khan's Palace", rich in various elements of intangible heritage. We have developed a new strategy for the development and conservation of intangible OUV elements of the property, and will soon start the implementation of the project. This initiative will certainly benefit the local community as well as serve the conservation of valuable traditional craftsmanship elements of Sheki.

Dear Chair,

We thank the Committee and the Advisory Body for the valuable contribution and recommendation.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

We have several requests from the floor from the NGOs.

Europa Nostra, you may have the floor.

Please, I would like to encourage and ask all NGOs to speak within their own limits, two minutes.

Thank you.

Europa Nostra (Observer):

Thank you, dear Mr. Chairperson, for giving me the floor.

Let us join forces to ensure a sustainable and viable future for the endangered Venice and its Lagoon.

Now to the Europa Nostra statement:

As early as 2016, in the framework of our most endangered programme, Europa Nostra and its partner, the European Investment Bank Institute, declared the Venice Lagoon as the most endangered Heritage site in Europe. In this way, we sounded a clear and loud alarm on the ever-growing danger threatening this unique World Heritage site.

Today, we believe that the serious decision, yesterday, of the World Heritage Committee not to inscribe Venice and its Lagoon on the World Heritage List in Danger should be seen as a due acknowledgement of positive measures already undertaken. This is also an encouragement expression of support to the Italian authorities and civil society to further improve and intensify their action against all identified threats.

We also welcome the decision of the World Heritage Committee to organize a new Reactive Monitoring mission to Venice and its Lagoon.

We especially call upon the Italian Government to develop urgently needed modelling of future climate scenarios and their impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of Venice and its Lagoon.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

I will pass the floor to the Centre for Biological Diversity.

You may have the floor.

The World Heritage Watch (Observer):

They are not in the room. Can I read the statement on their behalf?

The Chairperson:

Unfortunately, no because they are the one who requested.

And also, we have a joint statement by two NGOs, Stonehenge Alliance and Australian Marine, you may have the floor.

Stonehenge Alliance (Observer):

Thank you Chair.

On behalf of the Stonehenge Alliance, I would like to thank UNESCO for its concern over Stonehenge, a concern shared by over 225,000 people from 147 countries around the world.

Stonehenge World Heritage site is in danger now. The legal action challenging the State Party's decision is the only thing keeping the bulldozers off the site. We can only hope that it succeeds, because placing the site on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2024 could be too late. Construction contracts have already been signed, and it is clear that the State Party has no intention of changing its mind. The World Heritage Committee has given it plenty of opportunities to do so, and it has ignored every one of them.

We urge the Committee to stand firm in the face of such intransigence, and to maintain pressure on the State Party to withdraw the scheme.

We will have a new Government within the next 12 months, and having a clear and consistent position from UNESCO on the unsuitability of these proposals should help it come to a better solution and protect the site for future generations.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the World Heritage Watch.

The World Heritage Watch (Observer):

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Excuse me, World Heritage Watch, it's intervention on Item 187.

You may have the floor.

The World Heritage Watch (Observer):

Thank you, Chair.

Just a second...

On behalf of the Rhine Valley Citizens Initiative, we request:

- That the World Heritage Committee make sure that the speed of freight trains in the Middle Rhine Valley will be limited to 50 km/hour between Rudesheim and Koblenz, until other effective solutions to reduce the rail noise and vibrations are effectively implemented.
- That the plans for a bridge crossing the river will be given up until facts are available that clearly demonstrate the solutions to local needs, required under Decision **44 COM 7B.155**, and to request the State Party to make ferries into a permanently attractive means of transport for crossing the Rhine River.
- That all concerns of landscape and nature conservation, traffic, identity with region, and compatibility with the OUV related to the planned Federal Horticulture Show (BUGA 2029) are integrated into a coherent overall concept and that this concept is presented to UNESCO before irreversible decisions are made, and
- That the federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Hesse ensure, in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, that the construction and operation of wind turbines in the sidelines of the World Heritage site will be excluded.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Initiative Stadtbildschutz to intervene on the Item 58.

Initiative Stadtbildschutz (Observer):

On behalf of Eleni Methodiou, I make the following statement:

"The conversion of Hagia Sophia and Chora Monastery into a mosque raise a little question whether a monument with many uses over time, such as the Hagia Sophia and Chora Monastery – they have been a Christian church, a mosque and a museum – can be used in a way that favours one use and overlaps the others, or if this contradicts the exceptional ecumenical value of the monument.

The new use is not compatible with the criteria and the justification of the inscription on the List. They declared the monuments as museums, reflecting multilingual, cultural and historical richness over the centuries. Paragraph 166 of the Operational Guidelines states that: "Where a State Party wishes to have the property inscribed under additional, fewer or different criteria other than those used for the original inscription, it shall submit its request as if it were a new nomination". The issue of the use of the world monuments needs special study and specifications, which should be included in the Operational Guidelines, such as mentioning the use of the monument in the nomination file and the eventual plan to change it in the future.

An International Multidisciplinary Committee should be established with the task to coordinate the various studies and projects concerning the protection and the conservation of the two monuments, bearing in mind that the Committee 44th session called on Türkiye to engage in international cooperation and dialogue."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

7. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

The Chairperson:

So now, dear colleagues,

You will remember that due to the crucial conservation issues developed under this item, it was decided that we would resume our discussion on general Item 7 as soon as Items 7A and 7B are completed.

So, we have now closed both the Agenda Items 7A and 7B.

I propose that we now move to the examination of Item 7 on the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties.

I would like to know whether there are any comments on Document 45.COM/7 on the general state of conservation issues.

You may have the floor.

Japan, we can start with you.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

Mr. Chair, I would like to seek your guidance because we have some amendments. Is it the right time to explain those amendments, or should I do it later?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Your Excellency,

So, since it's part of the general debate, you may address them now.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

In that case, is it possible to have a look at the amendments? Because I want to explain some points in line with those amendments. I could, of course, do it later if you like.

Thank you, Sir.

The Chairperson:

So, would you please let us know, Your Excellency, which paragraph you would like to know first, so that we can project it.

And now, we are not examining. We are just only showing it, and for the general debates...

The Delegation of Japan:

Mr. Chair,

Is this a question directed at me?

The Chairperson:

Yeah, which paragraph? So that the Secretariat can project the amendments.

The Delegation of Japan:

Sure.

Well, we have a minor amendment in Paragraph 6, and we have additional paragraphs, Paragraphs 12, 13, 14, 15, after the draft decision proposed by the Secretariat.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

Bear with us, Your Excellency. There is a minor technical issue. So...

You may have the floor, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

I just wanted clarification because India wanted to make a statement, but what process is being followed?

Once you introduce an item, then the Secretariat would be explaining it, and then Member States would be taking the floor for three minutes, and then the draft decision would be presented on screen.

If that is the process you are following, then I would like to make a statement at that point in time. Otherwise, we would want to make it now.

So, Excellency, we are in your hands. We seek your guidance.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

We are not examining the draft decision. Now, we are opening it for the debate, as we discussed earlier.

The Delegation of India:

Are you opening it for debate, Excellency?

The Chairperson:

We are in the debate. We are in the discussion, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of India:

Okay, then India would like to make a statement.

The Chairperson:

If you bear with us, Your Excellency, because Japan requested the floor first.

The Delegation of India:

So, that is why I am a bit confused, because I see the draft decision in front of my eyes, Excellency, and you said we are not in the draft decision.

The Chairperson:

He has just only wanted to open and discuss certain matters, but, I mean, we can pass the floor to the Secretariat to elaborate more on it.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I think, here, the presentation by the Secretariat on this item has already been done. It was done on Monday by the Deputy Director on this item, and you agreed to resume to this debate after the examination of Items 7A and 7B. This has been what the Chairperson has explained and agreed and informed about this morning again.

So, Item 7A and 7B have been examined. Now, we are resuming to the continuation of the debate on Item 7.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Legal Advisor may wish to clarify more.

Thank you, Chairperson with your authorization.

The Chairperson:

Indeed. Legal Advisor, you may have the floor.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

This is just to confirm that my understanding is the same as the Secretariat.

The Committee started the consideration of this item a few days ago, and this consideration started with the introduction by the Secretariat. The step that follows is the debate with the members of the Committee, and then we will have the consideration of the decision.

It is my understanding, Mr. Chair, that you have opened the floor for the debate and that the Distinguished Delegate of Japan has requested to take the floor. The reason why the text of the decision is on the screen right now is not because the decision is under consideration, but rather that, if I understand correctly, the Distinguished Ambassador of Japan has requested that it be shown as a visual support for his presentation, for it to be clear.

After the intervention of the Delegate of Japan, of course, other members of the Committee may continue to intervene, after which the debate would be closed, and the decision would be taken up for consideration and showed again on the screen.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for the Legal Advisor.

India, so, are we clear now?

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

I thank the Legal Advisor for putting everything so clearly that we have understood the point.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Going back to Japan, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

We have several amendments in this decision.

Under Paragraph [6] is a minor amendment in order to make sure that this paragraph is in line with the COP decision in 2015. And in fact, the COP decision in 2015 clearly says: "decides to adopt the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change". This is a direct quotation from there, that is Paragraph 6.

And then, can we move on to Paragraph 12, if you don't mind?

So, those are the additions. Paragraph 12 is intended to facilitate cooperation among different parties through the enhanced dialogue between Member States, Evaluation Bodies and World Heritage Centre. This paragraph is proposed, on our experience, in the previous World Heritage Committee, where we witnessed so many properties with divergence between recommendations by the Evaluation Bodies and views expressed by the Member States.

In terms of inscription process, preliminary assessment has been introduced to institutionalize the dialogue between Member States and the Evaluation Bodies, and therefore, our proposal focuses on the Reactive Monitoring process regarding already inscribed properties. In the process of Reactive Monitoring, a small number of experts are involved in the evaluation of individual properties in comparison to the evaluation process in new inscriptions, and it is all the more necessary to have the opportunities for dialogue between Member States and Evaluation Bodies. Our proposal is not asking for a big change in the current system, but to institutionalize the current practice of dialogue. Now, as we can see from the examples this morning, the Bangladesh Sundarbans case, dialogue can produce very meaningful results. So, that would enhance our points in relation to this particular paragraph.

And then, Paragraphs 13 and 14 originally come from suggestions by Evaluation Bodies as well as World Heritage Centre.

The Paragraph 13 is essentially about States Parties. You know States Parties can enhance dialogue among themselves regarding properties that are or may be proposed for inscription on the World Heritage in Danger.

The Paragraph 14 is also regarding the knowledge sharing.

Finally, the Paragraph 15 represents a caveat, a matter of course, but we always need to care the budgetary aspect and that is why it's actually there.

So, I very much hope that our suggestions in Paragraphs 12, 13, 14 and 15 are in line with our experience in this Committee.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chair,

I am sorry but I do not understand what is happening.

We opened the debate on Item 7 and now, we are listening to the amendments on the decision. I think Ambassador of India has the same question. So, we cannot go now on the amendments and to understand the amendments and to see the amendments, but we have to discuss the item by itself. And then, when we finish the debate, we go to the decision, and we will listen to the amendments.

Now, I didn't want to interrupt Ambassador of Japan, but I mean, it is the rule to be followed in the Committee.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

Yes, we are in the debate. We are not examining the draft decision as he's just only, you know, explaining as an illustration method.

So, I hope that's fine with you.

The Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

You know, we have a general statement to make on this item, and I just wanted to take this opportunity, given the situation, because the Ambassador of Japan has actually put forward some explanations as to the Japanese proposed amendments.

I just wanted to ask:

- How do you actually envisage this dialogue between States Parties and the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre?
- What kind of dialogue are we discussing?
- And when you get these Reactive Monitoring machines upon their completion, what kind of interaction will there be?
- Are we talking about enhanced dialogue between the stakeholders in the process?

I think the process needs clarification.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I will pass the floor to Japan to respond to your question.

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes, Mr. Chair,

I am happy to do it, but I just wanted to make quite clear that we can do this in regard to the individual paragraphs at a later stage, because I don't want to be seen as blocking general statements.

So, I'm in your hands, if you want me to respond to the Russian Delegation right now, I'm happy to do it, but otherwise, we can probably do it later.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I would like to ask the Russian Delegation if you would like to hear the response now or while we examine the draft decision.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Simply, it seemed to us that it would be possible to do this afterwards, but we'd rather discuss the amendments when we're discussing the decision, please, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving India the floor.

As my Ambassador pointed out, we need to initiate the discussion regarding the Item 7 now that the Items 7A and 7B have been discussed.

Mr. Chair,

This year was unprecedented as the World Heritage Committee had to examine nearly 260 states of conservation reports, including 55 inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger. The SOC reporting is a useful tool, once a property is declared as World Heritage, to review not only the state of conservation but any management issues or challenges that may potentially impact the Outstanding Universal Value of a property. From time to time, such a reporting is important as it leads to a concerted effort of the concerned State Party, the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the associated communities and stakeholders to safeguard its OUV.

Mr. Chair,

We have reviewed the report provided by the World Heritage Centre and appreciate the need to improve the perception, as they have mentioned, related to the List of World Heritage in Danger and various recommendations given to achieve that. We have noted that the principal causes affecting the properties, notably the development pressures, illegal activities, tourism, climate change, mining and gas exploitation and exploration that need to be

addressed. These are serious concerns that are raised from time to time for World Heritage properties, no matter which part of the world are they located in. India understands fully the impact of these threats to the World Heritage properties and welcomes the efforts of the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies to resolve them. However, we would also request them to be mindful of the legitimate concerns of the States Parties who have their duty to provide better facilities or sustainable solutions to their citizens.

Surely raising this vital issue here is not to indicate any compromise on the OUV of a property to be accepted by the World Heritage Committee, it is to jointly work out a solution in consultation with the State Party or, if we may say so, a middle path that satisfies everyone and, most important, ensures that there is no negative impact on the attributes or the authenticity/integrity of the property.

Many issues or threats as identified by the Advisory Bodies, if left unresolved for a long time, may lead to it being pushed into the List of World Heritage in Danger. We agree that it should not be considered as a punitive measure, as it allows the State Party to address all negative impacts in a given timeframe.

India, however, realizes that often States Parties are not given enough time to manage the reversal of these impacts, of these threats, and recommendations are given in haste to push a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This, we think, can be counterproductive. We believe in allowing sufficient time to be given to a State Party to resolve these issues.

Last, Mr. Chair,

India would also like to highlight the concerns raised by many several States Parties, including India, related to third-party information that often misrepresents and misinforms and unnecessarily leads to the seeking of a SOC report. We realize it is often an unnecessary strain on the resources and time. We understand the Para 174 of the Operational Guidelines, wherein the said information is to be forwarded to the State Party, but in reality, it is akin to seeking a SOC of the State Party. We, therefore, request the World Heritage Centre to be more judicious in this regard.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman requested the floor.

The Delegation of Oman:

I did before, but I think now we are coming to the normal process because we were in confusion. Really it was confusion. But now, we are coming for the statements and that is appreciated.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

Is there anyone who would like to take the floor regarding this item?

Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In a section of the report, there's some information on community management. Russia has a number of sites that could fall into this section, and some of them belong to the Russian Orthodox Church. Now, these sites have a spiritual value, and some of them belong to World Heritage, including a monastery in Moscow, which last year will be celebrating its 500-year anniversary. Now, the main users of this site are the Russian Orthodox Church and the monk community. Now, there's a UNESCO Initiative in this area focusing on religious and spiritual heritage, Sites of Religious Interest, and there can be State Programmes in order to develop these sites.

Since 2019, we've put in place an initiative, but we've seen some reductions in similar initiatives due to the pandemic. Indeed, religious worshippers have been vulnerable to factors such as pandemics. However, we wish to recommence work in this area given that there are a large number of threats and challenges faced by religious sites and religious communities at the current time.

The World Heritage Centre, we hope, will be active in developing this kind of work.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Excellency.

I just want to emphasize about two points that we raised during previous discussions, and which might improve the work of this Committee, and that is most of the file and discussion were around about lack of communication and late of reporting, and this is very important.

What I am saying is not undermining the efforts of the World Heritage Centre as well as the Advisory Body, but I think we need to take more measures in submitting the report earlier that enable the Member States to read the report.

And second, I think to dialogue. I think we need to discuss the report with Member States before we submit any final decision about any site or about any issue. This is very important because most of the discussion is raised because of this. So, I would like, this is only to remind ourselves about the discussion raised.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

I'll pass the floor to the Secretariat to respond to your inquiry, Your Excellency.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je voudrais d'abord remercier les différents membres du Comité qui ont pris la parole sur ces questions autour de l'état de conservation.

Vous avez tout à fait raison. Cette année, comme on l'a dit, est exceptionnelle puisque vous avez examiné 263 états de conservation, ce qui a demandé une mobilisation et un travail énorme, très important, de la part du Secrétariat pour préparer ces rapports, pour les mettre à jour avec tous les rapports, les toutes les informations que vous nous avez fournies. Et je voudrais aussi dire que la réunion extraordinaire a décidé de cette réunion, comme vous le savez en fin janvier, et donc le Secrétariat a travaillé sans relâche pour pouvoir vous fournir les documents à temps, et vous vous souviendrez que certains documents ont d'ailleurs même été fournis plus de six semaines avant le début de cette réunion, donc en avance des dispositions et des Orientations, pour vous permettre de commencer à travailler avant le mois d'août; et nous allons continuer à faire ces efforts.

La dernière information, je voulais dire aussi, c'est que dans les conditions que vous savez, nous sortons du COVID, la disponibilité des experts, votre disponibilité et tout cela a fait que certaines missions ont été organisées un peu tardivement, ce qui, bien sûr, ne nous a pas permis de vous rendre certains derniers rapports à temps parce qu'il fallait que ces informations puissent être intégrées, comme, par exemple, la mission à Kasubi, qui était importante, et d'autres missions qui étaient importantes, que vous avez appréciées puisque vous avez décidé de retirer les tombes royales de la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril.

Donc, le Secrétariat va continuer à mettre tous ces efforts pour vous fournir effectivement non seulement des rapports à temps, mais aussi des rapports qui vous permettent de véritablement bien travailler comme nous essayons de le faire.

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Director. Oman.

Russia, point of order.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair, for giving us the floor.

I simply wanted to draw attention, the attention of the Secretariat to the following.

We have been listening to the interpretation. There was a mistake with respect to need to step up work with respect to protection of religious heritage. I actually gave a question rather than expressing a hope. I asked which Centres, Heritage Centres, will be focusing on this area.

So, it was a question, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Mr. Director,

You may have the floor to respond to the question addressed by the Russian Federation.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

Sur cette question particulière, comme vous le savez, le Comité avait pris effectivement une décision par rapport au programme sur les sites religieux du patrimoine mondial de continuer ce travail, mais de manière beaucoup plus intégrée dans le travail et dans les activités. Et ce travail va continuer, et c'est bien dans ce cadre que nous avons lancé le programme d'activités avec, par exemple, l'Arménie, qui s'est impliquée, qui a monté un programme très important, comme nous l'avons entendu au cours du débat, dans la région. Et cette question va continuer à être prise en compte par le Comité du patrimoine mondial, bien sûr.

Vous nous avez encouragés aussi à continuer à essayer de faire un travail transversal qui prenne en compte aussi le rôle des autres conventions. La question du patrimoine religieux continuera à être prise en compte effectivement dans le travail du Comité. En même temps, nous avons des programmes comme le Patrimoine pour la paix, qui sont des programmes qui ont été adoptés par les autres conventions, notamment la Convention de..., le Deuxième Protocole, et dans le cadre de ce programme aussi, nous allons créer des passerelles pour travailler ensemble et vous faire effectivement, dans le rapport des activités, le point sur toutes nos actions. Et c'est bien ce que nous avons exprimé dans le Document 5A, qui est le rapport du Secrétariat.

Donc, c'est vous dire que le Secteur de la culture, et le Sous-Directeur général est là pour, peut-être, pour vous apporter plus de clarifications et le préciser, nous allons continuer à travailler effectivement en synergie entre toutes les conventions, mais les questions liées au patrimoine mondial seront traitées bien sûr par le Centre du patrimoine mondial à cet effet.

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Director. So, I will go back to Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Only, I want to reply to my dear friend and colleague, Lazare.

If someone knows your work and the hectic work, and the most difficult, is myself, and therefore, I was not criticizing, I appreciate you.

What I am saying that because of the discussion today, and we know the period that it has passed, I said for the future, we hope that the reports can be submitted earlier and for dialogue. Otherwise, I mean, I do appreciate because I know the work, I know all the hectic work and also the shortage in the expertise, etc.

So, thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. *Dawlat Qatar*.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to share with you simply our congratulations for the efforts that you have made. We have experienced some exceptional, difficult circumstances, which we hope are behind us, and we would like to commend the efforts made by the World Heritage Centre.

With respect to the report submitted by States Parties, we would like to underscore that it is important for us to have constructive dialogue between States Parties, on the one hand, and the Advisory Bodies, on the other hand, as well as, of course, with the World Heritage Centre. Dialogue needs to be based on our shared values. It must also be based on established facts, on proof, and communication needs to be continuous so that everybody has access to all the necessary information.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, I see no more interventions from the floor.

It seems that the debate is over today, and the discussion is over.

Nigeria, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Nigeria would like to express its support for the amendments to the draft decision on this item.

While we appreciate the work of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, we, indeed, believe in the viewpoints of the State Party of Japan, particularly on the need to encourage more collaborative consultation between States Parties, Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre before state of the conservation reports are published.

We trust in the Committee to adopt the DR as amended.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

So, I see no more interventions or requests from the floor. Then, what I would suggest is we stop today here, and we resume our work tomorrow morning, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Secretariat if they have any announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Just to remind everyone that, tonight, there will be a side event which will start at 6:15, organized by UNESCO and IUCN, on "How to leverage World Heritage to meet the Biodiversity Challenge of the Decade", and this will take place in the Rock Art Room.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like also to remind you that the Bureau will take place tomorrow at 9:30, and see you tomorrow. *[gavel]*

The meeting rose at 5:40 pm. // La séance a été levée à 17h40.

SIXTH DAY
Saturday, 16 September 2023
TENTH PLENARY MEETING
10:22 am – 12:51 am
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

SIXIÈME JOUR
Samedi 16 septembre 2023
DIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h22 – 12h51
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

So, please, be seated, my dear colleagues,

Please note that the Bureau, at its sixth meeting this morning, recommended the Plenary that considering that we have now concluded the examination of our Agenda Items 7A and 7B as well as the debate on general Item 7, and as indicated in the Bureau, the state of the Plenary yesterday and in the interest of time, we will advance the examination of the following Items to this morning:

- General Item 8 related to the nomination process. This is only the general discussion on Document 45.COM/8, which will remain open until the 24 September for the adoption of the draft decision. This does not concern the examination of the individual nomination files, which will only start today in the afternoon, as scheduled.

After the discussion on the general Item 8, we will examine the subsequent Sub-items in the following order:

- Item 8A on Tentative Lists;
- Item 8D on clarification of boundaries areas by States Parties;
- Item 8E on review and approval of respective Statements of OUV; to be followed by
- Item 9A on the Upstream Process.

Also, in this afternoon, we will start the examination of Item 8B on the nominations of sites on the World Heritage List at 3:00 pm. For some of the nominations of cultural sites recommended for inscription, the presentation by ICOMOS will be delivered through a pre-recorded video. Furthermore, I would like to recall that the concerning Item 8B, after we have completed the examination of the nominations, we will deal with the 22 minor boundary modifications, and after a bit of time, management of those minor boundary modifications that are recommended for approval, we will go straight to the related draft decisions without presentation.

I also wish to inform you that we received a request from the State Party of France to move the timing for the examination of its nomination, "Mount Pelée", to today, in the end of the afternoon to allow all representatives to attend.

Thank you.

Japan, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Since we are not a member of the Bureau, we were faced with a little bit unexpected situation.

I'm talking about Item 7, and we have made a proposal. We explained the proposal yesterday, and those are the things that we are talking about. Originally this particular item was scheduled earlier at that time. And then, we collectively made a decision to postpone this item until Saturday morning. And at that time, we were told that we have to start Item 8 discussions from the afternoon, so it would be possible, if we have time, before the end of the morning of Saturday; that was what I heard earlier. And then yesterday, we started our discussions; I explained the DR and, then again, I'm told that this will be postponed to the 24th. I don't think this is fair. We have been talking about this item for quite some time, and we're not allowed to discuss the DR at this stage in time. I don't think it's fair.

Now, I want to know if there is any pressing reason why we cannot do it now. Because originally, Item 8 was scheduled from this afternoon. This morning we were told repeatedly that, if there is time, we can discuss Item 7. That is our proposal. So, I strongly propose that we should have a discussion on this Item 7, that only DR is left and that's the only thing.

On top of that, if I may, you know, yesterday at about 5:20 or 5:25 or around 5:30, I thought we are going to have discussions on the DR and then, all of a sudden, the meeting was closed.

So, I don't understand why we cannot discuss it now. In our eyes, this is not fair.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

So, we have indicated this twice or three times, I believe, before, and there was a consensus and no objections on the proposal to open the discussion on Item 7, but examine the draft decision on the 24th.

But it is the call of the Committee members.

Yes, Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Well, ultimate adoption can take place on the 24th, but the discussions on the deal should take place because I think..., before there was a discussion about this, and Ambassador of Oman was saying that we should have discussions on this issue after 7A and 7B when we still have a fresh memory about the discussions of the conservation files. So, ultimate adoption can take place on the 24th, but discussions about DR should take place here, at this moment in time.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

Very good morning to you.

This is exactly the point we were making in the Bureau this morning, exactly the point. When an Agenda item of the provisional Agenda is adopted, at the beginning of any meeting, the Chair of that meeting has a hammer, and the Chair hits that hammer. That hammer is sacred. Once the Chair rules, so be it.

It is our position that officers from India come on a Sanction Order based on Agenda items. Yesterday morning, we were informed certain Agenda items were being shuffled. Today morning again, we are informed certain Agenda items are being shuffled.

Excellency,

It is my humble request. We should put a stop to this shuffling. And with that, I am in complete agreement with the Ambassador of Japan. Once we follow an Agenda, it should be followed unless, as I said in the Bureau also, unless there is an emergency; and people in the Bureau, they said they did not understand what I said. Well, now you understand in front of the whole Committee; the whole Committee is here. The Ambassador of Japan has raised very important point, and India is in complete agreement with the Ambassador of Japan. Once an Agenda, the provisional Agenda, has been accepted, and the Chair has hit the hammer, as much as possible, unless there is an extreme emergency, Excellency, I request you to use your authority. You have the authority as a Chair, and this is leadership. You say: "no more changes", and for which, we will appreciate you, Excellency.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, we have spoken about it twice or three times and we explain it, and also the Secretariat explains it, and also, we inform the Bureau about it. So, there was no change on this matter.

We agreed and there were no objections to open the discussion of Item 7 and move to the examination of the draft decision on the 24th.

Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good morning to all of you Delegates.

We would like to support Mr. Chairman. We consider logically, therefore, that we ought to follow the initial timetable. We had a provisional Agenda, and debates on Agenda Item 7 are open so we can continue discussion on this point. We've decided to discuss the decision on the 24th, so we think we should stick to the initial working timetable simply because that's the usual practice of this Committee.

Also, as the Secretariat has told us, certain issues linked to conservation of property will be discussed during discussion of the nomination process. That's a separate Agenda item.

We also have some experts from Russia who are planning to take part in the discussion of the decision, and these people have not yet, unfortunately, been able to join us in Riyadh.

So, we would really ask you, Mr. Chairman, please, to stick to the initial timetable and to focus on the decision on the 24th.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good morning to all dear colleagues.

Our Delegation would also like to support the proposal of the Distinguished Ambassador of Japan. We deem fair that we complete only the discussion, but that we complete the discussion we started yesterday. As you mentioned, it seems that we are ahead of our schedule and there is enough time in the morning. So, we believe it's very fair that we continue with the discussion with Member States to express their opinion on this very important item, and then, at a later stage, on 24 September, we examine the draft decision.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to concur with the Ambassadors of Japan and India and others. I think we need to start the discussion and then decision to be discussed at the end, on the 24th. That's what we have agreed, and I cannot understand why we are postponing this.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

It seems like we have a misunderstanding here.

We opened the discussion yesterday. We opened the discussion and the floor to the Delegate of Japan, and then, no one took the floor so that we left the session earlier yesterday. So, the session was open for debate and for discussion, and we agreed on the examination of the draft decision on the 24th. So, we had no interventions yesterday or comments.

So, I think like we have a misunderstanding about what are we doing now. And we explained it a couple of times and we had no objections on this matter. So, the discussion on Item 7 took place yesterday after we completed the examination of Items 7A and 7B, and then, we opened the general discussion on Item 7.

You may have the floor, Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm sorry. With all due respect, what happened yesterday, because, you know, at the outset I said that I can, of course, respond to the question. I did say that we are happy to explain our DR, but it can come later. And then, you gave me the floor, so, I explained that was followed by other more general interventions. Now, at that time, there was a kind of understanding that general statements should take place at this moment in time, and come to the deal at a later stage. And what my understanding is, what you are asking for was whether there was any general statement to make on this item, so nobody wanted to take the floor after that. We did not know. We thought after the general debate, because we had around 30 minutes before the closure of the date, we thought that there will be a discussion on the deal immediately after that, even if we didn't say that. The general understanding was this was open for general debate, general debate, and then there was no general remarks. So, I thought there was

going to be a discussion on the DR. And then, all of a sudden, we were told: "Okay, this is the end of the meeting today, leaving 30 minutes". And then, I remember you said: "We are going to resume the discussions tomorrow". So, I thought the discussions on DR will take place tomorrow. That was the general understanding. All of a sudden, this morning in the Bureau, it seems that this suggestion was there, but we are not a member of the Bureau, we are not allowed to speak. Is this fair?

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

So, State Members and Observers, they can attend the Bureau as well and they can participate, and they can take place. So, it's not only exclusive for the Bureau members.

Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't know whether this is correct, but a point of correction.

I recall Nigeria took the floor because you made a statement that nobody took the floor. Nigeria took the floor and Nigeria was the last to speak. And we agreed that we continue with the discussion this morning.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

I would like to pass the floor to the ADG.

Le Sous-Directeur général pour la Culture :

Si vous me permettez, comme ça, on peut continuer le travail.

Il y a une petite confusion. Hier, effectivement, le Président a donné la parole pour un débat. Le Japon a parlé, l'Inde a parlé, Oman a parlé, le Nigéria a parlé, je m'en rappelle de mémoire. Il vous a demandé s'il y avait encore des prises de parole. Personne du Comité n'a levé sa plaque. Donc, on a compris que vous ne vouliez plus avoir de dialogue. Et ce que nous avons compris, apparemment, c'est que la décision, le DR, vous vouliez le voir le 24. C'est bien cela qu'on avait tous compris, à moins qu'on ait compris des choses différentes.

Là, ce que l'ambassadeur du Japon propose, c'est qu'on voie la DR, mais c'est autre chose. Si vous voulez faire cela, vous êtes aujourd'hui autorisés de faire ce que vous voulez, donc c'est à vous de nous dire ce que veulent la majorité. Soit on revient à analyser la DR, soit on le voit le 24. C'est comme vous voulez, mais ne dites pas qu'..., il y a eu l'espace pour le débat hier et on a dû suspendre. Le Président a suspendu 25 minutes avant la fin de l'heure signalée parce que personne ne voulait prendre la parole.

Donc, c'est à vous aujourd'hui de nous dire ce que vous voulez. Nous, on est dans vos mains, mais aucune décision n'a été changée. On a suivi ce que vous nous avez demandé. Voilà.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Sorry to come back.

No, I have no disagreement with what Mr. ADG said.

Having said that, I want to have a clarification because, if I'm not mistaken, Mr. Chair, did you say that no members of the Bureau can participate and say something. I thought this was not allowed. That's why nobody from our Delegation anything. Is it allowed? That's the point of clarification.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

I would like to pass the floor to the Rapporteur for some clarifications.

I'll give the floor to the Legal Advisor.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

My apologies. I did not understand that the question was addressed to me.

Mr. Chair, contrary to other Bodies, one of the particularities of this Committee is that the sessions of the Bureau, the meetings of the Bureau, are open to the other members of the Committee in particular, but also to other, to the Advisory Bodies, among others.

In that context, I do confirm, for future reference, that members of the Committee are able to attend the Bureau sessions and that they are able to take the floor. As a matter of fact, in the past few days, we had several instances in which members of the Committee..., this morning, the Distinguished Ambassador from India refers to the fact that he did take the floor in this morning's meeting; in prior meetings during this session, a State Party, if I remember correctly, Palestine, for example, took the floor. The process is the same one as in the Committee, that is that, first, the members of the Bureau speak, and then Observers are able to do so.

This is just a clarification for future reference.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Although we said before that we are ahead of our schedule, I'm afraid we are losing now some valuable time.

From what we heard from the Esteemed colleagues, it's clear to us that there is no consensus on how to proceed. In fact, there has been a misunderstanding concerning some Member States yesterday, including Greece; we wanted to make a general statement. So, I propose that we can reschedule perhaps our programme this morning and have only 15- or 30-minutes discussion on a general debate, and then proceed on the 24th with the examination of the DR.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

I would like to thank the Legal Advisor. As usual, he has made comments for future reference, which is very helpful. And I confirm that in the Bureau today, the State Party of India did sit, but we sat in a place where it was earmarked for Observers. And because we are also not a Bureau member, when we sat as Observers, we do not have a right to speak unless we take permission from the Chair, and the Chair mentioned that, first, the Bureau members would speak, and then, the Chair ruled that since we had requested the floor, the Chair was gracious enough to give us the floor, and we mentioned our reservations regarding the shuffling of the Agenda items. We still hold that the Agenda items are sacrosanct; once the hammer of the Chair hits, they should not be shuffled unless there is an emergency.

This is our position.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Okay, so now, since we have the proposal from Greece that we resume the discussion on general Item 7, and also, maybe, we can also follow by the proposal of Japan is to discuss the proposed draft decision, and then, maybe, we formally adopt a draft decision on the 24th if that is okay with everyone.

Point of order, Russia.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair.

Perhaps, I was not correct to the interpreted...

What I wanted to say is that we can continue to discuss any issues, any matters relating to the essence of Agenda item, the Agenda item linked to the state of conservation of properties. But after this discussion, we should then, I think, move on to looking at the text of the decision on the 24th. So, at that point, we'll look at all the amendments

that have been put forward. But as I said, we can continue, if we want, to discuss the essence of any changes to our system of Reactive Monitoring and so on, any general topics, we're open to that before the 24th. So, we support what Japan is saying. But simply again let me underscore...

Excuse me, I'm told that the interpretation wasn't correct. Let me repeat myself.

The Japanese Delegation suggested that we discuss the Reactive Monitoring mission, and that there might be discussion between the Secretariat, the Advisory Bodies and the Delegates, and the World Heritage Centre. Now, we support the idea and the proposal of having this dialogue, as expressed by the Japanese Delegation, but we would like to draw attention to the fact that the text of the decision should be discussed after, after we have closed this Agenda item on the nomination process. Once again, Delegates, we have experts coming to Riyadh who would also like to make some proposals; they have some suggested amendments for the draft decision. Consequently, we would suggest that we look at the draft decision on the 24 September because, as per the Agenda, the discussion of this decision was planned for the 24th, that's Saturday, the 24th. This means that up until the 23rd, any delegates may table amendments to the draft decision.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

No, I think we have a middle ground here. The point here is we want to discuss the DR because we have already heard a lot of general statements. We have to discuss the DR, and this DR has considerable support. I have actually spoken to many Delegations, and this has considerable support. But as I said, we are very open to any amendments.

Now, what I would suggest is we should have discussions on the DR now, but we don't have to close it, and if the Russian Delegation wants to come up with the amendment at the latest, that's fine. We have no substantive disagreement with the Russian Delegation. The point here, we have time. We have time. Why don't we discuss the DR now? But as the Russian Delegation suggested, we don't have to have a complete close on the discussions. But this discussion, I think, is very important because this is about the dialogue. This is essentially about the dialogue between among the concerned Parties, and this is very pertinent to the issues that we have discussed in relation to the conservation files earlier yesterday and the day before yesterday.

So, it's worth having discussions and worth hearing views from the Delegations, but as the Russian Delegation suggested, we are still open to amendments up until the 24th.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

I would like once again to make this clear. It seems that understanding is emerging here on the Committee. The Delegations would like to discuss right now Agenda Item 7, that's the general Agenda Item 7, because we have time to do so. However, if we start examining the decision, then we'll lose some time, now. Why? That's because even if we do look at the textual amendments that have been tabled by Japan, we won't be able to adopt them at this stage. The Chair won't be able to confirm this decision because the decision remains open until 24 September. Consequently, up until the 23 September, should any Committee members wish to table amendments, they may do so. That means that on the 24th, we would then be looking again at the same decision. So, we would be losing time. We'd be looking at the same draft decision two times.

Now, I do understand the wish of the Ambassador of Japan to discuss his amendment, his proposal, but we have already discussed it to some extent. Japan has the opportunity to table amendments. Many Delegations, including my own, have supported some amendments. We have supported the idea set out in the amendments. Is that right? However, the state of conservation and issues relating to the state of conservation will lead to discussion and should be discussed during discussion of nominations. Consequently, we would be considering the same horizontal, so to speak, issues, and these might be reflected in the decision on the 24th on Agenda Item 7. So, at the moment, we don't know whether issues will or will not arise. We don't know whether there might be some crossovers that can be discussed in a single discussion. We won't know that until the 21st. Consequently, we support Greece's proposal. If there are countries who would like to get involved in debates now, if they'd like to express any opinions as to the general Monitoring system, including with respect to the Japanese amendment to improve that system, then that's absolutely acceptable. We have time to do so, but we can't have a look at a textual decision at this stage, because

we're still waiting for our experts to fly in, and they wish to make a positive contribution to our discussion, just like Japan's contribution.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Japan, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Mr. Chair,

I'm really sorry to come back again.

You know, my proposal, as I said, is to discuss the decision, but we don't have to close it now. You know the reason; I have been chairing meetings a number of times before. When you start discussing the DR, there will be a lot of comments, a lot of comments, and those comments, oftentimes those comments are supporting the contents of the DR. But I think this is an important issue. I think everybody has to speak. So, in that case, it will take considerable time. So, if we have discussions on the DR now, even if we cannot close it now, if we have a discussion on the DR now, I think people understand the positions of each other and we don't have to repeat it again on the 24th. You know, I don't think this item is too controversial, but nevertheless, because of the importance of this item, I think there will be a number of interventions. So, why don't we do it when we have time? I'm not saying that you should hammer it to close the discussions, but people should be given the floor, talk about what they think about those amendments. This process takes quite a long time and that is why we suggest we do it right now. But I understand that Russian expert is coming later date, so they may want to propose further amendments. That's fine. It may not take such a long time if the discussion is only about the specific amendment.

But, you know, the discussions on those items, I'm sure, will take certain amount of time. Why don't we make the best use of time?

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Excellency.

So, Russia, you have anything to add?

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair.

I still don't understand where the logic is here in what the Distinguished Ambassador of Japan is saying. Even if the Committee were to look at examination of the text, even that goes against what we decided earlier, and it goes against the initial Timetable. And by the way, the Delegates all organized their visit to Riyadh on the basis of that Timetable. Even if we were to discuss the amendments at this stage, they could not be closed at this stage because, as I have said, on the 24th, we have formally the right to make any amendments to the text that we would like to make, so why double up? Why come back to the same discussion twice? As I have said, we have experts who are not yet with us, and they have some positive contributions to make. Just like the experts of any other Delegation of a Committee member. So, it seems to me that, on the whole, broadly speaking, the Japanese amendments are positive. They are useful but, at this stage, we cannot complete drafting them because, likewise, the Ambassador of Japan cannot, at this stage, predict how the debates on nominations will go. We do not know what questions different Delegations will raise, and the Ambassador cannot know, therefore, what other Delegations will wish to add to the text. So, why waste time today at this stage? That is the point I cannot understand. Why not have the discussion later? We're simply wasting time already, and now we are discussing this issue that will be discussing again later in any case. So that is unfortunate, I feel. I think that we should stick to the Timetable as discussed by the Bureau, and that Timetable was approved by the Electoral Groups, and then, on the 24th, we will be able to debate all the amendments that we wish to make. We have time to do so; so, dear Delegates, I would invite you to support the initially approved Timetable and if any delegate would like to take the floor on the general essence of the Japanese amendments, then please do so. We are also willing to contribute to that discussion, but we do feel that the text on the screen, the text of that draft decision, should be on the screen on the 24th for discussion, as previously decided.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm afraid the time is evaporating. Since I submitted our proposal to give this general debate, at least half an hour has elapsed, and I don't feel that the majority of Member States are against having a half an hour discussion on this item. Some of them would like to make a general presentation or general remarks on it. Some of them would be also ready to go more in depth, fully understanding the arguments of the Russian Delegation that their experts are not present. But some other Member States have their experts here. So, we could start the discussion, put a time limit to it for today, and then continue and conclude it on the 24th.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

Now, let me make a last try.

If the Russian Delegation does not oppose for me to propose that DR is there to explain what it is and want to hear views from other Delegations, that's fine.

If they oppose the showing of the DR all together, I really don't understand why this is the biggest issue of difference between Russia and Japan in this Committee, but why can't we have discussions on the DR? That's something I don't understand. By the way, this decision has nothing to do with the inscription, this is all about conservation.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, it seems like we have a consensus, and the majority would like to resume the opening of the discussion on the general Item 7, and if they have statement and if they have anything to do, also, in response to the proposal of Japan since you have received it. And then, we can allocate... Yes, we can allocate about half an hour about it and then we continue our work. So, this is the thing like it was open from yesterday and I don't know why it was not understood but...

South Africa you may have the floor.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Yes, we wanted to support the proposal by Russia, which is exactly our understanding in terms of what has been discussed and confirmed in terms of the order that we are going to follow.

We are open to a general debate, not necessarily that the decision be opened. Our understanding is that the debate will only be opened on the decision on the 24th.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I hope now we are like at the same page.

So, we will reopen the discussion for about half an hour and the general debate, and then we will resume to our work.

7. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)**The Chairperson:**

So, it seems that we are good.

So now, you requested to resume the discussion, and no one wants to intervene?

Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation welcomes the amendments submitted by Japan.

We firmly believe that their adoption will be substantial to improve communication and exchange of information between the States Parties and the Advisory Bodies in the context of the Reactive Monitoring process. This proposed practice will serve the purpose of more transparency, but also for more efficiency since dialogue and consultations in all stages of the procedure would be beneficial to converging the views and avoiding of misunderstandings.

We would also like to address the question to Japan for more clarifications regarding the implementation of the content of the recommendation provided in Para 15.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

In agreement with our Guidance and also in agreement properly with the points made by the Russian Delegation, can we just have a look at Paragraph 12? Because this is the core of the issue.

I want to make general discussion on the particular paragraph, and then, I would like to hear from other Delegations on the reactions to this particular paragraph.

And also, because Greece referred to Paragraph 15, I can explain why we have it there.

So, can we just have a look at Paragraph 12?

I don't think that is a problem for the Russian Delegation.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, we will just show it just to project and illustrate your point.

Which paragraph you want to refer to, Your Excellency?

The Delegation of Japan:

Paragraph 12.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, you have the floor, now.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

In Paris, when we had discussions with conservation reports, many Delegations were actually talking about the lack of communications. I'm sure that Evaluation Bodies as well as the Secretariat were very busy. But at the same time, some of those conservation reports can have a big impact on the domestic situation in the States Parties concerned.

Now, with that in mind, our proposal essentially has three different things.

But our first proposal is more general. On the conservation report before... This part is very important. Before the publication of the report, the content of the report has to be disclosed to the Member State concerned, and if there is a need, the consultations should take place. This is the first paragraph.

The second paragraph is a little bit different. The second paragraph is if the report of the Evaluation Bodies proposes to put the particular property in the List of World Heritage in Danger, then they have to disclose their opinion before the publication of the report, and then, there is a need for consultations. And in case, the views of the Advisory Bodies and the States Parties do not converge, the point of view of the State Party concerned should be contained as an attachment, as an annex, to this document. That is Paragraph b).

Sub-paragraph c), this applies not to the Evaluation Bodies but to the Secretariat. When the Secretariat paper proposes to put the property in the List of World Property in Danger, in that case, the Centre has to disclose it to the Member State concerned prior to the distribution of the document, and if the State Member's views are different, in that case, those have to be shown in the annex. That is the most important thing.

Paragraph 15, which was asked by Greece. Yes, it is true that financial implications are there. We have had discussions with the Centre on this particular point. One of the caveats shown by the Centre was that they need some budget for this. That means you can't do it for everything. So, we have to take that point into consideration. That's why Paragraph 15 is there.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

So, I may pass the floor to the Secretariat to reflect on some of your comments.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je voudrais remercier M. l'ambassadeur du Japon pour cette explication, ces clarifications.

Je dois dire que nous avons effectivement commencé ce dialogue avant le Comité, tout au long de cette année, et cette question-là a été au centre des discussions lors des différentes rencontres que nous avons eues avec différents membres du Comité.

Mais je voudrais, si vous le permettez, M. le Président, juste rappeler déjà la pratique que nous avons concernant certaines questions qui sont évoquées dans le paragraphe 12 et qui concernent à la fois les missions de suivi réactif que le Comité demande, mais aussi les missions de conseil qui sont demandées par les États parties. Alors, la pratique a toujours été, depuis quelque temps, que la version initiale consolidée des rapports de missions qui sont effectuées par le Centre du patrimoine mondial et les Organisations consultatives soit d'abord partagée avec l'État partie concerné pour recueillir ses erreurs factuelles, pour recueillir son avis de manière à ce que ce ne soit pas une surprise de découvrir le rapport de mission mis en ligne. Parce que vous avez demandé souvent que les rapports de missions soient mis en ligne et avec bien sûr l'accord de l'État partie. C'était une pratique et vous vous souviendrez que vous recevez cette transmission de rapports et nous vous proposons un temps de quinze jours pour nous faire un retour sur le rapport que nous rediscutons et que nous finalisons.

Je crois que l'idée de cet amendement est effectivement d'aller dans ce sens et de le systématiser. Ce qui est tout nouveau, qui est important, qui est rajouté, c'est dans le cas où il y a une proposition d'inscription sur la Liste en péril, c'est à dire qu'en fait ce n'est pas une proposition d'inscription sur la Liste en péril, mais c'est un avis de la mission de dire que le bien visité ait rempli les conditions qui sont inscrites au paragraphe 179 des Orientations.

Ce que le Japon, dans son amendement, demande, c'est qu'un dialogue soit entamé, à ce moment-là, pour que ce soit possible. Alors, ce qu'il faut comprendre, c'est que ce dialogue, effectivement, nous sommes favorables à le mener.

Le paragraphe 15 est un paragraphe, effectivement, qui montre qu'il y a du temps et des ressources nécessaires, qui seront certainement, qui auront un impact sur comment ce dialogue peut être conduit à ce moment-là, pas simplement pour les Organisations consultatives, mais aussi pour le Centre du patrimoine mondial à ce moment-là. Donc, ce dialogue, nous l'avons commencé, vous souhaitez le faire, mais il a des implications, et je voudrais simplement ici le relever.

Alors, M. le Président, vous voudriez peut-être aussi, parce que c'est important, donner la parole aux Organisations consultatives également pour leur avis.

Mais je voudrais conclure en rassurant les membres du Comité que c'est un peu dans cet esprit d'améliorer la transparence, d'améliorer les échanges et le dialogue avec les États membres du Comité et les États parties de la Convention en général que nous avons commencé à améliorer cette manière de procéder à la finalisation des rapports des missions et aux échanges. Ces échanges ont lieu déjà pendant la mission. Ils n'ont pas lieu après, ils ont lieu pendant la mission, avec toutes les rencontres que nous faisons, avec les termes de référence qui sont préparés ensemble avec les États parties concernés et les décisions du Comité, et ils ont lieu parce que vous recevez le rapport et dont vous nous fournissez vos commentaires, justement à ce titre-là.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

I may pass the floor to the Advisory Bodies if they have any reflections on this.

IUCN:

Shukran, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for these discussions.

IUCN seconds the points that have been made by the Secretariat.

As you know, the Advisory Bodies have had many discussions around continuing dialogue. We are available and open and support open dialogue with States Parties and continue to encourage this. As the points have just been made by the Director of the World Heritage Centre around the importance of doing so, this is part of the Reactive Monitoring process, and is also undertaken with the States Parties in question during the missions that are undertaken with our mission experts, and also afterwards.

Perhaps, just one point to raise that one of the most important points as well is, of course, the finalization of documents, including mission reports in preparation for the upcoming Committee session and the state of conservation reporting, is, of course, to ensure a timely finalization of all documents.

So, as we have said, we support open dialogue and exchange, but an important point on this is to ensure that this is able to take place within an appropriate timeframe that does ensure the finalization of documents in time for the preparation for the Committee session.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much, Chair.

ICOMOS agrees with the colleague from IUCN.

As the Director of the Centre mentioned, the amended text resonates in part with current practice. It is hoped that the proposed amendments will provide the mechanisms and the means for further dialogue through the Reactive Monitoring process, which may be beneficial to the information provided to the Committee for its deliberations.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Sorry for my voice.

I don't see any contradiction between what is presented here and what is presented by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body. It is complementing each other and, therefore, I think this is more clear, more precise.

The problem only about the dialogue before taking a decision is that to put a site in the Danger List or accepting it, this is the problem because it is becoming too late. For example, for this Committee, before we came, only two or three days, we got to understand the decision of the Advisory Body and, therefore, dialoguing might give more time and, therefore, the Member State will know what is going on about their files.

So, I think it is complementing each other. I don't see any contradiction.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

Also, we'll get back to the Secretariat.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je pense que je voulais juste rajouter quelque chose qui est très important, c'est à dire que, pour que tout cela puisse être possible de manière encore plus efficace, il faut prendre en compte une nécessaire planification des missions. Mais je voudrais vous assurer ici que la plupart des missions qui sont organisées, quand elles sont organisées dans les temps, avec la disponibilité, bien sûr, de l'État partie, les rapports de mission sont prêts. Alors,

ce qui est important, ce n'est pas simplement les rapports de missions, c'est la communication des documents de travail au Comité du patrimoine mondial. Et la règle est ici de toute façon très claire. Vous commencez à les demander six semaines avant le début de la réunion.

Donc, si cette question est beaucoup plus systématisée, cela voudra dire que les missions qui ne peuvent pas se faire ou qui sont prévues à la dernière minute pourront ne pas avoir lieu parce que, justement, le temps du dialogue n'aura pas été suffisant, peut-être, estimé par vous. C'est pour cela que, peut-être, sur ces questions, puisque vous devez quand même garder les questions qui peuvent arriver aussi en dernière minute, c'est tout à fait normal que cela arrive, donc, lorsque cela est possible et dans les limites des dates butoirs du travail du Comité du patrimoine mondial selon les Orientations, cela pourrait nous permettre de garder cette petite flexibilité qui vous permet à vous de vous organiser pour recevoir des missions parce que, des fois, il y a des missions qui ont été repoussées à la demande des États parties parce que les conditions n'étaient pas réunies, parce que les institutions n'étaient pas disponibles ou vos experts n'étaient pas disponibles.

Donc, ce qui serait bien, c'est de garder toujours cette possibilité de négociation et de préparation de la mission dans l'amendement proposé par le Japon.

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Director. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much.

I don't want to take the floor again, but we have to remind ourselves.

Last meeting Committee, we added one year. When we added that one year, I think it will give a spectrum of time between the Member State and the Advisory Body and the World Heritage Centre.

I think this one year is going to spare more time for discussion. We have to remember this.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you.

I just wanted to clarify our intentions.

We understand there might be some procedural challenges or perhaps time challenges. In our proposal, we are saying that the consultations take place, but those consultations can be done online in the first place. And we can understand the situation where, you know, the views of the State Party concerned, and the Evaluation Body cannot converge. In that case, maybe the report has 1- or 2-page annex explaining the points about the view of the State Party concerns.

So, we have flexibility there. I don't think this is going to take a gigantic time. I also agree that this is an attempt to institutionalize what's going on. Perhaps the only difference is the pure viewpoints of the Member States have to be shown as an annex. That is a little bit new, only in the case of Indonesia listing, but that is a little bit new. But otherwise, essentially this is institutionalization of what is going on. So, you know, you can make use of modern technology to save time for this exercise.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

ADG, you have anything to add to this?

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

Yes, if you allow me.

[interpretation from Spanish] I'll be speaking in Spanish.

I just wanted to make a comment because we've been working on this for a few months now already. Two issues actually.

Firstly, comparing with other conventions, but obviously, you know, most of you, I think, are also part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention, and you know that the description of elements has to be very, very careful avoiding

factual areas, being careful about interpretation issues, be it on the part of States Parties and those reading. I think we've been working a lot on descriptions. And here, we're talking about missions and, in particular, with the World Heritage Convention, as you know, these missions will..., yeah, dialogue is everything. We try as much as possible to exchange with Member States and States Parties. We share our reports with them just so as to make sure that if they have any further contributions, we can incorporate those.

Now, when it comes to the heritage per se, or things that are proposed to be put forward as nomination files for inclusion on the List, the proposals from the Secretariat actually represent a big step forward. I think the Advisory Bodies and Secretariat have worked very hard on that. But what is also useful is that when we hold these discussions here within the Committee itself, it's important to have all of the relevant information for making a decision so that it's going to be as useful as possible when it comes to safeguarding a property. That's why sometimes, we do have annex documents, and sometimes, the State Party has to give its response to a mission, be it an opinion from the Advisory Body or other. And so, that's why the maximum of information is of vital importance and that's why we are actually very, very pleased to see the contribution made by the Distinguished Delegate of Japan.

Thank you. *[end of interpretation from Spanish]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Allow me first to welcome the proposal made by the Distinguished Ambassador of Japan, who believes it will increase the dialogue between Member States and Advisory Bodies and will also enhance the ongoing efforts by the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies to increase the transparency and efficiency within the framework of the Reactive Monitoring process.

We acknowledged, of course, the efforts undertaken by the Secretariat and the World Heritage Centre, but we also noted the delay in transmitting mission reports. In some cases, I would like to ask the average timeframe to present them.

We also need to discuss the financial repercussions. I understand that Paragraph 15, it's not in front of me right now, but I think it would be useful as well to discuss them.

Thank you very much. Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

Director, you may have the floor to reflect on this matter.

Egypt, the mic.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

Je voudrais juste remercier le Distingué ambassadeur de l'Égypte pour sa question.

Dans la pratique, vous savez que les missions de suivi réactif ou des missions de conseil, comme l'a dit le Sous-Directeur général, sont des missions d'experts. Alors, ces missions d'experts s'appuient sur des termes de référence que nous avons convenus et sur les documents de travail que vous mettez à notre disposition. Ce qui nous permet de préparer efficacement la mission et d'avoir une programmation de la mission dans un temps très court, puisqu'il faut rationaliser les questions financières également pour que les missions ne restent pas longtemps sur le terrain. Et ensuite, nous commençons à rédiger le rapport et, s'il nous manque des informations, nous échangeons avec vos points focaux.

Donc, nous nous donnons, d'habitude et de façon très claire, un délai de six à huit semaines pour préparer le rapport, ce qui est un délai pour une préparation d'un rapport assez professionnel avec des recommandations très claires et raisonnables, ce qui permet effectivement de vous le renvoyer. Et vous avez quinze jours pour réagir et nous publions le rapport. Évidemment, il est arrivé des situations particulières où un rapport de mission n'a pas pu être rendu parce que, malheureusement, ça peut être le cas, un expert peut avoir eu un COVID long, ce qui peut rendre les choses très compliquées pour rédiger le rapport, etc., mais ça, ce sont des cas particuliers. Donc nous avons convenu avec les Organisations consultatives dans nos méthodes de travail, ce temps.

Mais cela nécessite aussi que, du côté des États qui accueillent les missions, l'organisation soit faite, que la documentation soit parfaite, que les évaluations d'impacts environnementaux qui sont demandées soient mises à disposition, que tous les documents techniques soient là. Et je voudrais encore revenir sur une question

fondamentale, c'est que tout ce qui peut faciliter ce dialogue en amont, pas simplement après le rapport, est bien sûr la chose la plus importante pour faciliter un accord et, comme l'a dit le Sous-Directeur général, bien sûr, c'est important d'avoir l'avis de l'État partie et s'il est important de respecter l'avis technique d'experts, d'expertise des Organisations consultatives et du Secrétariat et, à ce moment-là, un avis de l'État partie sur les recommandations ou sur la mission peut être partagé et mis aussi à la disposition des membres du Comité lorsque le rapport de mission est mis à disposition, une fois qu'il a été finalisé et par les deux Parties.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Director. Thailand, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think our Delegation concurs that the dialogue between the special Advisory Bodies and the State Party is extremely important in this endeavour to conserve the preservation of the Heritage site.

So, we would like to concur with the proposal by Japan to have the draft mission report of the Reactive mission shared with the State Party before its publication, and we would also like to stress that it should be done in a timely manner, as it will ensure and promote expressive report reflecting the reality on the ground, and give enough time for State Party to comment on the report.

The consultation and dialogues will indeed help to State Party and Advisory Bodies to understand each other so that they can work together to advance conservation and protection of the relevant site.

So, with that, we would reserve our position to maybe comment on the wording on the 24 September as we plan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any more interventions?

Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

I have listened carefully to the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies, and they already said that the dialogue is already established, and we know that there is a dialogue between the States Parties, the Centre, the Advisory Bodies, but as it is presented in Paragraph 12.1 and 12.2 by Japan, I feel that this process is very heavy and demands a lot of work from the Secretariat, from the Advisory Bodies, and as you know, Mr. Chair, time is money. So, we have to spend a lot of money on this new process, and I am wondering and I ask questions to the Advisory Bodies and to the Secretariat, if this is not a sort of pushing the Advisory Bodies to change the decision, or we should keep the independence of the Advisory Bodies.

And as Mr. Ottone, the ADG Ottone said, we have also to look to the credibility and the integrity of the Convention.

So, we do prefer, at this stage, we do not support this proposal, and especially, we don't have the budget requested for this process.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Here, we are talking again about dialogue between States Parties and Advisory Bodies, dialogue which, as you will recall, in 2010 really saw quite a big breakdown during the Brasilia meeting when the States Parties were in some ways in a quote/unquote, "rebellious against the Advisory Bodies".

Let us not forget that, from that moment forth, we have been building this ongoing, rich dialogue between States Parties and Advisory Bodies, hand in hand.

Now, it is obvious that the issue of financing is something that we're all very aware of, but, as has been pointed out by our Distinguished ADG, we can't fall into the trap of going in thinking that States Parties are, somehow, able to modify reports that we disagree with. No, whenever these Monitoring missions occur, we have to abide by them. I think this is the strength of the Advisory Bodies that they are able to make these proposals. And if a property is on the Danger List, then you're going to have to make sure that everybody is understanding exactly what the role of these missions are. It's to ensure that we need to make sure that we understand the role of getting things off the List. And that's what happened with the Islands in the Gulf of California for Mexico.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece, have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We listened very carefully to the timeframe mentioned by the Director of the World Heritage Centre, and we would like to remind all Delegates that, in view of next year, and hopefully the normalization of the line of works of our Committee, we will have the next, the 45th session, earlier than this year, in June, in July, meaning that the whole procedure will be affected, and reports of the Advisory Bodies and all the Monitoring process would have to be completed much earlier than this year. So, the time limit is a fact, and we have to work accordingly.

And we would also like to thank the Japanese proposal so as to include in the annex the views of the Advisory Bodies and the State Party concerned in case of a divergence of opinions.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, I will pass the floor to the Secretariat to reflect on some of the comments addressed.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je voudrais, bien sûr, redire déjà ce que j'ai dit et ce qui répondrait à la question de la Distinguée Déléguée de Saint-Vincent.

C'est vrai que le dialogue demande du temps, demande de la disponibilité, et il y a une implication, forcément, en termes de disponibilité, de ressources humaines et du temps. Je l'ai déjà dit, je l'ai rappelé dans ma première intervention, et c'est une question que les membres du Comité devront prendre en considération. Cela dit, le Secrétariat a déjà commencé à faire ce dialogue. Ce qui est marqué dans l'amendement du Japon est que cette question soit poussée un peu plus loin, et notamment pour les questions beaucoup plus critiques où la question de l'inscription sur la Liste en péril peut, par exemple, être mise et est recommandée.

Mais je voulais juste vous dire quelque chose. Vous savez que vous avez défini la date du 1^{er} février pour la soumission de vos rapports sur les états de conservation. Ce que nous avons noté, c'est que, au 1^{er} février, nous recevons 50 % des rapports attendus. Donc, si nous avons tous les rapports au 1^{er} février, c'est à dire 100 % des rapports, nous pouvons entamer un dialogue encore plus efficace, mais si nous avons la moitié des rapports, cela devient difficile. Donc, je crois que c'est aussi quelque chose qu'il faut prendre en considération, parce que cela réduit nécessairement le temps qui peut être nécessaire pour le dialogue en amont, avant la tenue du Comité du patrimoine mondial et pour la préparation des rapports des états de conservation et aussi des projets de décision.

Merci, M. le Président.

Comme la question a été posée d'avoir les avis des trois Organisations consultatives, peut être que vous voudriez aussi, après l'IUCN et l'ICOMOS, donner la parole à l'ICCROM.

Merci beaucoup, Monsieur.

The Chairperson:

Advisory Bodies, any comment on this?

IUCN

Thank you, Chairperson.

I think most of the comments have been made.

I just reiterate that the principal challenges in implementing what, I think, we all share in terms of the intent, will always be about the timelines that are available for timely delivery of reports, and if there is significant extra work, we know that budgets are constrained.

I would like to say that I don't think, although we often have robust exchanges with States Parties, we are always clear that the reports that we are providing are our independent reports by the Advisory Bodies and with the World Heritage Centre. And I think the dialogue process is one which improves both the quality of the work, but also the spirit in which the work that we do in this Convention is done. So, I think we are very comfortable that dialogue, and structured dialogue, is something which is something that helps all of us and helps IUCN to do its work.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS

ICOMOS:

Chair, thank you very much.

I will make a very short comment, and that is simply that it's always preferable to systematize procedures.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to see if ICCROM has anything to do.

ICCROM:

Indeed, thank you, Chair.

We do want to make a short comment.

We don't usually try to intervene on state of conservation, but in this case, obviously it does involve us because we are involved in some of the Reactive Monitoring missions and in the drafting of all of the reports. I just want to support what's been said for the large part.

Obviously, ICCROM is always open to dialogue with the States Parties and in regard to any sites that are in the Reactive Monitoring process or on the state of conservation process.

The things, the two points that I would want to make, and they've been mentioned already, but I want to emphasize them, is it's not a question of desire for dialogue, it's a question of time. And because it is a question of time, I honestly think what we need to do, with all due respect to all Committee members here, we're talking in a very general sense at this point in time, what, I think, we actually need to do is we actually need to sit down very concretely and start working from the moment that you want your report six weeks in advance of the Committee meeting and actually sort of figure out, okay, if it's six weeks that this has to be issued, how much time before do we need that extra report coming from the State Party in case there's a potential Danger Listing, because they need to know that they have a month to draft that? And then, that means that we have to have the dialogue for another month before that. I mean, I think we really need to sit down. I'm a planner by profession. We really need to sit down, and we need to figure out what the planning implications of that are so that we understand, you know, is 1 February still a valid deadline for the SOC reports? Maybe that needs to be moved up in order for us to actually be able to carry this whole process out in a longer fashion.

So, again, my suggestion, at this point in time, is to actually sit down and look at what the implications are from a time point of view, from a practical time point of view. And I'm sure that we can try to figure out what the best solutions are, recognizing that there are always also going to be cases that are a little bit outside the norm.

My final comment, because we've talked about budget implications and there are budget implications, certainly, but there's also human resource implications which are also important for this. You know, ICOMOS has fantastic experts, but it's got a huge membership also, but I mean, the people dealing on oral heritage are only a certain number of people. ICCROM, you know, has a big network, but we're only a certain number of people. And so, we also have to take into account the human resource implications of that, in addition to the budgetary implications of that.

Just to close, I really want to emphasize we are absolutely in favour of dialogue. We are absolutely in favour of working with States Parties in the best way possible. We just want to be practical going forward.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for the wonderful inputs.

So, I see we don't have any more interventions, and I think we had a good amount of time to discuss this, and we had fruitful...

Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I listened carefully to the Advisory Bodies, and I would like to support what has been said by ICCROM.

The process is very heavy and if we want to adopt it now, I think it is impossible because we need a calendar and we need to know exactly the financial implications. It is not a just a proposal to enhance the dialogue. Of course, we are for the dialogue, all of us, we are for the dialogue, but it should be based on information, very clear information on the financial implications, and for also how we can have human resources. ICCROM said that when we receive the reports in February, how we can establish the dialogue?

So please, Mr. Chair, we need..., maybe the Secretariat could provide to us a sort of calendar of financial implications to take a clear decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

Your inquiries are well noted.

So, with your permission, I think we had a good amount of time to discuss this matter. Your Excellency of Japan, I hope you were happy with this, and if you allow me to close the debate and resume to open Item 7..., Item 8, sorry. So, we were going back and forth with Item 7.

8. NOMINATION PROCESS [Opening of the item] // PROCESSUS DE PROPOSITION D'INSCRIPTION [Ouverture du point]

The Chairperson:

Now we go back to Item 8.

So, our Agenda Item 8, devoted to the Nomination Process and to the Draft Decision **45 COM 8**.

I now invite Mr. Alessandro Balsamo, Head of the Nomination Unit of the World Heritage Centre, to briefly present Document 45.COM/8.

Mr. Balsamo, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

Following reflections initiated in 2018, the World Heritage Committee with its Decision **44 COM 8** decided to establish an Open-ended Working Group of States Parties to the Convention, in order to broaden the scope of the reflections on sites of memories of recent conflicts,

The Open-ended Working Group chaired by Ms. Vera Lacoëuilhe, Deputy Permanent Delegate of Saint Lucia, with Ms. Hellen Gichuhi, Deputy Permanent Delegate of Kenya, as Rapporteur and a member of the Bureau along with Austria, Japan, and South Africa met in nine meetings between November 2021 and June 2022.

The Group recommended to the Committee to lift the moratorium on the evaluation of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts and to process nominations of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts submitted by 1 February 2022 and considered complete. The Group also recommended definitions of the terms "recent", "conflict" and "sites of memory" and Guiding Principles for the preparation of nominations of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts. In addition, the Group also recommended the Committee to adopt a Contestation Mechanism for sites of memory included on the Tentative Lists and newly submitted nominations using criterion (vi).

The Committee at its 18th extraordinary session held in UNESCO in January 2023 adopted the recommendations by the Working Group and also decided that for those States Parties which had requested it at the 18th extraordinary session, the examination of their nominations would be included on the Agenda of the present session.

Part 3 of Document 8 deals with four nominations that are in the pipeline but were not evaluated either due to the COVID-19 pandemic or security reasons.

The four nominations are:

- Lake Chad cultural landscape (Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria), submitted in 2020;
- Mt. Kumgang – Diamond Mountain from the Sea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), submitted in 2021;
- Badain Jaran Desert – Towers of Sand and Lakes (China); submitted in 2020;
- Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China (Phase II) (China), submitted in 2022.

Whenever possible the evaluation process for these nominations will be undertaken in accordance with the timeframe foreseen in Paragraph 168 of the Operational Guidelines and their examination will not impinge on national and overall quota of nominations to be examined.

Mr. Chairperson, IUCN would like to complement this presentation.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN, you may have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And with your permission, IUCN's remarks address the section of the Item 8 Document headed "Reflection on nominations under natural criteria".

This element focuses on concern regarding the relatively small number of nominations we see being made under the natural criteria, in spite of the large, identified potential of natural heritage sites to fill important gaps on the World Heritage List and to improve the regional balance of the List. There are many potential sites identified in a series of gap studies developed over the decades by IUCN, related to both biodiversity and geological diversity. Due to the prevailing lack of funds available, such studies have been carried out based only on voluntary contributions since the 2012/2013 biennium, and they've been done in partnership with a range of States Parties and voluntary and philanthropic funding, but with very little investment available for follow up.

It is notable that the potential to support new natural nominations relates to regions that are currently under-represented on the World Heritage List, and this could also then restore the regional balance on the List. So, part of our reflection at the 50th year of the Convention is that there is a need to provide more support to nominations of natural heritage, and we would recommend multi-year action plans for World Heritage in priority regions and with the relevant countries to help globally exceptional natural sites to develop nominations and to build awareness and capacity at all levels. And this is a concrete mean for this Convention to do more to support the newly adopted Global Biodiversity Framework, the blueprint for tackling the extinction crisis that is facing us globally. Such Regional Action Plans would take the action needed to invest in under-represented regions that are most in need of support for natural heritage to build capacity, but also to ensure that the solutions for nominations are matched to sustainable development needs, and to also help build the regional diversity of the Advisory Body networks and the Specialist networks that support this Convention.

Mr. Chair,

The draft decision includes two paragraphs for the consideration of the Committee.

The first relates to encouraging States Parties to make the fullest and effective use of the network of IUCN's regional and global thematic studies when preparing nominations to be submitted, and the second is to call for support towards the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies work and the work of States Parties to implement a series of multiyear Regional Action Plans that could increase the priority that is, supporting regions that are under-represented in natural heritage, and to improve the regional balance of the World Heritage List and fill the important gaps that remain.

Mr. Chair,

We believe this is a highly important issue and there is a need for action, and we commend this decision to the Committee, and we would also welcome further discussions with interested States Parties to carry forward the work proposed.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, dear colleagues,

I would like to inform you that this Item will remain open to take into account the debates and comments or any interventions held under Agenda Items 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D and 8E. The Draft Decision **45 COM 8** will be adopted on 24 September once we have completed the examination of Items 8A through 8E.

So, I would like to see if there are any comments or interventions from the Committee members on this Agenda item.

So, I see no interventions from the Committee members so that we can proceed to the next item.

8A. TENTATIVE LISTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES AS OF 15 APRIL 2023 // LISTES INDICATIVES DES ÉTATS PARTIES SOUMISES AU 15 AVRIL 2023

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We will now proceed with our Agenda Item 8A, devoted to the Tentative Lists. The relevant document is Document 45.COM/8A. This document spans over a 2-year period.

I invite Mr. Alessandro Balsamo again, to briefly present Document 8A.

Mr. Balsamo, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Document 8A presents the Tentative Lists of all States Parties submitted in conformity with the Operational Guidelines, as of 15 April 2023.

In particular:

- Annex 1 presents the overall situation relative to Tentative Lists;
- Annex 2 of Document 8A presents all the new Tentative Lists or additions to existing Tentative Lists which have been submitted by States Parties since the last session of the World Heritage Committee; and
- Annex 3 presents a list of all sites on Tentative Lists received from States Parties, in alphabetical and regional order.

As of 15 April 2023, of the 194 States Parties which had ratified the Convention at that date, because Tuvalu only ratified on 18 May 2023, 186 had submitted Tentative Lists in accordance with the requirements specified in the Operational Guidelines, and 8 States Parties have no sites on their Tentative List. All the nominations submitted for examination in 2023 are included on the Tentative Lists of the States Parties concerned.

Since the preparation of Document 8A for the extended 44th session of the Committee in 2021 up until 15 April last, 41 States Parties have submitted new Tentative Lists or modified existing Lists. The number of properties added to existing Tentative Lists is 105. Currently, in total, we have 1,768 sites on the Tentative Lists.

Draft decision has been included on page 2 of both the English and French version of the document.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'd like to see any comments or interventions from the Committee members.

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have only one question regarding the Tentative List.

For how long can we hold a Tentative List of a country if they are not updating it? This is my question. Is it for how many years? Five, 10, 15? That's my question.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I will pass the floor to the Secretariat to answer this question.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, and thank you for this question, which is very important.

Actually, there is no deadline. The Tentative List can last forever. However, the Operational Guidelines indicate that States Parties are encouraged to update their Tentative List at least every ten years.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do we have any other comments?

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you for the answer.

But don't you think this is because I can see the List is becoming too long? Don't you think we should have a regulation for this, at least ten or 20 years instead of keeping it open and the List going for on, because sometimes it's creating confusion. This is my point of view.

Thank you.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you again for this question.

Of course, this is totally in the hand of the Committee because it is a sovereign right of each State Party to include new sites on the Tentative List, as it is for now, and to remove it as well. The only automatic, let's say, action that we can note on Tentative List is that whenever a site is included and related site is inscribed on the World Heritage List, that entry is removed. Otherwise, we rely on the changes that are proposed by the States Parties. But if the Committee should think and consider that there should be a deadline of ten years or 15 years. This is up to you to decide.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Alessandro. So, I would like to pass the floor to the Director.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Juste pour rajouter ce que mon collègue du Secrétariat vient de vous dire. Nous vous encourageons à l'harmonisation de vos Listes indicatives. Je pense que toutes les études qui ont été réalisées par les Organisations consultatives et par le Secrétariat, mais aussi sur la base des discussions que vous avez eues par le passé pour améliorer la représentativité de la Liste du patrimoine mondial, pour améliorer vos propres choix sur les propositions de dossiers de nomination que vous soumettez, le travail en amont sur cette Liste indicative est important pour que la bonne sélection des sites soit ici importante.

Et là, effectivement, l'ambassadeur d'Oman a tout à fait raison de souligner cette question et c'est pourquoi nous organisons des activités de formation à l'échelle nationale avec vous, puisque beaucoup de pays reçoivent des assistances internationales financières pour ce faire. Mais aussi, nous encourageons à l'organisation des activités régionales d'harmonisation entre les différentes régions des Listes indicatives. Et c'est ce travail qui peut aussi amener à l'amélioration de la représentativité de vos sites sur la Liste indicative. C'est un travail qui est surtout à encourager et à faire pour les régions qui sont les moins représentées aujourd'hui sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, bien sûr, avec votre soutien et votre appui.

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Director. Mali, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

L'établissement de Listes indicatives du patrimoine mondial, leur révision et mise à jour dans l'approche participative, avec l'implication de tous les acteurs, constituent des étapes décisives pour l'inscription des biens culturels sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, comme cela est consigné dans le *Guide pour l'élaboration et la révision des Listes indicatives du patrimoine mondial*.

Cependant, le constat est que bon nombre de biens inscrits sur la Liste indicative prennent assez de temps avant de basculer dans la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Cela est dû surtout au fait que les ressources humaines et

financières sont insuffisantes pour préparer dans les meilleurs délais les dossiers de proposition d'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Aussi, sollicitons-nous auprès du Centre du patrimoine mondial et des Organisations consultatives l'obtention du renforcement de leur appui à l'endroit des pays qui en ont réellement besoin, aux fins de faciliter le passage des biens de la Liste indicative à la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar.*

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

[interpretation from Arabic] Our colleague, the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman, mentioned something very relevant. He mentioned the fact that many properties spend a long time on the Tentative List before being inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Now, perhaps we could try to change this and make our work more efficient, so that properties that have been on the Tentative List for a long time are given a focus so that they can move off the list faster. We could perhaps help States Parties with procedures to move their properties from the Tentative List onto the World Heritage List. Perhaps the Secretariat could make a proposal as to how States Parties might be given some recommendations if they have, for example, had a property on the Tentative List for, say, ten years. Perhaps after that period, some advice could be provided on what the State Party could do so as to change the situation. The State Party could be told what efforts it needs to make so as to have its property inscribed in the World Heritage List. This might also facilitate the work of the Advisory Bodies and Secretariat.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I'll pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to reflect on the last intervention.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

C'est vraiment pour remercier M. l'ambassadeur du Qatar pour son intervention.

Tout à l'heure, mon collègue, dans sa présentation, a bien souligné que les Listes indicatives sont vraiment sous votre responsabilité, mais tout soutien à l'harmonisation et au renforcement du travail autour de ces Listes, à la gestion des sites qui sont sur les Listes indicatives et au renforcement des capacités des experts est bien sûr bienvenu, et je remercie vraiment M. l'ambassadeur du Qatar d'avoir relevé ce point-là.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair, for giving India the floor.

We also believe that putting up a property on the Tentative List is an important step by a State Party to include the sites with a view to put it up for the World Heritage nomination on the World Heritage List in future. It's in a kind of a wish list of any State Party, but what it does is that it allows a State Party to review its national or regional sites that have a potential Outstanding Universal Value. It also gives us, as State Party, an opportunity to actually work on improving the state of conservation and other critical management issues that may crop up before the sites are put on Danger. So, in a way, it's a good exercise.

However, Mr. Chair, that we have 1,768 properties on the Tentative List from 186 States Parties, which means still 9 States Parties haven't had a single site on the Tentative List, and that's a cause of concern which the World Heritage Committee, the Centre, the Advisory Bodies should collectively look at. And this is, we believe, where the gaps begin because of gaps or imbalance, because, you know, herein also lies the issue of the capacity-building whether we are looking at engagement with the local communities, the local Government bodies, the experts from that State Party or from that region, this is where, you know, the matter is of grave concern.

I think that is what the Committee should actually look at.

But before ending, I just wanted to ask a question to the Secretariat that in case of the Tentative List, we understand that for the World Heritage properties, you have a mechanism of a third-party information that the Secretariat receives and it passes on to the concerned State Party. In case of a Tentative List, do we also have a similar mechanism? That is I wanted a clarification.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'll pass the floor to the Secretariat to respond to this matter.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Actually, there is no exactly a procedure that is foreseen in terms of Tentative List for third-party information. However, we esteem that, as soon as a site is included in the Tentative List, indeed, this becomes under the realm of what is the protection of the World Heritage Convention. Therefore, if we have information about any project impinging on that site, we may write to the concerned States Parties to verify that information.

And Mr. Chairperson, if you allow me, I wanted to also add one thing on the question also posed by Qatar, because it is really important to underline and it's an important question, what we do also in terms of the work that we do with Tentative List, the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies. And it's indeed absolutely important because the Tentative Lists are really the root of what happens after in the process. So, we are really attentive to this process. And you may have noticed also the publishing of the *Guidance on Developing and Revising World Heritage Tentative Lists*, which is the expression of this attempt to work with the States Parties to have also more harmonized Tentative Lists. Like the Director was mentioning, the harmonization is extremely important to, then, have also good results in terms of nomination later on in the process.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any more comments or intervention on this item?

So, since there is no more intervention, I, therefore, invite you to proceed with the adoption of the Draft Decision **45 COM 8A**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment on the Draft Decision **45 COM 8A**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments on this regard? I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8A** adopted. *[gavel]*

So, we have a request from the State Party of Palestine. You may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Palestine:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[interpretation from Arabic] It seems that this is a very large room, and perhaps the Secretariat did not see our plate. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

I tried to take the floor after the general debate, after the Committee members but, maybe, I was not visible in any case.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

So, as I mentioned, my intervention is relating to these two items and allow me to revert again to the credibility and to the unbalance on the World Heritage List, not only the World Heritage List regular one, but also the World Heritage List in Danger.

And in this regard, I would like to give you very quickly some statistics. 43% of the sites on the World Heritage List are inscribed by 7% of States Parties, and 20% of sites on the World Heritage List, sorry, are inscribed by 68% by States Parties. You see the disparity? And now for the World Heritage List in Danger, 41% of the sites on this List are located in the Arab region, and 25% in the African region, which means in our region, 66% of the sites in Danger are located in our regions. So, my request in this regard to the Secretariat and the Advisory Body is to give more attention and means, including capacity-building, to help in the implementation of the corrective measures in order to reach the Desired state of conservation and the removal of these sites from the List in Danger.

As for the regular List, we need to have a deep and thorough reflection, and maybe, we can consider giving possibility for some Member States to submit two files per year and others one file per year, and others even less than one file per year. I think that the Committee may consider, if they consider it appropriate, the creation of an Open-ended Working Group to reflect on this matter, and I am confident they will take the right decision.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. So, I'll pass the floor to Armenia.

The Observer Delegation of Armenia :

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to speak before, but I will go now.

The Armenian Delegation would like to draw attention of the Distinguished audience that Azerbaijan has time and again opted to politicize and misuse this cultural platform by levelling unfounded and inaccurate accusations against Armenia in all of its submissions, both for the Tentative List and the World Heritage List. Such behaviour is contrary to the values and principles of our organization.

Furthermore, one of the sites is located near the city of Hadrut in Nagorno-Karabakh, which fell under the control of Azerbaijan in the aftermath of its large-scale aggression unleashed amidst the global pandemic in the fall of 2020. Since then, Azerbaijan has embarked on state-sponsored cultural genocide of the millennia-old Armenian cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh, with numerous documented instances of destruction, desecration, and appropriation of cultural sites.

The satellite imagery of the recent destruction of the Church of Saint Sarkis in Mokhrenis village of the Hadrut region, among others, serves as a striking example of Azerbaijan's disregard not only for the Armenian cultural heritage, but also for the decision of the International Court of Justice of 7 December 2021, which compels that Azerbaijan take all necessary measures to prevent and punish acts of vandalism and desecration affecting Armenian cultural heritage, including, but not limited to, churches and other places of worship, monuments, landmarks, cemeteries and artefacts. On 10 March 2022, the European Parliament passed a resolution condemning Azerbaijan for the destruction of cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh, denouncing Armenophobia in Azerbaijan and advocating for access to international organizations, including UNESCO, to safeguard heritage. However, up until now, Azerbaijan refuses to provide access to the fact-finding mission of UNESCO to Nagorno-Karabakh to draw up an inventory of the most significant cultural assets proposed by the Director-General in November 2020 as a prerequisite for effective protection of the region's heritage, coupled with the inhumane blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Chairperson:

I would like to ask you to conclude, please.

The Observer Delegation of Armenia:

Therefore, Armenia emphasizes the urgent need for the swift deployment of the UNESCO mission to impartially assess the situation on the ground.

I thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Lebanon.

La Délégation du Liban (Observateur) :

M. le Président,

En fait, mon intervention, après avoir écouté les discussions d'aujourd'hui et l'explication concernant les Listes indicatives, concerne ces ateliers que l'UNESCO est en train de prévoir et d'organiser.

Ce que je voudrais dire, c'est que nous avons grandement besoin de ce genre d'ateliers parce que nous avons besoin de renouveler nos ressources humaines, sans même parler des ressources financières, et nous serions très heureux si ces ateliers pouvaient avoir lieu au Liban pour toucher le plus grand nombre de personnes, au lieu que ce soit une personne qui soit envoyée autre part, mais que les ateliers de formation, à tous les niveaux d'ailleurs, Liste indicative, Liste en danger, etc., qui soient organisés au Liban pour toucher le plus grand nombre de ressources humaines au Liban et dans la région arabe, évidemment.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Azerbaijan.

The Observer Delegation of Azerbaijan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, thank you for giving us the floor.

Unfortunately, sorry for taking the floor and to waste the precious time of the Committee, but we are obliged to make this statement and to respond to the Armenian side.

Mr. Chair,

The hypocritic nature of the statement of the Armenian side has no limit. Unfortunately, from the last two statements of the Armenian Delegation, we see that the reason why they are participating in this Committee session is only Azerbaijan, and this is very shameful for this country, as they have nothing to offer to the international community.

This statement, Mr. Chair, is another blatant manifestation of the continuation of the territorial claims of Armenia against Azerbaijan.

During the 30 years of military aggression and occupation of internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan. Armenia subjected Azerbaijani cultural heritage to large-scale destruction, plunder and vandalism. Thousands of cultural objects, including monuments of world and national importance, mosques, temples, exhibits, museums, archaeological sites and libraries were looted and destroyed. 65 out of 67 mosques, Excellencies, were totally destroyed and two remaining were heavily damaged, vandalized and were used as pigsties, in total disrespect to the Muslim world. This is what this country is doing. This act of vandalism, Excellencies, not only took place in the liberated Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, but also in the Armenia itself, in historical Azerbaijani territories of Western Zangazur, Kaphan, Yerevan, Göyçe, ^[inaudible] and Vedi. Armenian Government destroyed all the cultural heritage in these territories, with the one clear aim to wipe out traces of Azerbaijani people living in these territories for centuries. And as we speak now, the historical Azerbaijani Tapabashi quarter in Yerevan, the only area of the historical old town that has survived to this day, is at risk of the same fate.

And at the end, Mr. Chair, I would like to urge Armenia that compliance with international law and good neighbour relations, in particular respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States are the main objectives to which Armenia should finally begin aspiring.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would like to ask all States Parties to maintain a constructive discussion during this session.

8D. CLARIFICATIONS OF PROPERTY BOUNDARIES AND AREAS BY STATES PARTIES // CLARIFICATIONS DES LIMITES ET DES SUPERFICIES DES BIENS PAR LES ÉTATS PARTIES

The Chairperson:

So, we shall now move to our Agenda Item 8D devoted to the issue of the clarifications of property boundaries and areas of States Parties. Please refer to Document 45.COM/8D. This report also spans over a 2-year period.

As you will remember, in line with Decision **18 EXT.COM 3** and Annex [2] of the related document, this Agenda item will be adopted without debate.

I invite Mr. Balsamo, to briefly present Document 8D. Mr. Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Document 8D presents cartographic and geographic information provided by States Parties on the boundary clarifications of World Heritage properties. This document presents information related to maps and geographic

information of properties reviewed and accepted through the Retrospective Inventory project since the last Committee session.

As you know, the Retrospective Inventory was initiated back in 2004 with the purpose of identification and collection of data such as information on boundaries, on serial component parts and areas of World Heritage properties where the required information is missing or is not adequate. It involves an in-depth examination of the nomination dossiers available at the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and IUCN.

Satisfactory boundary clarifications have been submitted for 34 World Heritage properties, all of which are included in this document. To be considered adequate, boundary clarifications must be consistent with the decision of the World Heritage Committee at the time of inscription. Maps also must meet the current technical requirements.

Out of the 1,157 properties analysed, 557 were determined to be subject of clarification. 52% of the properties inscribed have adequate maps with clearly defined boundaries. The remaining 48% of properties are in need of a clarification, and out of these, 5% do not have cartographic information from the time of their inscription. As you can see, great progress continues to be made in clarifying the boundaries of the World Heritage properties, but many remain imprecise or unclear. The World Heritage Centre provides its continuous support to all States Parties in the preparation of boundary clarifications.

Draft decision has been included on page 2 of the English and French versions of the document.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to proceed with the adoption of the Draft Decision **45 COM 8D**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed?

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendments for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8D**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments on this? So, I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8D** adopted. *[gavel]*

8E. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF RETROSPECTIVE STATEMENTS OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE // EXAMEN ET ADOPTION DES DECLARATIONS RETROSPECTIVES DE VALEUR UNIVERSELLE EXCEPTIONNELLE

The Chairperson:

We shall now move to our Agenda Item 8E, Adoption of retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value. Please refer to Document 45.COM/8E. This report also spans over a 2-year period.

As you will remember, in line with Decision **18 EXT.COM 3** and Annex 2 of the related document, this Agenda item will be adopted without debate.

I invite Mr. Balsamo again to briefly present Document 8E. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Document 8E concerns the adoption of 18 retrospective Statements of OUV, for which the review process has been finalized since the last session of the Committee.

Out of the 18 retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value, 7 are from the Arab States region, 2 from the Asia and the Pacific region and 9 from the Europe and North America.

In 2007, the World Heritage Committee requested that Statements of Outstanding Universal Value be drafted and adopted retrospectively for all World Heritage properties inscribed between 1978 and 2006.

Since 2009, the World Heritage Committee adopted 753 retrospective Statements. 38 Statements are still to be finalized and presented to the Committee: 2 in Africa, 5 in Arab States, 9 in Asia and Pacific, 20 in Europe and North America and 2 in Latin America and Caribbean.

A list of the properties for which draft retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value are proposed for adoption is included in the draft decision, and the text of each draft Statement, in the language in which it has been submitted by the State Party, can be found in the Annex to the document.

Once adopted, the retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value will be translated by the World Heritage Centre and made available on its website.

You will find the draft decision on page 1 in both the English and French copies of the document.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I, therefore, now invite you, dear colleagues, to proceed with the adoption of the Draft Decision **45 COM 8E**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

No amendments are received for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8E**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if we have any comment on this. So, I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8E** adopted. *[gavel]*

I would like to ask the Director of the World Heritage Centre for some feedback and reflection on the item just adopted.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

My intervention, here, is to really thank all the States Parties that have submitted their retrospective Statements of OUV.

This is a very important step because it will allow both the Committee members, the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies to monitor in a proper way the state of conservation of your properties. I think it is in line with the discussion that we have had on the Item 7 also.

So, I would really encourage the other States Parties who are still in the process of finalizing their retrospective Statement of OUV to really finalize this work because it will ease the way we appreciate the attributes of your properties, I mean, that justify the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value when we are preparing our report, conducting our missions, and having dialogues with you on some of the issues that your properties are facing on a daily basis.

So, I would really want to encourage you to pay attention to our request to finalize your retrospective Statement of OUV.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, dear Director.

9A. UPSTREAM PROCESS // PROCESSUS EN AMONT

The Chairperson:

Dear Committee members,

The next item on our Agenda, concerns the Upstream Process. Please refer to Document 45.COM/9A. This document spans over a period of 2 years.

As you will also remember, in line with Decision **18 EXT.COM 3** and Annex 2 of the related document, this Agenda item will be adopted without discussion.

I invite Mr. Balsamo, Head of the Nomination Unit of the World Heritage Centre, to briefly present Document 9A. Mr. Balsamo, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Document 9A presents the Progress report on the Upstream Process and the new Upstream Process requests received.

The Committee launched in 2011 an initiative called “Upstream Process”, which aimed to explore options for improving and strengthening the nomination process. The Upstream Process has been incorporated in the Operational Guidelines in 2015.

Its implementation over the first years highlighted a number of challenges in terms of human and financial resources, but also the need for conceptual clarifications of its scope.

In 2018, the Committee approved a revised definition of the Upstream Process proposed by the Ad-hoc Working Group that met in 2018, and requested the Secretariat to integrate it in the Operational Guidelines in the framework of their revision at the 43rd session in 2019.

It is important to emphasize that the application of the Upstream Process approach does not imply that a site would ultimately be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The main aim of the Upstream Process is to, indeed, reduce the number of sites that experience significant problems during the nomination process, and to avoid significant investment in financial and human resources where the proposed sites do not demonstrate potential for justifying Outstanding Universal Value.

Following the publication of the *Guidance on Developing and Revising World Heritage Tentative Lists*, as a first step to address the Upstream Process requests regarding the creation or revision of Tentative Lists, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies are working on the operationalization of this guidance. For this purpose, a toolkit for States Parties and resource persons was developed. This toolkit will be used in the organization of workshops conducted by the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and IUCN about the development and revision of Tentative Lists, contributing to a streamlined and consistent implementation of all Upstream Process requests concerning Tentative Lists.

Concerning the new requests received, by the 31 March 2022 deadline, the World Heritage Centre received seven Upstream Process requests. Annex I of Document 9A shows these requests in order of priority. By the 31 March 2023 deadline, the World Heritage Centre received one request. As only one request was received, no list in order of priority of requests was needed for the 2023.

Annex II of the document presents the list of pending Upstream Process requests received from 2018 to 2023. They are divided by year of submission and object of the advice requested (Tentative Lists or Nominations), and presented in English alphabetical order by State Party.

Finally, we would like to thank the States Parties of Slovenia, Switzerland and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for their financial support to the overall coordination of the Upstream Process.

The draft decision of this item is on page 3 of the English version and on page 4 of the French version of Document 9A.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thank the Secretariat for the report and for all its efforts to make the Upstream Process efficient.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada were among the States Parties that had jointly undertaken on an experimental basis in 2011, an Upstream Pilot Project to prepare a common nomination file, The Grenadines Islands, in close cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and thanks to the Funds-in-Trust of the Netherlands and UNESCO Participation Programme. After almost ten years that included two phases, we are now entering the formal upstream process. We hope not to wait another ten years to finalize the nomination file, especially since the

two States Parties have no site inscribed on the List. The Upstream depends on the availability of the resources and the expertise, and we thank Slovenia, Switzerland and United Kingdom for their contributions to the process.

We call on the Working Group on the budget, which will start its work on 18th, to look in depth on the budget allocated to this end. Of the 38 requests from 2018 to 2023, some are finalized or in progress, others have not yet started. However, we consider that the period of 18 months is too long to receive the outcomes of the Upstream request after the deadline of which it is submitted. We need from the Secretariat a clarification, from the Centre, of course, and maybe Advisory Bodies, about the order of priority for processing requests. Is this linked to the date of submission of the request or applicable according to the Guidelines of the Upstream Process and the reference made to Paragraph 61 c) of the Guidelines, which stipulates, inter alia, that priority is given to States Parties with no sites inscribed on the List?

And we would also like to listen to the Advisory Bodies to know the challenges in the process which need to be addressed.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

India would endorse the remarks made by the Distinguished Delegate of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and we would also like to thank the World Heritage Centre for presenting the report on the implementation of this Upstream Process and the requests, including the main pilot projects since the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee.

We note with satisfaction the overall progress related to this Upstream Process, an effort that has been continuing since 2008. India welcomes and supports the initiative for States Parties being given an opportunity to submit these requests for Upstream advice in case these are needed. This allows for an interaction between a State Party and the Advisory Bodies, and help a State Party seeking assistance to work on their Tentative List augmentation and to seek advice regarding, excuse me, the potential Outstanding Universal Value of a property. This process, as we have noted, has been mainstreamed since 2015 as well.

India has also noted the selected pilot projects and various requests received in this regard. The next year, I and II of the report indicate nearly 40 proposals are still pending. Clearly, it is obligatory on the part of the World Heritage Committee to help the Least Developed Countries, the Low Income and Lower-Middle Income Countries and the Small Island Developing States, following the mechanisms of the Paragraph 61 c) of the Operational Guidelines, since their share of the World Heritage properties is quite low. We complement the efforts being made towards assisting such States Parties to augment their Tentative List and work on their nomination proposals. This is still a work in progress which aims to reduce the gap between the States Parties in terms of number of properties on the World Heritage List.

India requests the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies to keep continuing these efforts.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

After thanking the Secretariat for this report. I have a simple question only regarding no. 4 in the draft resolution there.

What is the relation between Item 4 here, in this draft resolution, and the discussion that we had about limiting the years of the Tentative List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Chair.

I would like just checking.

The debate is open now or without debate. If so, I would like one question.

The Chairperson:

So, we'd like to inform you that I propose this to be adopted without debate, but the Committee members requested the floor.

So, if you have any intervention, you may. Yes.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Firstly, I would like to express my appreciation for the organization of Upstream Process, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS.

I have one question.

We understood that the primary assessment will start from this year. So, the relation between Upstream Process and the primary assessment, what is, how can I say, what is the relationship between the two systems? That's my question.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat and Advisory Bodies to respond to the comments addressed by India, Oman and Japan.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

I will provide the first answer. Then, I think that my colleagues from the Advisory Bodies will also like to speak.

To address also, first of all, Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines, of course, we are doing our best on a daily basis, you know, to work on Upstream Process request. And as I was saying, actually, at the beginning of my presentation, indeed, unfortunately, the implementation of this process highlighted some human and financial constraints, and these are challenges that we are trying to overcome each day. But you can really count on us for doing our best. And we know that this project from Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines is pending since some years, even if a new version has been put forward now and we are actually working on that.

India also was, I think, speaking about the order of priority and also the way we treat this request. Just to recall that the order of priority for the Upstream Process has been decided by the Committee at its 41st session, and it is quite simple because the first priority is given to the revision of Tentative List, and then, we go with the same priority system which is presented in Paragraph 61 of the Operational Guidelines, point c), where, for instance, the States Parties with no properties inscribed on the List are first in the priority system, then those with three properties inscribed. And then we go on with that priority system.

Now the question of Oman, I think, sorry if I repeat it, but our point 4 of the decision is linked to the duration of Tentative List. That's the question? Yes.

So, in point 4 of the decision, we actually talk about the Guidance that has been published on the developing and revising Tentative List. This Guidance is this tool that is supposed really to help States Parties in revising their Tentative List. And indeed, as I was mentioning, actually, with your question before, under the Tentative List item, it could be a tool and it should be the tool that is used by State Party to refresh their Tentative List because this could also be done in conjunction with the Advisory Bodies and the Centre, and it will be extremely important. But again, the only point that we need to take in mind are the challenges in terms of human and financial resources, which, as it has been already underlined, are not really endless for this process.

And the last question was by Japan about the relationship, actually, between the Preliminary Assessment and the Upstream Process. Now, of course, these are two mechanisms that are being considered by the Committee over the years. And actually, the Preliminary Assessment, it has been the result of the success of the Upstream Process. Maybe with the passing of the years, the Upstream Process will just deal with only with the Tentative List revision, because, actually indeed, the Preliminary Assessment is dealing in a systematic way with single sites. Therefore, there will be no need anymore of request for Upstream Process for single sites and we noticed already this trend in the new submissions that we received. But of course, what we can say is that both these mechanisms imply guidance at an early stage but they are different mechanisms because, again, just not talking about the difference that Preliminary Assessment is dealing just with single sites and Upstream Processes is also dealing with revision of Tentative List, but with the Upstream Process, you may have visit to the site, which is not foreseen actually with

the Preliminary Assessment, and there are actually other differences. But the most important, I think, is also in terms of calendar, because with the systematization of the Preliminary Assessment, we have a clear calendar of all the process and when the actions are needed and the submission and deadlines for also receiving the response and the outcome of the Preliminary Assessment review. While for the Upstream Process, this is not the case. So, I think these are the main differences between the two processes.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I see no more comments.

Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chair,

I asked a question about the order of priorities when we submit a request. How? What is the priority in the discussion or evaluation of the Upstream? Is it related to the date of submission, or it is related to Paragraph 61 c) of the Guidelines?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mr. Alessandro.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Yes, indeed, the order of priority is, first, those requests that are put forward for a Tentative List, then the priority system that is foreseen in Paragraph 61 c) of the Operational Guidelines. Along with that, we also have to put together, of course, the date of submission because if we have an outstanding request from 2018 with the same level of priority, it will be prioritized to one that is received one year later.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I hope that answers your request. Is it clear now, Saint Vincent?

I see no more comment.

So, dear colleagues, I therefore invite you to proceed with the adoption of the Draft Decision **45 COM 9A** but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 9A**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no comments and I, therefore, declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 9A** adopted. *[gavel]*

I see also that we have some requests from NGOs to take the floor, but I would like to let them know that they will be given the floor after the adoption of draft decision on the 24th.

Also, I would like to pass the floor to the Director of World Heritage Centre for some general announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Now, we are just asking the Chairperson to clarify this message to the NGOs that he was referring to Item 8, which is still open and will be adopted on the 24th.

So, just to say that now, we'll have two side events, for your information:

- The first one would be at the At-Turaif District Room, and it will be on the "10th Anniversary of Al Zubarah Historical Site", this is organized by Qatar, and this side event will start at 1:30 of course.

- And the second side event will take place in Rock Art Room. It is organized by South Africa and is on "Enhancing Collaboration for Sustainable Management of World Heritage Properties: A Case Study for Lake Saint Lucia Estuary, iSimangaliso Wetland Park World Heritage Site".

So, thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

And then, there are still two others. Sorry, my apologies because there were four, not two.

- The third one is on Al-Ahsa Oasis Room. It will start at 1:30 and it is organized by a WHIPIC, it is on the "Pathway to Advancing Interpretation and Presentation within the World Heritage System".
- And then the fourth one will take place in Hegra Room. This is the Advisory Bodies space. It is organized by the Advisory Bodies. It will start at 1:30 and it's on "Everything you wanted to know about World Heritage Capacity-Building".

So, thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, dear Director.

So, we will resume at 3:00 pm with Item 8B on nominations. *[gavel]*

The meeting rose at 12:51 am. // La séance a été levée à 12h51.

SIXTH DAY
Saturday, 16 September 2023
ELEVENTH PLENARY MEETING
3:14 pm – 6:31 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

SIXIÈME JOUR
Samedi 16 septembre 2023
ONZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h14 – 18h31
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Good afternoon, dear colleagues.

Dear Colleagues,

It is now time for us to consider nominations of properties to the World Heritage List. I would like to recall that the relevant working documents concerning nominations are: 8B, 8B.Corr and 8B.Add.

The Advisory Bodies Evaluations can be found in the information documents:

- ICOMOS: INF.8B1 and INF.8B1.Add
- [IUCN: INF.8B2]

Let me also recall that Document INF.8B3 presents the list of all nominations received by 1 February 2022 and 1 February 2023, including those for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its extended 45th session and foreseen for examination in 2023, and those foreseen for examination at its 46th session in 2024, with the indication of these deemed complete.

Document INF.8B4 and INF.8B4.Add present Factual Errors identified by States Parties in the Advisory Body Evaluation.

I now invite the Secretariat to present these documents and read out the list of nominations for which factual errors notifications have been received and to add some explications.

Mr. Balsamo you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Document 45.COM/INF.8B4 and 45.COM/INF.8B4.Add concern the text of the evaluations and present factual errors notifications by States Parties and the related Advisory Body's replies. The main document was dispatched on 31 July, while the INF.8B4.Add was distributed to you on Tuesday 12 September. I will now read out the list of nominations for which factual errors notifications concerning the related evaluation have been received.

Factual Errors Letters received:

2022 cycle:

1. Iran (Islamic Republic of), Hyrcanian Forests
2. Azerbaijan / Iran (Islamic Republic of), Hyrcanian Forests
3. Congo, Forest Massif of Odzala-Kokoua
4. Viet Nam, Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba [Archipelago]
5. Cambodia, Koh Ker: Archaeological Site of Ancient Lingapura or Chok Gargyar
6. Canada, Tr'ondëk-Klondike
7. Denmark, Viking-Age Ring Fortresses
8. Ethiopia, The Gedeo Cultural landscape
9. Germany, Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt
10. Guatemala, National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj
11. Iran (Islamic Republic of), The Persian Caravanserai
12. Lithuania, Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-19[39]

13. Republic of Korea, Gaya Tumuli
14. Spain, Talayotic Menorca – A cyclopean island odyssey
15. Türkiye, Gordion

Then, for the 2023 cycle, we have received notifications from:

16. Canada, Anticosti
17. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Cold Winter Deserts of Turan
18. Rwanda, Nyungwe National Park
19. Saudi Arabia, 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid
20. Azerbaijan, Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and "Köç Yolu" Transhumance Route
21. France, The Maison Carrée of Nîmes
22. India, Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas
23. Indonesia, The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks
24. Iran, The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh
25. Palestine, Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan
26. Portugal, Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone
27. Russian Federation, Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University
28. Suriname, Jodensavanne Archaeological Site: Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery
29. Thailand, The Ancient Town of Si Thep
30. Türkiye, Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure

Then we have four additional notifications that are included in Document INF.8B4.Add.

31. Italy, Evaporitic Karst and Caves of Northern Apennines
32. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Cold Winter Deserts of Turan
33. Argentina, ESMA Museum and Site of Memory – Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination
34. Rwanda, Memorial sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero

Before the presentation of the concerned nominations by the Advisory Bodies, the Secretariat will announce the related factual error notification received. If the notification of factual errors has an impact on the proposed Statement of OUV, the consequent amendment is already included in the text of the related draft decision.

Just to recall that only notifications received by the statutory deadline and submitted in the appropriate form of Annex 12 of the Operational Guidelines have been made available in these documents.

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Alessandro.

I would like to see if there are any comments on this. I see none.

So, our next point deals with nominations that were scheduled to be examined by the Committee at this session but were withdrawn at the request of the concerned State Party.

I also invite Mr. Balsamo to read out the list of the withdrawn nominations.

You may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Five nominations have been withdrawn prior to this session at the request of the concerned States Parties and these are:

1. Cameroon, The Sukur and Diy-Gid-Biy cultural landscape of Mandara Mountains
2. Germany, Alpine and pre-alpine meadows, pastures and wetlands in the Ammergau, the Lake Staffelsee Area and the Werdenfelser Land

3. Italy, The Cultural Landscape of Civita di Bagnoregio
4. Morocco, Area of the Ajgal Dragon Tree
5. Portugal, The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Head Office and Garden

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Is there any question on this? So, I see none.

And then, we will now begin with the examination of nominations. I would like to take this opportunity to recall that Committee decisions are based on objective and scientific considerations, and any appraisal made on its behalf must be thoroughly and responsibly carried out. The Committee recognizes that such decisions depend upon:

- a) carefully prepared documentation;
- b) thorough and consistent procedures;
- c) evaluation by qualified experts; and
- d) if necessary, the use of expert referees.

The Committee is requested to examine the draft decisions presented in the relevant documents, and, in accordance with Paragraph 153 of the Operational Guidelines, take its decisions.

I wish to stress that for referred nominations there is no new nomination file to be prepared and there is no evaluation mission of the relevant Advisory Body to the site. Also, as recalled by the Committee in its Decision **42 COM 8** "in compliance with the Convention and the Operational Guidelines, Outstanding Universal Value is recognized at the time of inscription of a property on the World Heritage List and no recognition of Outstanding Universal Value is foreseen prior to this stage."

I would like to appeal to you all to strictly respect these important rules during our debates and our decision-making.

As you know, considering the latest withdrawals, currently we have 50 nominations to be examined between today and Wednesday, as well as 22 minor boundary modification proposals.

For this reason, I would like to suggest that the examination of nominations that are recommended for inscription and do not present any particular potential issue be dealt with in a way to avoid repetitions of interventions aimed only at congratulating the concerned State Party. To this extent, I will ask for the cooperation of all Committee members and Observers alike, as it would be preferable to uniformly apply this standard as from the beginning of the examination of all nominations.

We will now proceed with the examination of nominations. We will begin with nominations that were foreseen for examination in 2022, and then proceed with nominations foreseen for examination in 2023. The order of the examination of nominations is listed on page 5 of both the English and French version of Document 8B and on page 1 of the corrigendum document. I would kindly ask you to follow this order to the extent possible. However, the Bureau already endorsed requests to reschedule the examination of a few nominations to allow participation of high-level Delegations. Thus, following several requests concerning the order of examination of nominations, I would like to inform you that the World Heritage Centre has put online a provisional Timetable day by day including requests already endorsed by the Bureau. This Timetable is to be found on the web page of the extended 45th session.

For some of the nominations of cultural sites recommended for inscription, the presentation by ICOMOS will be delivered through pre-recorded videos.

Furthermore, I would like to recall that after having finished the examination of nominations, we will deal with 22 minor boundary modifications and, for better time management, for those that are recommended for approval, we will go straight to the related decision without presentation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Just before proceeding with the examination of nominations, the Advisory Bodies wish to make a brief presentation on their respective evaluation process of nominations. I give the floor to IUCN and ICOMOS.

You may have the floor please.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair.

May I ask for the slides, please?

Thank you, Chair.

We'll just move to the first slide.

[Next slide, please]

So, Mr. Chair,

In speaking to IUCN's evaluation process, please allow me first to acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Jim Thorsell, who served this Convention as the IUCN head of World Heritage for 20 years, and who sadly passed away last month.

Jim was a pioneer in introducing systematic conservation approaches to World Heritage conservation, was dedicated to ensuring the integrity of natural World Heritage sites. His legacy includes framing of our evaluation process, as well as the many sites that were listed in the early days of this Convention.

[Next slide, please]

Mr. Chair,

The IUCN's evaluation process is outlined on the slide shown on screen. This is the slide from the Operational Guidelines. We'd like to thank all States Parties for advancing conservation through the preparation of nominations under natural criteria in both the 2022 and 2023 cycles, and both of these cycles have still been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of course, that means the 2022 cycle is being presented here with a delay of one year since the evaluation process concluded. We appreciate greatly the close collaboration with all States Parties and the local authorities in navigating the evaluation mission so effectively in sometimes challenging circumstances.

IUCN's role is to deliver independent, high quality scientific and technical advice to you, the World Heritage Committee, and to follow the standards set out in the Operational Guidelines, and respect the relevant deadlines.

The IUCN World Heritage Panel, which frames the recommendations that you are receiving from us through this session of the Committee, reaches its recommendations on a wide range of inputs with the nomination files, the dialogue with States Parties and the supplementary information that is provided by the nominating States Parties, being central and indispensable, complemented in the evaluation with both independent desk reviews and the on site evaluation missions that are crucial to understand what is happening on the ground.

Mr. Chair,

We strive for the widest possible diversity in inputs, and to improve this further in terms of regions, languages, scientific disciplines and the professional backgrounds of IUCN's World Heritage Panel members, as well as our evaluators and expert reviewers. This includes the key inputs of our expert Commissions, our partnership with UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre on comparative analysis, and the contribution of the International Union for Geological Sciences, the International Association of Geomorphologists and the International Speleological Union on geoheritage matters.

So, Mr. Chair,

I just close by thanking all of these contributors and especially to recognize the large part of this work that is delivered by volunteers who are so committed to supporting the World Heritage Convention and without whom this work would not be possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Je vous remercie M. le Président,

Je souhaite commencer cette présentation en soulignant le caractère particulier de cette session, qui nous amène à présenter deux cycles d'évaluation de proposition d'inscription en même temps.

[Diapo suivante, s'il vous plaît]

L'ICOMOS exprime sa gratitude à l'ensemble des experts impliqués dans le processus d'évaluation ainsi qu'aux États parties ayant soumis une proposition d'inscription pour les efforts fournis pendant cette période difficile qu'a constitué la pandémie de COVID-19.

La procédure d'évaluation de l'ICOMOS est décrite à l'annexe 6 des Orientations. Différentes étapes la composent comme les études de document et la mission technique d'évaluation, les réunions du panel d'experts, ainsi que certains moments d'échanges avec les États parties. L'ICOMOS est sensible à la représentation géographique des experts impliqués dans le processus d'évaluation et a récemment modifié les règles de composition de son panel d'experts pour mieux répondre au problème du déséquilibre géographique des propositions d'inscriptions.

L'ICOMOS est rigoureux et scientifique, et tente d'être constructif dans la formulation de ses recommandations au Comité du patrimoine mondial afin d'œuvrer pour la conservation des biens.

[Diapo suivante. Diapositive..., merci]

L'ICOMOS implique une quarantaine d'experts dans l'évaluation d'un dossier de proposition d'inscription, couvrant différents aspects du bien, que ce soit de l'analyse de son importance dans le contexte géoculturel dans lequel il se place à la façon dont il est protégé et géré.

Les recommandations de l'ICOMOS sont collégiales et institutionnelles.

Le champ d'expertise de l'ICOMOS comprend :

- la multidisciplinarité;
- la diversité culturelle et géographique;
- un large éventail de formations et d'expériences; et
- une large représentation institutionnelle.

Pour conclure, M. le Président, je voudrais remercier tous les experts qui sont impliqués dans ce processus d'évaluation, qui contribuent avec enthousiasme et énergie à constituer les recommandations que l'ICOMOS apporte sur l'ensemble des dossiers de proposition d'inscription.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thanks to IUCN and ICOMOS and all involved Parties in the evaluation process.

So, I'd like to hear if any one of the Committee members would like to have any intervention or comments on this.

So, I see none, and therefore, we will now start the examination of nominations proposed for examination in 2022. We will start with natural sites and continue with cultural sites. I am going to call on ICOMOS and IUCN to be concise in their presentations.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Also, I would like to mention to our dear colleagues from the NGOs that I would like to call upon all NGOs present in the room to combine their intervention into one joint statement whenever several of them wish to take the floor on one particular side, and to inform in advance the Secretariat about who will take the floor and on which side. Thank you very much for understanding.

And also, for the States Parties, I would also like to recall all States Parties that once the State Party is concerned by inscriptions on the World Heritage List have made their two-minute statements, they are invited to leave the Plenary Meeting Room and proceed to the Celebration Room. This is available next to the Bureau Meeting Room on the left side. This is to prevent disturbing the work of the Committee as we have a very heavy agenda under Item 8B. I really thank you in advance for your collaboration and cooperation in this matter.

2022 CYCLE // CYCLE 2022

NATURAL HERITAGE // PATRIMOINE NATUREL

8B.1 Forest Massif of Odzala-Kokoua (Congo) // Massif Forestier d'Odzala-Kokoua (Congo)

The Chairperson:

I now invite IUCN to present the nomination Forest Massif of Odzala-Kokoua (Congo) but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat, Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Concerning the evaluation of the nomination for the Forest Massif of Odzala-Kokoua, we received a factual error notification, which is on page 12 of both the English and French version of the Document INF.8B4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. IUCN, you may have the floor.

IUCN :

Merci, M. le Président.

L'évaluation de l'UICN se trouve aux pages indiquées sur la diapositive.

[Next slide, please]

L'inscription du Parc national d'Odzala et deux zones adjacentes a précédemment été proposée en 1994, sous le critère (x). À l'époque, le parc ne comptait que 284 000 ha, et a été différée par le Comité du patrimoine mondial à sa 19^e session, à Berlin, en Allemagne, du fait de préoccupations liées à son intégrité.

Par la suite, le bien a été agrandi, et actuellement proposé sous les critères (ix) et (x), en tant que Massif forestier d'Odzala-Kokoua.

Le bien proposé couvre une superficie de plus de 1,1 million ha, entourée d'une superficie de 4,2 million ha.

[Next slide, please]

Concernant le critère (ix), le bien proposé représente une riche diversité d'écosystèmes, notamment une vaste mosaïque forêts-savanes.

Il représente un excellent exemple, à une échelle exceptionnellement vaste, du processus de reconquête postglaciaire de la forêt sur les écosystèmes de savane. Le site est écologiquement important en tant que point de convergence de types d'écosystèmes multiples, des forêts congolaises, des forêts basse-guinéennes et des savanes. Il comprend de vastes étendues de forêts très diverses et rares ainsi que des forêts intermédiaires plus sèches.

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Concernant le critère (x), le bien proposé est considéré comme étant parmi les aires protégées les plus importantes au monde pour la conservation des mammifères, des oiseaux et des amphibiens. Ainsi, le bien proposé protège un assemblage pratiquement complet d'espèces, ce qui est de plus en plus rare, et dont il y a un grand nombre d'espèces menacées sur le plan mondial. Avec 17 espèces, le parc présente la plus riche diversité en primates d'Afrique centrale. Outre les gorilles, les chimpanzés et les éléphants, la faune constituée également de pangolins, des perroquets jaco, des crocodiles nains, qui sont des espèces menacées sur le plan mondial. On y trouve également de nombreuses espèces de plantes et d'animaux rares et/ou endémiques.

En conclusion, le site est exceptionnellement important pour ses processus écologiques de recolonisation forestière représentant un confluent important entre un large éventail de types d'écosystèmes, et abritant un assemblage pratiquement complet d'espèces. L'UICN considère que le bien proposé démontre une importance sur le plan mondial selon les critères (ix) et (x), relatifs aux processus écologiques et à la biodiversité.

[Next slide, please]

Cependant, tout en reconnaissant l'importance mondiale des valeurs proposées, le Panel de l'UICN a soulevé quelques préoccupations concernant l'intégrité, la protection, la gestion et les limites du bien proposé.

En effet, tandis que le bien proposé est intégré dans un parc national, l'information complémentaire fournie par l'État partie a confirmé la présence de concessions minières dans la zone tampon du bien proposé. L'UICN note que la présence de concessions minières dans la zone tampon du bien est très préoccupante pour son intégrité.

[Next slide, please]

Le projet de décision se trouve dans le Document 8B, comme indiqué sur la diapositive, et contient la recommandation de l'UICN de différer l'inscription du Massif forestier d'Odzala-Kokoua, tout en notant le potentiel important de ce bien proposé à satisfaire les critères (ix) et (x).

Cependant, l'UICN tient à noter que cette recommandation a été achevée selon les délais du cycle d'évaluation 2021/2022, et sur la base de toute information reçue jusqu'au 28 février 2022.

Par conséquent, M. le Président, l'UICN prend note de l'information supplémentaire, dans la lettre d'erreur factuelle soumise par l'État partie, qui présente du progrès par rapport aux préoccupations évoquées par l'UICN.

À la suite de cette lettre, l'UICN est heureux de constater, d'une part, la confirmation de l'adoption du nouveau plan de gestion et, d'autre part, la suppression des permis d'exploitation au niveau du bien. L'UICN prend note du fait que l'État partie confirme son intention de révoquer également les permis restants dans la zone tampon du bien proposé. L'UICN recommande à l'État partie d'achever la révocation complète de ces permis avant que le Comité du patrimoine mondial n'examine la proposition d'inscription.

J'en ai fini, M. le Président. Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Now, I would like to know if anyone from the floor would like to intervene on this matter.

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

First of all, Japan would like to express our position that the Committee has to be very cautious about the change of the decision from the deferral to inscribe, and we would like to emphasize that there should be strong evidence to change the draft decision.

From this point of view, we would like to pose three questions to State Party and Advisory Bodies.

First, the two questions are to the State Party:

- One is regarding to mining permits remaining in the buffer zone. The State Party's intention to revoke those permits is shown in the factual error letter, and we would like to have a confirmation from the State Party on this matter, and we would like to know the timeline of this.
- Our second question is from the information in the factual error letter. We understand the management plan is revised and adopted. We would like to have elaboration a little more on the content of this management plan, especially regarding the control measures of kudzu plant.

And the third question is to Advisory Body:

- We understand that this site has a very important values but have some management problems. So, inscription on the World Heritage List may facilitate the protection and conservation of the site, but sometimes it could cause more challenges. So, we would like to hear IUCN's view on the implication if we inscribe this site now.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Désolé, M. le Président. Un peu plus tard.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

So now, I would like to pass the floor to the State Party to respond to the two questions addressed by the Delegation of Japan.

La Délégation du Congo (Observateur) :

Merci infiniment, M. le Président, pour la parole que vous nous accordez.

Nous allons donc répondre aux préoccupations de l'État partie du Japon. Nous remercions le Japon pour ses préoccupations.

Nous voulons rassurer ici le Comité des membres du patrimoine mondial que les permis d'exploitation minière qui étaient dans la zone tampon du Parc national d'Odzala-Kokoua étaient réellement révoqués. Il s'agissait de sept permis. Il y en a cinq qui sont révoqués complètement et, en attente de révocation, nous en avons deux qui ne sont pas en activité, d'où l'assurance du Gouvernement de la République du Congo, ici, devant le Comité, qu'il n'y a pas d'inquiétude s'agissant des permis d'exploitation minière. Je répète, cinq étaient révoqués, deux en attente de révocation mais qui ne sont pas en activité.

Pour ce qui est du plan de gestion révisé, effectivement dans le cadre du plan d'aménagement du Parc national d'Odzala-Kokoua, il est question de faire attention à cette espèce invasive, et nous tenons à vous rassurer, chers membres, que le Congo prend acte de cette préoccupation et nous faisons attention à cette culture invasive qui est arrivée dans notre pays, certainement par la mobilité ou par des bateaux. Donc, nous faisons attention à cette mobilité, mais je peux vous rassurer que cette plante invasive n'est pas en accroissement sur l'écosystème du Parc national d'Odzala-Kokoua.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Advisory Bodies to respond to the Delegation of Japan.

UICN :

Merci, M. le Président.

Bien évidemment, l'inscription de ce site sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial va appeler à de nouveaux défis. Mais à ce stade, il est important de noter qu'en Afrique centrale, quand même, il y a eu de belles initiatives de conservation de toutes les aires protégées qui sont dans le bassin du Congo, notamment sur ce site.

Et il est important de rappeler ici qu'il y a un événement important qui va se passer au mois d'octobre au Congo-Brazza, comme par hasard, qui est le Sommet des Trois Bassins, et bien avant ce sommet, il y a une rencontre qui va regrouper des partenaires financiers et techniques.

Je pense que ces initiatives, déjà, nous rassurent pour la suite. Bien évidemment, il y a des efforts énormes à faire en termes d'efficacité, de gestion et de mobilisation des ressources, mais nous pensons que l'État partie, vu son engagement au plus haut niveau, pourrait, en tout cas, relever ce nouveau défi.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

South Africa. You still want to have the floor?

The Delegation of South Africa:

We'll have the floor after Rwanda.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Rwanda, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

M. le Président, Excellences, chers collègues,

Étant donné que c'est la première fois que je prends la parole, je remercie le Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour l'accueil exceptionnel et vous remercie, M. le Président, pour la manière dont vous menez le débat et vous souhaitez plein succès.

M. le Président,

En début de session, nous avons eu un débat intéressant sur l'importance d'atteindre les objectifs de conservation de la biodiversité tout en répondant aux besoins de développement socio-économiques des populations locales. Le Parc national d'Odzala-Kokoua, proposé à l'inscription par l'État partie du Congo, est un exemple parfait de la façon dont un pays fait le choix de donner la priorité à la conservation sur le développement économique.

Le parc national proposé à l'inscription est d'une importance capitale pour la conservation de la biodiversité du bassin du Congo. Il dispose d'une diversité biologique exceptionnelle, qui a valu son inscription sur la Liste indicative du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO en 2008.

Faisant suite aux décisions relevées dans le rapport par l'Organe d'évaluation sur le Massif forestier d'Odzala-Kokoua, il est impérieux de relever que ce site remplit bel et bien les critères fondamentaux pour lesquels il fait l'objet d'inscription, à savoir les critères (ix) et (x).

Ce rapport révèle véritablement trois problématiques.

S'agissant de la présence d'une concession minière à l'intérieur du bien proposé, elle est consécutive à une erreur de cartographie. Les permis miniers se trouvaient dans la zone tampon du bien et aucun d'entre eux n'est en activité à ce jour, du fait de l'expiration pour certains et l'annulation pour d'autres. Ainsi, de sept permis miniers représentés relevés par les recommandations de l'Organe d'évaluation, cinq sont inactifs par annulation et par expiration et deux sont valables, mais les sociétés attributaires ne sont pas présentes sur le terrain. À cet effet, des engagements ont été pris par l'État partie en vue d'entériner l'annulation de ces deux permis suite à une réunion bipartite tenue le 23 juin 2023 entre les experts du ministère de l'Économie forestière et ceux des Mines.

Deuxièmement, au regard de la pertinence d'étendre la zone tampon du bien, le Gouvernement du Congo s'est engagé à examiner la possibilité de le faire dans cette partie, une fois le processus d'attribution de la concession sera finalisé.

Enfin, s'agissant de la consultation avec les communautés locales dans le nouveau plan de gestion, il importe de dire que le Parc national d'Odzala-Kokoua vient d'être doté d'un nouveau plan d'aménagement d'une validité de dix ans, approuvé en Conseil des ministres du 26 décembre 2022, portant approbation du bien d'aménagement du Parc.

M. le Président,

J'aimerais également vous demander de pouvoir donner la parole à l'État partie et ainsi lui donner la possibilité de répondre à d'autres interrogations en temps voulu.

Je vous remercie de votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you very much, Chair, and the rest of the Delegates.

From the Zambian State Party point of view, we would like to observe that IUCN was able to establish the fact that this property has rich biodiversity, and it meets criteria (ix) and (x).

In addition, Chair, we also take note as a State Party that the permits, as stated by the State Party, five permits have been cancelled and two are already in the process of being cancelled, meaning that this is a demonstration by the State Party to making sure that the property is well managed.

At the same time, Mr. Chairman, we take note of the fact that, in terms of geographical representation, Africa suffers a lot in that area and where you have a situation where you have a site which meets part of the criteria, there is a need for the Committee to look at that.

Then the next aspect, Mr. Chair, the issues of sustainable development. You notice that there are issues which are critical matter to most of the African States Parties. And this being the case, you find that we risk not having most of our sites nominated as World Heritage sites simply because this label or the UNESCO's label is being seen as a deterrent factor to the national development. So, we need to be a bit careful, even as we look at this whole matter from the conventional point of view.

I submit, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa, you can have the floor.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

As the State Party of South Africa, we note with appreciation the confirmation by the evaluators of this nomination that the property meets the criteria and integrity requirements for inscription.

The sheer diversity of plant and animal life found within the boundaries of the nominated property is inspiring. The nominated property houses numerous rare and endemic species that are found nowhere else but on the property, and therefore, this is a botanical treasure trove. The property is a critical conservation area, which intersects with important bird and biodiversity sites which are not yet represented on the World Heritage List. It also overlaps with three highly vulnerable protected areas for mammal, bird and amphibian conservation, and thus establishing itself as a globally irreplaceable region.

On the protection status of the nominated property, we appreciate the confirmation by the State Party that no operating mining permits overlap with the nominated property, and that arrangements have been made for the cancellation of existing mining permits in the buffer zone. Furthermore, a 10-year management plan for the property was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2022, which addresses the issues raised in this draft decision, with clearly defined indicators and monitoring parameters. The State Party should be commended for its effort in addressing and clarifying all the issues raised in the evaluation mission report.

In respect of the buffer zone for the nominated property, the recommendation as it stands. The State Party should increase the area of the buffer zone to the greatest extent possible. It is also a cause for concern because the buffer zone is already 4.2 million ha. South Africa is of the view that the buffer zone should provide effective protection of the nominated property, as suggested in Paragraphs 104 to 105 of the Operational Guidelines. South Africa would like to emphasize that what is important is not the size of the buffer zone, but its effectiveness as serving as an additional protection of the property. We do note, however, the confirmation by the State Party of the Republic of Congo that all forests within the buffer zone of the nominated property are being actively managed, and there are actions being undertaken to certify them.

To this end, we are of the view that the criteria conditions of integrity as well as protection and management requirement for inscriptions have been met, and we would like to align ourselves with the State Party of Rwanda in support of inscription of this property.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Belgium.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président.

Chers collègues,

La Belgique constate que le bien proposé pour inscription semble clairement démontrer la VUE sur la base des critères (ix) et (x). Il apparaît que le site n'est plus habité depuis 50 ans et qu'il n'a connu aucune exploitation. Son degré d'intégrité est donc très élevé. La taille du site, 1,17 million ha, et une zone tampon de 4,5 millions ha, est suffisante pour garantir la conservation de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

Nous nous réjouissons des efforts considérables réalisés par l'État partie, avec le soutien du Centre du patrimoine mondial, pour trouver une solution adéquate aux préoccupations restantes. Tenant compte de la réponse de l'État partie ainsi que de l'UICN, nous ne pouvons que féliciter la République du Congo pour sa décision de supprimer les concessions minières inexploitées dans le bien ainsi que pour l'accord obtenu au niveau gouvernemental pour mettre fin aux deux permis d'exploitation minière restants dans la zone tampon. La Belgique soutient donc l'amendement introduit par la Délégation du Rwanda en vue de l'inscription du Massif forestier d'Odzala-Kokoua sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Une inscription d'autant plus positive qu'elle vient renforcer la Priorité Afrique de l'UNESCO à laquelle notre pays apporte tout son soutien.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Le Massif forestier d'Odzala-Kokoua est un parc vital pour les migrations de diverses espèces animales protégées, dont les éléphants de forêt. Il s'agit d'un pré carré d'une biodiversité exceptionnelle qui concentre des bastions des plus importants du gorille de l'Ouest et du chimpanzé Pan en Afrique centrale. Le parc possède la plus riche diversité en primates d'Afrique centrale, 17 espèces au total, et protège un assemblage pratiquement complet d'espèces, ce qui est de plus en plus rare dans une région très touchée par le braconnage et le commerce illégal d'espèces sauvages.

En outre, les degrés d'intégrité du bien proposé est très élevé, parce qu'il est inhabité depuis 50 ans et n'a jamais fait l'objet d'une exploitation de bois. Cela est démontré et approuvé par l'UICN.

Pour ce qui est du plan de gestion, bien qu'il existe des insuffisances, l'État du Congo a conçu un nouveau plan d'aménagement, qui pourrait d'ailleurs être détaillé par son représentant ici présent.

Pour toutes ces raisons, l'amendement proposé par le Rwanda mérite un examen favorable de la part du Comité. En tout état de cause, le Mali appuie cette proposition d'amendement en faveur de l'inscription du bien.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Listening at the Advisory Body as well as the State Party, in addition to South Africa and Mali, now, with all the support evidence that this site can meet OUV, and it is important to inscribe it, given that we are looking for the Priority of Africa.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Egypt extends its heartfelt congratulations to the Republic of Congo for diligently submitting this nomination file, and we express our sincere gratitude to the IUCN for the evaluation.

The nominated property holds a special place within the high biodiversity wilderness of the Congo Forest and nature in Central Africa. Its outstanding qualities are readily apparent and perfectly aligned with the two key criteria, namely criteria (ix) and (x).

Furthermore, Egypt wholeheartedly acknowledges the Republic of Congo's tireless dedication to safeguarding and managing this precious site, setting a commendable example for conservation efforts worldwide. We firmly believe that the inclusion of Odzala-Kokoua on the World Heritage List will not only enrich this esteemed registry, but also contribute significantly to balancing the global representation of heritage sites. Furthermore, elevating the prominence of African sites, the inscription would underscore the collective commitment to preserving the world's diverse and exceptional heritage for future generations to cherish and learn from.

From this perspective, Egypt fully supports the amendment presented by Rwanda for the draft decision.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm sorry to take the floor for the second time, but after hearing the discussions on this particular property, we appreciate the commitment by the State Party regarding the revoking of mining permits and also the strong commitment to the conservation of this particular property. We also appreciate the interventions from IUCN. IUCN does recognize the value of this particular property and made a reference to a very important conference which is coming in this October, which could provide investment opportunities for the conservation of the property.

We take note of the emerging consensus on this property and, therefore, we support the amendments proposed by Rwanda.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, I'd like to pass the floor to the State Party to respond to South Africa and Rwanda's inquiries.

La Délégation du Congo (Observateur) :

Merci, M. le Président, pour la parole que vous nous accordez une fois de plus.

Je voudrais juste vous dire que nous sommes heureux et honorés par cet appui que nous avons des parties qui sont conscients de cette richesse, de ce patrimoine mondial que nous voulons pour l'humanité tout entière. Nous sommes heureux de voir combien les États reconnaissent les forces et l'effort fait par la République du Congo en maintenant ce site, qui est un site important du bassin du Congo, qui est le deuxième poumon écologique après l'Amazonie.

Nous vous remercions tous pour votre appui et nous pensons que, M. le Président, ce que nous allons prendre comme décision aujourd'hui est une décision importante non seulement pour le Congo, mais pour l'humanité tout entière.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I think we don't have any more interventions from the floor. So, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.1**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you. Chair.

We would like our name to be added to the amendment, please.

The Chairperson:

Rapporteur, you may have the floor.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Rwanda, which is now supported from the floor by the Distinguished Delegations of South Africa, Belgium, Mali, Oman, Egypt, Japan and Qatar.

The amendment starts with the Para 3. The revised Para 3: "Inscribes the Forest Massif of Odzala-Kokoua, Congo, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ix) and (x);".

Revised Para 4: "Takes note of the provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:". We received this statement in French only, and I would also like to explain that this is a standard phrase we use when the Committee decides to move the decision from "deferred" to "inscribe", we use "provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value" as it has to be reviewed by the Advisory Bodies and confirmed by the State Party, so it is adopted later.

A revised Para 5: "Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:".

- Point a): "Finalize the full cancellation of the last two non-operational licenses that partially overlap with the buffer zone of the property,".
- Point b): "Increase the area of the buffer zone that would not be possible subject to logging regimes to the greatest extent possible in order to reduce any edge effects on the natural systems inside the property, and ensure that all concessions in the buffer zone of the property work towards obtaining FSC certification, and that they will be strictly controlled and managed without any significant impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property;".
- Point c) is deleted.

End of the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Nigeria. After listening to the argument put forward, we would like to support the proposal put forward by Rwanda and we want our name to be added.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you.

Saudi Arabia would like to support the proposed amendment from Rwanda, please. We would like our name to be added to the list.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Ethiopia.

La Délégation de l'Éthiopie :

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

L'Éthiopie souhaite également s'ajouter à la liste des pays et soutenir l'amendement présenté par le Rwanda.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. L'Inde.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

Any nomination that receives a deferral recommendation, if there are amendments to its inscription, it requires serious debate and discussion, which we have heard, and we have seen that multiple Member States have taken a call to inscribe it. We need more nominations from Africa to come onto the World Heritage List.

Taking the arguments and the explanations that were given, and taking into consideration that we want to see that India wants to see more African nominations on the World Heritage List, my country wants to join Rwanda, South Africa, Belgium, Mali, Oman, Egypt, Japan, Qatar, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia in supporting this amendment.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would like to join Rwanda, South Africa, Belgium, Mali, Oman, Egypt, Japan, Qatar, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia and India in supporting this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Zambia is wondering as to why we are not appearing even when we support it already. So, in short, we would like to re-emphasize that we should appear there if possible. Since we spoke earlier, we should have appeared first, earlier than the rest.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, well noted. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We recognize the efforts of the State Party, so we also would like to support the amendment put forward.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to join the countries supporting the amendments. And we'd also like to request from the Advisory Bodies to perhaps include a request for a report on the state of conservation at some point throughout the upcoming year.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much.

We would also like to join that proposal.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

We believe that inscribing the site on the List is a responsibility of this Committee, and we would like to have some kind of follow up to see our decision was correct or not.

So, I think the previous..., Mexico..., the same as a proposal of Mexico. We would like to propose the additional paragraph requesting the State Party to submit the report in 2025, at the end of the decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation would like also to support this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Yes, Mr. Chairman.

We would like to join the amendments, including the amendment of Japan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more requests. So, I invite you to examine the draft decision, paragraph by paragraph once the Secretariat...

The Rapporteur:

Mr. Chair,

If I may intervene, we can add point c) as requested by the Distinguished Delegation of Japan.

The Chairperson:

Japan, is it a suitable place?

The Rapporteur:

It can say: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2025 a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned". "By 1 December 2025 a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session". It's "48th".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I'd like to ask Mexico. This reflects your request?

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Yes. Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes, exactly.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'd like to ask you to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

So, I see Paragraph 1 and 2, there are no amendments. Do we agree to accept them as they are?

Rwanda.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Oui, M. le Président.

On va redemander la parole tout à l'heure.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, do we agree to adopt them as they are? Paragraph 1 and 2. I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposal. Do we agree to this text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text a) and the subsequent a) and b) and c)?

Rwanda.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Oui, M. le Président, merci.

Nous voudrions savoir s'il serait possible de donner la parole à l'État partie concernant le dernier point qui a été rajouté.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

To the delegate of Rwanda, I would like to let you know since we are examining the draft decision, only Committee members will be given the floor.

With this regard, do we agree to the proposed text? Including the addition by the States of Japan and Mexico. So, I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as proposed, *[gavel]*, as amended.

So, I invite you to adopt the whole draft decision, and there are no objections.

Therefore, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.1** adopted as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Let me congratulate Congo and behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List.

Congo, you may have the floor for a brief statement of two minutes. Your Excellency, the Minister of Environment and Economy.

La Délégation du Congo (Observateur) :

Merci, M. le Président de la 45^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie pour votre leadership dans la conduite des travaux.

M. le Directeur du patrimoine mondial. Excellences, Mmes et MM. les Ministres, MM. les Ambassadeurs, chers experts, chers Délégués, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je suis particulièrement honorée en cette circonstance solennelle de prendre la parole devant cet auguste auditoire, au nom du Gouvernement de la République du Congo, afin de remercier le Gouvernement du Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour l'accueil chaleureux et l'hospitalité légendaire réservés à ma modeste personne ainsi qu'à la Délégation qui m'accompagne depuis notre arrivée dans cette belle ville de Riyadh.

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Ce jour est mémorable, non seulement pour la République du Congo, mais pour l'humanité tout entière et pour les générations futures et actuelles.

M. le Président,

Comme vous l'avez suivi, le Congo a présenté les efforts particuliers pour l'inscription de ce patrimoine depuis les années 2008 à ce jour. Par votre décision, issue de cette 45^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial, vous nous donnez l'occasion de célébrer la consécration de l'inscription du Massif forestier d'Odzala-Kokoua sur la Liste des sites d'exception du patrimoine mondial, un trésor riche en biodiversité et de paysages naturels situé au cœur de l'Afrique, dans le bassin du Congo. Votre acte historique de ce jour sera gravé à jamais dans les mémoires collectives du Congo et de l'humanité tout entière. Je voudrais témoigner par mon propos notre gratitude à tous les États membres qui nous ont supportés. Je n'aimerais pas prendre beaucoup de temps pour les citer ici, mais je voudrais particulièrement adresser nos salutations au Rwanda, à l'Afrique du Sud, au Mali ainsi qu'à d'autres membres, la Belgique, qui nous ont appuyés depuis la présentation de ce dossier. Nous remercions également nos partenaires techniques et financiers, particulièrement l'UICN, l'Union européenne, l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture, L'Initiative pour le patrimoine mondial forestier d'Afrique centrale et le Fonds pour le patrimoine mondial africain pour leur contribution inestimable visant à améliorer la gestion des sites forestiers du bassin du Congo susceptibles d'être reconnus pour leur valeur universelle exceptionnelle dans la Liste du patrimoine mondial naturel d'Afrique centrale.

Nous prenons acte qu'au 1^{er} décembre, la République du Congo va présenter un rapport qui prendra en compte les amendements souhaités par les membres. Nous vous invitons tous aussi au Sommet des Trois Bassins forestiers tropicaux du monde à Brazzaville.

Je vous remercie, Excellence. *[applaudissements]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. I would like to congratulate you again.

Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

Allow me to congratulate Congo on this listing.

An Observer has requested the floor, Mauritania. Would it be possible to give them the floor? I believe that they had requested to be on the list of speakers for some time now.

The Chairperson:

Your Excellency,

[interpretation from Arabic] We agreed that in the event of congratulations, only congratulations should be expressed in the room beside the Bureau Room. *[end interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Chair, there seems to be an objection.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Could you please repeat?

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

I believe that they have a comment to make on Item 8, and they wanted to take the floor after the adoption of the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

We have been seeing World Heritage Committee meetings from many, many years. This is not the first time the World Heritage Committee meeting is happening. And even when our inscriptions happen, we are just given a very specific amount of time, and thereafter there are no interventions.

So, I thank you for bringing this on record, and I thank you for the position that you have taken.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

Your Excellency of Qatar, the Delegation of Qatar,

So, as we have agreed from the beginning that we will proceed, only we will give the floor to the concerned State Party. So, I appreciate your understanding on this matter.

8B.2 Andrefana Dry Forests [extension and renomination of Tsingy de Bemaraha Strict Nature Reserve, inscribed in 1990, criteria (vii)(x)] (Madagascar) // Les forêts sèches de l'Andrefana [extension et nouvelle proposition d'inscription de Réserve naturelle intégrale du Tsingy de Bemaraha] (Madagascar)

The Chairperson:

I now invite IUCN to present the Andrefana Dry Forests, an extension and renomination of Tsingy de Bemaraha Strict Nature Reserve, Madagascar.

IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN :

Merci, M. le Président.

L'évaluation de l'IUCN se trouve sur les pages indiquées sur la diapositive.

[Next slide, please]

La proposition concerne une extension en série du bien du patrimoine mondial, Réserve naturelle intégrale du Tsingy de Bemaraha, à Madagascar, qui a été inscrit au titre des critères naturels (vii) et (x) en 1990, à la 14^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial, à Banff, au Canada.

Au total, le bien élargi compterait 734 298 ha avec des zones tampon de 838 035 ha.

[Next slide, please]

Concernant le critère (ix), les sites proposés représentent des centres d'endémisme résultant d'oscillations paléoclimatiques dans l'ouest de Madagascar, où les variations du régime des pluies ont conduit à l'expansion et au recul des écosystèmes forestiers.

Concernant le critère (x), les éléments constitutifs supplémentaires présentent un éventail spectaculaire de biodiversité caractérisée par des espèces endémiques de lémuriniens, d'oiseaux, des espèces menacées et en danger critique d'extinction, notamment des mammifères selon la Liste rouge des espèces de l'IUCN.

Le bien recouvre aussi partiellement sept aires protégées considérées comme étant parmi les plus importantes au monde pour la conservation des mammifères, des oiseaux et des amphibiens.

[Diapo suivante, *please*]

Par ailleurs, les forêts sèches de Madagascar ont été identifiées comme une priorité éventuelle pour de nouvelles candidatures à l'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en Afrique.

À l'avis de l'IUCN, cette extension, à elle seule, comblerait plusieurs lacunes importantes sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

[Diapo suivante, *please*]

En ce qui concerne la protection et gestion du bien proposé, les ajouts proposés se composent de cinq aires protégées, avec les Parcs nationaux d'Ankarafantsika, de Mikea et Tsimanapesotse, et les Réserves spéciales d'Analamerana et d'Ankarana, chacune disposant de son propre plan de gestion. Les plans de gestion précisent la nécessité de maintenir la valeur universelle exceptionnelle des sites.

Ces éléments sont intégrés dans un « Plan Stratégique de Gestion du réseau d'Aires protégées », et ils bénéficient aussi de vastes systèmes de suivi normalisés avec des évaluations annuelles de la gestion des aires protégées du point de vue des menaces.

Dans la zone tampon, les mécanismes de gouvernance sont rigoureusement axés sur des approches de développement durable avec une gestion de la zone tampon à laquelle sont associées différentes structures d'organisations communautaires. Les communautés reçoivent une part du revenu des aires protégées. Des accords coutumiers, appelés *dinabe*, sont conclus entre le personnel des aires protégées et les communautés locales pour réglementer les activités.

L'UICN note que l'État partie a pris des mesures importantes dans la lutte contre ces menaces. Cependant, ces efforts doivent être renforcés dans la restauration écologique des écosystèmes du bien.

[Next slide, please]

En conclusion, l'UICN recommande au Comité du patrimoine mondial d'inscrire les Forêts sèches de l'Andrefana sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, en tant qu'extension au titre des critères naturels (vii), (ix) et (x).

En effet, avec les ajouts en série proposés, presque tous les centres d'endémisme des forêts sèches occidentales de Madagascar, notamment, seraient représentés et intégrés dans ce complexe écologique.

Toutefois, M. le Président, l'UICN a noté qu'il y a une exception notable du centre d'endémisme de Menabe-Antimena. L'État partie a ensuite clarifié, dans l'information complémentaire, que les aires protégées dudit centre ne remplissent pas encore les obligations relatives à la protection et à la gestion. Par ailleurs, des travaux de recherche additionnels et d'autres consultations publiques seront requises à mesure que le statut d'aire protégée soit renforcé.

Néanmoins, l'État partie reconnaît, et l'UICN abonde fermement dans ce même sens, qu'il est souhaitable de proposer un élément constitutif du centre d'endémisme de Menabe-Antimena dès que possible pour renforcer l'intégrité du bien proposé. Il est donc recommandé de refléter ce point de vue dans la Décision du Comité.

J'en ai fini, M. le Président, je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to ask if there are any intervention from the floor.

Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation would like to commend the State Party for this excellent dossier and to express our support to the inscription of this nomination, according to the Advisory Body recommendation.

We would like also to highlight the significance of this nomination since the extension of an already inscribed property demonstrates the existence of a constant effort on behalf of the State Party to provide further protection of the property, especially in terms of integrity and conservation. Furthermore, as already noted by IUCN, the nomination is expected to fill important gaps on the World Heritage List on the grounds of biodiversity criteria.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Nous tenons d'abord à féliciter l'État partie de Madagascar pour cette proposition d'extension et d'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Il s'agit d'une candidature de grande qualité.

Indiquons ensuite que ces sites additionnels sont d'importance extrême pour la conservation, car ils comprennent des centres d'endémisme de forêt sèche à Madagascar, connus particulièrement pour leur mégadiversité que l'on

ne retrouve dans aucun autre bien du patrimoine mondial. Les éléments composants supplémentaires présentent un éventail spectaculaire de biodiversité endémique et menacée avec des taxons, tels que les baobabs, des membres de la famille de plantes succulentes, des flamboyants, des espèces endémiques de lémuriens, un genre d'une famille d'oiseaux endémiques et trois des quatre dernières tortues terrestres de Madagascar. La présence de genres endémiques et même de familles de vertébrés, comprenant souvent des espèces fortement menacées dans les éléments composants proposés, est unique parmi les forêts sèches du monde, ainsi que le reconnaît, du reste, l'UICN.

De même, l'État partie malgache s'efforce de mettre en place une approche hautement intégrée en matière de gestion pour le développement durable avec les communautés, et ces approches sont également intégrées dans les initiatives et projets régionaux de développement durable.

Au regard de ce qui précède, le Mali soutient cette proposition d'extension ainsi que son inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like first to thank IUCN for this positive report.

In addition, I congratulate and thank also the State Party for their commitment and for this modification. I think this is a value for the site and we do approve it.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more interventions.

I now invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.2**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendments for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.2**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, dear colleagues, we don't have any proposed text and if there are no objections, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.2** adopted. [gavel] [applause]

Congratulations to Madagascar on behalf of the entire Committee for the approval of the extension of this property. Madagascar, you may have the floor for a 2-minute brief statement.

La Délégation de Madagascar (Observateur) :

Merci, M. le Président.

M. le Président, Excellences, en vos titres et vos honneurs respectifs,

Nous sommes très heureux d'être parmi vous aujourd'hui en cette session pour prendre la décision de l'inscription de ce bien dans le patrimoine mondial.

Nous ne sommes que des gardiens dans cette gestion, mais c'est à nous tous, ce bien sérial, donc nous n'avons pas grands mots que de vous remercier. Merci à l'UNESCO, merci au Centre du patrimoine mondial, merci à ses Organes de consultation, merci au Comité et à nous tous, et surtout, surtout, surtout les États membres qui nous soutiennent pour cette inscription.

Merci à vous.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

8B.3 Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago [extension and renomination of Ha Long Bay, inscribed in 1994, criteria (vii)(viii), extended in 2000] (Viet Nam) // Baie d’Ha Long – archipel de Cat Ba [extension et nouvelle proposition d’inscription de la « Baie d’Ha Long », inscrit en 1994, critères (vii)(viii), élargi en 2000] (Viet Nam)

The Chairperson:

I now invite IUCN to present the extension and renomination of Ha Long Bay to include the Cat Ba Archipelago, Viet Nam, but before I give the floor to the Secretariat, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Concerning the evaluation of the nomination of Halong – Bay Cat Ba Archipelago, as an extension of Halong Bay, we received a factual error notification, which is on page 16 of both the English and French versions of the Document INF.8B4.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair.

IUCN’s evaluation of this property can be found on the pages indicated on the slide. Ha Long Bay was inscribed in 1994 under criterion (vii) and in year 2000 under criterion (viii).

In 2013, the Cat Ba Archipelago was already nominated as a separate property under criteria (ix) and (x). The IUCN evaluation, at the time, concluded a recommendation to not inscribe Cat Ba as a separate property, but recommended that it could be considered as an extension of Ha Long Bay under criteria (vii) and (viii) and possibly criterion (x). And so, that is, in a sense, the proposal we have before us now.

[Next slide, please]

This present file is a renomination of Ha Long Bay under all four natural criteria (vii), (viii), (ix) and (x), and an extension of the area of Ha Long Bay to include the adjacent Cat Ba Archipelago. So, the new proposal for the nominated property covers a total of just over 65,000 ha, and the extension would be 22,250 ha within the larger area.

[Next slide, please]

Overall, Mr. Chair, IUCN concludes that the Cat Ba Archipelago does have potential as an extension of Ha Long Bay under criteria (vii) and (viii). We further consider that the potential is also evident under criterion (x). However, at present, the full justification of that criterion has not been fully demonstrated based on accurate and updated species data for the whole of the nominated property. As in the previous evaluation, Mr. Chair, the IUCN Panel concluded that there was not a case to consider further the application of criteria (ix), ecosystem criteria in this case.

Mr. Chair, IUCN has noted in its evaluation that the nominated property is subject to several current and potential threats, especially in regard to the impact of substantial tourism activities, and this has been a recurring topic in state of conservation reports for the existing property of Ha Long Bay since 1995.

The prospect of continuing large-scale tourism is a significant risk to the integrity of the proposed extended property. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Archipelago of Cat Ba was already receiving up to 2.7 million visitors per year. It was indicated that there are plans to increase that to 3.7 million by 2025, with a long-term vision of 10 million visitors by 2050.

[Next slide, please]

The supplementary information provided by the State Party confirms there are a number of large-scale projects in the planning stage, which have risks of fragmentation and demands for natural resources. A number of these large-scale projects could impact the potential Outstanding Universal Value of this nominated property, including a new International Seaport that’s being constructed to the west of Cat Ba Island.

Based on the information provided, IUCN has also noted that there are gaps in the protection of Cat Ba Archipelago and there's a need to strengthen regulation, especially for tourism but also a number of other threats in order to secure the future integrity of the property. And also, there appears to be a need to extend the Cat Ba National Park to ensure that all of the important values that are noted inside and outside of the National Park are adequately protected.

There is a management plan, but there are concerns about that in relation to its institutional arrangements for biodiversity conservation, and there is a lack of monitoring proposals in place, except for the iconic Cat Ba Langur, a key species of the Cat Ba Island.

The action plan for 2021-2025 is based on tourism and the marine part of the nominated property, but there are a lack of actions specified for terrestrial conservation and management and a lack of a separate tourism management plan for the area.

So, Mr. Chair, based on the nomination of 2022, we concluded that the significant growth plans for large-scale tourism and industrial developments are significant and serious threats to the integrity of both the terrestrial and the marine parts of the nominated property, to an extent that the requirements of the Operational Guidelines are not met, and we consider that the impacts of these threats do need to be reduced to at least the maximum ecological capacity of the nominated property.

[Next slide, please.]

So, in that regard, Mr. Chair, whilst there is strong potential, we see both integrity and protection and management needing to be addressed.

The last slide, please.

For these reasons, the IUCN Panel recommendation is that the World Heritage Committee would consider a deferral of this extension of Ha Long Bay to include the Cat Ba Archipelago to allow for the time needed to reconsider the development projects that I have referred to and these threats that are present, and also to complete the missing information in relation to the potential justification under criterion (x).

Mr. Chair, I'd just like to conclude by acknowledging the positive dialogue with the State Party and also the concerned local authorities that are responsible both for the existing property and the extension, including a very productive meeting that took place yesterday, and acknowledged the recent statements that have been made both by the State Party and the local Governments regarding assurances of their commitments to work to conserve Ha Long Bay and the Cat Ba Archipelago, which, I believe, have also been shared with the Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to see if there are any comments regarding this nomination.

Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Dear Committee members,

Thailand wishes to refer to the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.3** regarding the Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago nomination.

We appreciate the work of IUCN on the review and assessment of the nomination dossier of the Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago as well as the outcomes of the field mission at the Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago. My Delegation believes that valuable recommendations provided by IUCN would support the State Party of Viet Nam in completing and taking specific actions to better protect the natural values of the property at present and in the future. Thailand also would like to recommend the State Party of Viet Nam for their work and commitment on the nomination and protection of the sites.

The nomination dossier for extending the existing World Heritage site of Ha Long Bay to include Cat Ba Archipelago has been prepared based on the recommendations by the IUCN in 1993 and 2013. The nomination is mainly aimed at better protecting and ensuring the integrity of the Heritage property, without any limitations pertaining to administrative boundaries between the two provinces that the site is located in. Furthermore, with several meetings with the State Party, Thailand is of the view that the State Party has been positive and forthcoming in dealing with IUCN recommendations.

- My Delegation would also like to take this opportunity to touch on a couple points as follows: With regard to the development projects, upon receiving the IUCN report, the Government of Viet Nam has taken prompt action by directing relevant ministries and agencies to provide some guidance to the provinces on

the management of the development projects in the property. The Government has placed priority on mitigating impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value in accordance with Operational Guidelines and relevant Viet Nameese law,

- Regarding the management issue, local authorities of Hai Phong City and Quang Ninh Province have established a joint management mechanism for the inter-provincial property at all levels. The State Party also commits to institutionalize the current mechanism, as well as to revise and complete the management plan as per IUCN's recommendation in order to ensure effective management of the property,
- Moreover, the State Party of Viet Nam also confirms that there is clear evidence of community consultations which led to their consented relocation from the core zone to a more manageable area in the buffer zone. The Government is also committed to take necessary steps to ensure better living conditions, job creation, and improved social services, including health care, schooling for children, and so forth.

In light of the above-mentioned situation, Mr. Chair, Thailand wishes to extend our support for the approval of the significant boundary modification of Ha Long Bay to include Cat Ba Archipelago under criteria (vii) and (viii). My Delegation has proposed the draft amendment, and we hope that the Committee members could lend their support.

And with your permission, may I also ask to kindly give the floor to the State Party of Viet Nam in order to provide an additional information on any issues the Committee members might deem necessary?

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Qatar, you have the floor. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Qatar:

Qatar acknowledges the significant boundary modification of Ha Long Bay (Viet Nam) to include the Cat Ba Archipelago to become Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago on the World Heritage List for the list of reasons here:

- Both of these sites are located at the north east of Viet Nam, which both coexist to represent one of the most important areas in the world for karst tower landscape and an excellent example of karst matured in humid tropical condition, containing limestone karst terrain flooded by the sea.
- Also, the property has contributed to the completing of stages of the process of sea-inundation of tropical karst through examples of terrestrial and intertidal stages, and all the necessary elements fully reflecting the Outstanding Universal Value of Ha Long Bay were fulfilled with regard to Operational Guidelines criteria (vii) and (viii).
- The State of Qatar encourages the State Party to revise and complete the management plan to address key threats to the property and strengthening the law enforcement, also to continue the engagement of local communities.

With the above being said, the State of Qatar supports the significant boundary modification to become Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago on the World Heritage List and the draft amendment decision proposed by Thailand.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you. Oman, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Oman expresses gratitude and appreciation for the commendable efforts the State Party had made in preserving and protecting the Ha Long Bay, which was first inscribed in 1994 under criteria (vii) and also inscribed in 2000 under criteria (viii). To include Cat Ba Archipelago has been prepared based on the recommendations by IUCN 1993 and 2013.

The nomination is mainly aimed at better protecting and ensuring the integrity of the World natural property without limiting to administrative boundary between the two provinces. Therefore, the dedication to expand the Cat Ba National Park, which is not noted by IUCN, will definitely ensure the importance values in nominating areas outside the National Park, and adequately protected, these invaluable environmental treasures will truly be inspiring to all countries. By prioritizing the conservation of this property, the State Party has shown great commitment to preserving it to ensure that future generations will be able to appreciate and learn from their rich heritage. Though their unwavering support, they have set an excellent example of proactive measure, which has guided by the province with the World Heritage property. How to propose, plan and assess development projects in the areas of

coming time, ensuring mitigating impact on its OUV in accordance to the Viet Nameese law and in Operational Guide for the implementation of the World Heritage conservation.

In addition, the consultation with the local community in order to get their free and informal consensus for relocation, they have been relocated to another manageable area in the buffer zone with better living conditions. Furthermore, the commitment of the State Party to research, educate and training in conservation showcases the long-term vision and dedication to continuously improve and refine the preservation effort. By investing in these areas, State Party is equipping future generation with necessary knowledge and skills to continue preserving and promoting these significant sites.

Finally, it is important to mention the great State Party's collaboration with international organizations and engagement in global networks further enhance their efforts, allowing for the exchange of experience, best practices and resources.

We welcome and support the proposed amendment by Thailand, and we thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor.

Nigeria has paid a great attention to the documents and draft decision on this item. We note and commend the assessment and recommendation of the IUCN, as well as the concerns expressed for which the dossier is being deferred.

Mr. Chair,

However, looking at the responses of the State Party of Viet Nam, which show the cancellation of some future development projects while adopting others for the purpose of maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value of both the existing Ha Long Bay World Heritage site and the extension being sought of Cat Ba Archipelago, we believe that Viet Nam's approach has demonstrated that no harm will be done to OUV of the totality of the site after extension. We are privy to the fact that, apart from the responding fully to the concerns expressed and having resolved the management issues, the State Party has also undertaken to reduce the number of criteria on the premise of which the extension was sought to match those of the existing site.

In the light of the efforts and the foregoing looking approaches, which promise continued protection of the OUV of the new site in its entirety, plus the fact that Viet Nam will continue to cooperate with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies going forward to preserve the integrity of the property in its entirety, we are recommending that the decision be adopted as amended by granting an approval for the extension sought by the Member State.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

We would like to re-express our position of cautious approach to change the draft decision from deferral to inscribe.

From this viewpoint, we would like to ask a question to the State Party.

Ha Long Bay is a beautiful site and a very famous tourist destination, including Japanese tourists. It's important to keep a good quality of tourist experiences, and tourism management has been a priority issue for this site. Extending the site could, could increase the management challenges. We understand that this extension is going to be the first case of joint management of two local Governments in Viet Nam. In Japan, we have two natural sites involving two local Governments in the management of the site, and from our experience, sometimes, it's not easy to coordinate their activities. So, with this background, we would like to seek explanation from the State Party on the measures or structure in place for the effective coordination and cooperation among the two provinces, especially in tourism management.

And also, we would appreciate if the State Party share with us the results of dialogue with IUCN yesterday.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

My Delegation would like to thank the State Party of Viet Nam for preparing the nomination file for the extension of the World Heritage Site of Ha Long Bay, and appreciate the assessment and recommendation of the World Heritage Centre and the IUCN.

Upon studying the IUCN report on this extended property, we have found that the State Party followed the recommendation of IUCN in 2013 regarding the need to have an extended nomination to include Cat Ba Archipelago in Ha Long Bay site, as we have today. The extension will help to enhance the OUV of Ha Long Bay and mobilize coordinated efforts by the two provinces to effectively deal with challenges in order to preserve the property for future generations. Furthermore, all the necessary elements that reflect the Outstanding Universal Value of the site are located within the nominated property and protected by a surrounding buffer zone.

In light of this situation, my Delegation supports Thailand's amendment to the draft decision.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Italy expresses its gratitude to the Advisory Body for its accurate evaluation, and we are sure that IUCN's comments have been and will be very important for the State Party.

The property has long been included in the World Heritage List, and we believe that the boundary modification proposed can improve integrity and protection of the site, in particular, by eliminating the limitation of administrative borders between the two provinces.

We have carefully considered the updated information provided by the State Party, and we believe that adequate measures have been taken regarding tourist resorts and other development projects in the buffer zone. Furthermore, we have been informed that the new projects in the buffer zone have not yet been approved and several measures have been implemented to protect the integrity and the OUV of the property. Finally, we appreciate that on the basis of the evaluation by IUCN, Viet Nam decided to renounce to nominate the site for criterion (ix).

Therefore, we commend the Viet Nam efforts to improve the sites through boundary modification, and we are very pleased to support the amendments proposed.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for giving me the floor on the Agenda Item 45 COM 8B3.

Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago extension and renomination of the Ha Long Bay (Viet Nam), which has got a deferral recommendation by IUCN, the Advisory Body for natural sites, but amendments have been presented for inscriptions.

I thank the excellent work done by the World Heritage Secretariat and the Advisory Body. We respect the views of the Advisory Body. Hence, when the Advisory Body has given a deferral recommendation, then there are major considerations involved. If the amendment is from deferral to inscription, then serious discussion and clarifications are required. The State Party of Viet Nam met us and have clarified that they have taken prompt actions to provide guidelines to the local authorities to propose, plan, assess development projects in the area of the property in the coming time, ensuring to mitigate impacts on its Outstanding Universal Value inscribed by UNESCO, in accordance with Viet Namese law and the Operational Guidelines. India appreciates the efforts and strong commitment from Viet Nam regarding the integrity, protection, management of the property. The letter of commitment by the Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam and two other letters of commitment by two leaders of Hai Phong City and Quang Minh Province exhibit their seriousness and commitment of the leaders and the local community to strictly observe the national policy and the Convention of 1972 to protect the property for future generations. This commitment is also strengthened by the presence of the two Vice-Chairmen of Quang Nam Province and Hai Phong City at this meeting in Riyadh.

India, therefore, supports the amended draft decision proposal for inscription, and approves the significant boundary modification of Ha Long Bay to include Cat Ba Archipelago to become Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago on the World Heritage List.

I will say a line in the Viet Name language: "*Indo hong ho, Viet Nam*".

I request you to give the floor to Viet Nam to respond to the concerns of the Advisory Body.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Considering that the nomination of the extension of the Ha Long Bay World Heritage property inscribed almost 30 years ago with the adjacent Cat Ba Archipelago has been a long time coming, following IUCN recommendations in 1993 and 2013 and an evaluation report in 2018;

Considering also that the State Party has agreed and taken multiple, including legal, commitments to meet IUCN concerns regarding the integrity, protection and management of both the existing Ha Long Bay property and the Cat Ba Archipelago extension;

Considering further that the State Party has agreed to nominate the major boundary modification of the Ha Long Bay property on the basis of the criteria identified by IUCN to establish provable Outstanding Universal Value;

Considering as well that the State Party claims to also seek the extension of the Ha Long Bay property with the Cat Ba Archipelago to apply the stringent procedure of Article 172 of the Operational Guidelines and corresponding oversight of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, to also better protect the integrity of the Ha Long Bay property and provide authorities in both concerned provinces with more and better means to withstand growing pressures from mass tourism, real estate developments and unsustainable economic development;

Considering further that the State Party is committed to pursue socio-economic development of the nominated extended property that is contingent upon sustainable environmental protection, and that its decision, taken in that respect, will warrant the rights and entitlements of the local communities;

Therefore, Mr. Chair, Belgium has decided to co-author the draft amendment submitted by our Esteemed colleagues of the Kingdom of Thailand.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. *Shukran*.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Afwan*. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

First of all, we'd like to thank the detailed report of the IUCN as well as the reports presented by the Secretariat.

We would like to support the amendment put forward by Thailand in order to approve the significant boundary modification of Ha Long Bay to Cat Ba Archipelago.

We understand that this modification aims to protect and ensure the integrity of this natural property, with no administrative boundaries between the two sites. We also recognize the commitments undertaken by the authorities to protect the site. We also highlight that Viet Nam has fulfilled the recommendations of the IUCN, and has decided to focus only on criteria (vii) and (viii).

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and this Committee Session.

It is crucial to address concerns raised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN, regarding the protection of Ha Long Bay. Swift action is imperative to safeguard this property for the benefit of future generations. Paragraph 8 of the Operational Guidelines emphasizes the importance of protecting World Heritage properties from

adverse impacts, particularly those stemming from large scale projects. The proposal to extend the Ha Long Bay to encompass Cat Ba Archipelago aligns perfectly with this principle, as it seeks to bolster the protection and preservation of this exceptional site.

As articulated in Article 4 of the Convention, to underscore the significance of World Heritage status, consider the example of Viet Nam's Trang An Complex, initially embroiled in controversy due to pollution from nearby cement factories, as highlighted in Article 3 of the Convention, this site has since undergone a remarkable transformation after being inscribed on the World Heritage List.

It now stands as a serene and ecologically vibrant testament to the Viet Nam's dedication to conserving its heritage, a testament to the Convention's core principles. The success story of the Trang An Complex, which even impressed the UNESCO General-Director during her visit, exemplifies the harmony achieved between economic development and sustainable tourism and the preservation of nature as outlined in Paragraph 11 of the Operation Guidelines. This achievement instils confidence that a similar approach can be successfully applied to the proposed extension of Ha Long Bay, similar to Trang An Complex, the extension of Ha Long Bay to include Cat Ba Archipelago seeks to enhance protection and ensure the integrity of this invaluable property, aligning it with Convention's core objectives as articulated in Article 2, which is to identify and safeguard sites of Outstanding Universal Value.

Given these considerations, we, as the Zambian Delegation, wholeheartedly support Thailand's proposal to significantly modify the boundaries of Ha Long Bay to include Cat Ba Archipelago on the World Heritage List.

Such a decision would align seamlessly with the principles of the Convention, and reinforce our collective commitment to the preservation of the natural and cultural treasures of our world for generations to come.

I submit, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

Zambia, the mic.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

My Delegation would like to appreciate the work done by the World Heritage Centre and the IUCN, and thank Thailand for proposing the draft amendment, particularly on the significant boundary modification of Ha Long Bay to include Cat Ba Archipelago, a property of Outstanding Universal Value.

It is our understanding that upon preparation of nomination, the State Party reached a consensus among the local communities who wish to have a new World Heritage site as soon as possible. In fact, we believe this brings many benefits such as sustainable environmental protection, sustainable socio-economic development, ensuring security and safety like many heritage properties have brought over the years in the reality. Additionally, it is also the understanding of our Delegation that consensus has been reached among communities who had to relocate out of the core area to new premises, and that the number of locals affected by the relocation has been on a decrease significantly. The State Party informed that compensation schemes and assistance are provided for them to settle in better conditions.

In this regard, we support Thailand's proposal for amendment of the draft decision regarding the significant boundary modification of Ha Long Bay extending to Cat Ba Archipelago to become Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago on the World Heritage List.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for giving us the floor.

We warmly welcome the fact that the State Party has worked in close cooperation with IUCN for many years, and this significant boundary modification is the result of the received advice and joint collaboration.

As for the integrity, we consider that the proposed enlarged site will provide adequate protection of the OUV of the whole area since all necessary elements have been included in the core area and in the buffer zone.

After careful review of the documents, we are on the view that the legal protection is guaranteed as the extended area falls under multiple designations such as National Park, Biosphere Reserve, National Special Scenic Site, and so on, and thus the property has effective national legal protection.

Management tools are also available, such as regulations, master plans and action plans.

So, acknowledging the efforts of the State Party, together with the Advisory Body and encouraging the State Party to implement timely the recommendations in the draft decision, we support the proposed amendment as initially suggested by Thailand.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair.

We commend the presentation made by the State Party as well as the information provided on Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Archipelago, as well as the extension.

The regions included in Cat Ba contain a great level of diversity, including the forests in the central region. Within the archipelago, there are also rare species of primates, as well as other forms of flora and fauna. Some of these species can be found nowhere else. The State Party of Viet Nam has been successful in fighting against pollution, particularly, as regards water treatment.

The State Party has undertaken commitments to fight against threats such as mass tourism, large-scale development projects or the development of maritime transport. These developments have a negative impact on the property, so we commend the efforts undertaken by Viet Nam to ensure the comprehensive management of the property as well as effective coordination between the two provinces. The provinces have enhanced their cooperation, and we're convinced that, in the future, thanks to common efforts, the provinces, alongside the Government of Viet Nam and other relevant stakeholders at different levels, will be able to ensure the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of this property and the archipelago. We also note the willingness of the State Party to undertake an impact assessment study on this property as regards any potential activity to be undertaken within the property and the wider area and the buffer zone. We thank the Advisory Bodies and the State Party for the work undertaken and for the transparent and constructive dialogue which has been carried out with the State Party.

We support the amendments put forward by Thailand.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Comme nous avons pu le comprendre après la présentation de ce dossier, le bien proposé pour extension et inscription est un site exceptionnel, qui abrite un large éventail d'espèces marines et terrestres, notamment un grand nombre de plantes et surtout des espèces animales, dont certaines sont endémiques et menacées.

Nous notons aussi que la baie d'Ha Long a été inscrite pour la première fois en 1994 selon le critère (vii) et également en 2000 selon le critère (viii) pour inclure l'archipel de Cat Ba. L'État partie du Viet Nam ne fait que poursuivre une procédure et répondre à une recommandation de l'UICN concernant cette extension.

Conformément aux informations disponibles et actualisées, méritent d'être salués de nombreux efforts entrepris par le Viet Nam dès la réception du rapport de l'Organe d'évaluation. Ils ont notamment consisté à planifier et évaluer les projets de développement dans la zone du bien, en veillant à atténuer les impacts sur sa valeur universelle exceptionnelle, conformément à la loi vietnamienne. En outre, les localités concernées ont mis en œuvre un certain nombre d'activités pour protéger l'intégrité et la valeur universelle du bien, ainsi que l'atteste, du reste, notamment la résolution n° 5/2021 du 12 août 2021 relative au soutien financier et à la mise en œuvre du démantèlement des installations aquacoles dans les baies de l'archipel de Cat Ba.

Mérite d'être pris en compte l'engagement de l'État, partie du Viet Nam à prendre des mesures spécifiques pour mettre en œuvre les recommandations de l'UICN, et ce, immédiatement après l'inscription du bien.

Compte tenu de ce qui précède, nous encourageons l'État partie à continuer à évaluer les besoins de soutien du plan de réintégration, à mener des politiques et des programmes de soutien pour faciliter l'intégration de la communauté locale.

Enfin, nous approuvons les amendements proposés aux fins de permettre la nouvelle inscription du bien de la baie d'Ha Long ainsi que son extension pour intégrer l'archipel de Cat Ba.

Merci bien, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation has examined very carefully this nomination dossier as well as the Advisory Body's evaluation, whereas we have asked further clarifications from the State Party in order to establish a well-informed opinion on this case.

Therefore, we believe that this request for enlargement and inscription should be accepted for four main reasons:

- First, the Advisory Body recognizes the potential of the nomination of the nominated property to meet criteria (vii) and (viii) whereas the State Party is also of the view that the possibility of using criterion (x) needs further investigation and documentation.
- Second, the State Party gives its assurances as of non-licensing large-scale projects so far, its commitment to implementing IUCN's recommendations concerning these projects as well as the observance of Paragraph 172 of the Operational guidelines concerning future projects.
- Three, this proposed extension of the boundaries of the nominated property has been a great opportunity for two provinces of Viet Nam to successfully cooperate in order to safeguard their cultural heritage. This is considered by the State Party as a unique example that can inspire other initiatives of this kind within the country or together with neighbouring countries.
- And finally, our support to this nomination is based on the assurances, of behalf of the State Party, that the nomination has the full consent of the local residents. Moreover, it goes hand in hand with the efforts undertaken by the State Party to improve living conditions of the residents and takes into consideration their needs.

Mr. Chair,

Given all the above, we are convinced that this proposal meets all the prerequisites to be accepted and that also it will substantially contribute to the protection of the property from exploitation and overtourism in the coming years.

Therefore, our Delegation fully supports the amendments proposed by Thailand.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for giving South Africa the floor.

Firstly, we would like to commend the State Party of Viet Nam for the submission of extension and renomination of Ha Long Bay to include Cat Ba Archipelago.

Chairperson,

The State Party of Viet Nam has demonstrated its commitment to addressing the issues raised by the IUCN in their evaluation mission report. For example, increasing protection of the proposed site, community consultation, and addressing large-scale developments that might have negative impact to the OUV of the site, in line with the State Party applicable legislation.

After examining the dossier and followed by the discussion with the State Party of Viet Nam, Mr. Chair, our assessment is that this site fulfils the requirement for listing in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

In light of the above content, Mr. Chair, the Delegation of South Africa would like to support the extension of the boundary and renomination for inscription of Ha Long Bay to include Cat Ba Archipelago.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chair,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has reviewed the amendment, examined the reports and dossier, and has listened to presentations from the State Party on the Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago site of Viet Nam.

We note that the Ha Long Bay World Heritage site was inscribed in 1994 on the criteria (vii) and again in 2000 on the criteria (viii). The IUCN recommendation of 1993 and 2013 to include Cat Ba Archipelago is also noted as the State Party proceeded to prepare the current dossier on that basis. In fact, the extension of boundaries to include Cat Bay Archipelago captures areas already protected on the Viet Nam heritage laws. Further expansion of the boundaries recommended by IUCN will be addressed once this new area has been inscribed.

We note that large-scale development projects within or directly affecting the property have not been granted approval to proceed, and efforts are being made to improve site management and to involve the neighbouring communities. In fact, both provinces have agreed and are committed to cooperate in ensuring that activities conform with expectations of a World Heritage site. We applaud the efforts of the State Party in this regard.

Therefore, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines supports the amendment to significantly modify the boundary of Ha Long Bay (Viet Nam) to include Cat Ba Archipelago to become the Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago on the World Heritage List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Considering that IUCN recommendation have been followed, Rwandan Delegation commend the State Party of Viet Nam for the measures which were put in place to protect the property. We note with satisfaction that all the necessary elements related to the OUV are protected.

Therefore, Rwandan Delegation supports the amendment proposed by Thailand presented before you.

I thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa‘ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to thank Viet Nam for its commendable efforts undertaken to protect this property. We thank all the Government, all the organizations that have supported Viet Nam in its efforts.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I now invite the State Party to respond to the question raised by the Japanese Delegation.

The Observer Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I wish to express our sincere thanks to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the wonderful organization of the meeting and I would also like to thank Thailand and other Committee members who co-authors and supports the amendment.

Viet Nam has taken various actions to endorse IUCN recommendations to better ensure the integrity, protection and management of the property.

With regard to the question raised by the Distinguished Delegate of Japan, we wish to share with you about the meetings we have between the representatives of Viet Nam and IUCN and the World Heritage Centre. We have two meetings. The first one is online on 6 September and the second one is meeting *in praesentia* in Riyadh, yesterday. And I'm sure that Mr. Tim Badman and Mr. Alessandro Balsamo can share with me the view that we have very fruitful and constructive dialogue in the spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding. We touch upon three issues, and we agree on three issues that we wish to share with you:

- 1) The first one regarding criteria. We fully agree that Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago can meet the criteria (vii) and (viii), and also at IUCN Viet Nam, we study the potential criteria (x) for future nomination.

- 2) The second issue regarding management. IUCN appreciates the efforts made by the local authorities to work closely together with a strong level of collaboration and with the joint management platform at all levels. The leaders are committed to further institutionalize the current mechanism to revise and complete the management plan. This site will be the first site of the joint management between the two provinces, and, definitely, with the joint efforts of the leaders and the local communities of the two provinces, I'm sure that the issues that the Delegation of Japan has mentioned, the mass tourism, could be effectively dealt with, and this would be the first inter-provincial site, which also invite other provinces and cities in Viet Nam to work for closely together, and also can inspire for another model of transboundary sites in the future as well.
- 3) The third issue regarding development projects. We are strongly committed to the property at the highest level of legal protection, with the letters of commitments of the leaders of Viet Nam, and so the provinces as well. So, the expansion helps to enhance the OUV of the property and better protect and ensure the integrity of the World natural property, not only for the present but also for the future generation.

And having said that, the Government of Viet Nam would sincerely and ask for the support of the Committee for the inscription of Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Archipelago.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

I would like to pass the floor to IUCN for some...

Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Sorry, Mr. Chair,

If you wanted to give the floor to IUCN, please, and after that, we want to make an intervention.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. IUCN.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair.

I think it would just be appropriate for IUCN to comment on the meeting as well.

I'd like to just firstly confirm that the three key points that were just raised by the Distinguished Ambassador Viet Nam are indeed, from our point of view, the key points from that discussion. And also, just to reiterate, firstly, that there is a clear potential for the application of criteria (x), so the further exploration of that is an important part of the deliberation of the Committee.

Secondly, I think to welcome the opportunity that has been provided to hear not only the commitments that are necessary at the national level, but in this case, the commitments that need to be taken on board by the two different provinces that are concerned. IUCN knows, from our long association of work in Viet Nam, that it can be quite challenging to ensure coordination between provincial level efforts, and, I think, Japan also alluded to the difficulties that can sometimes take place within countries in terms of that type of collaboration. So, I think we greatly have appreciated meeting the leaders of the two provinces concerned and hearing firsthand the degree to which their collaboration has increased.

And thirdly, I think just to endorse but make clear the challenge that exists with the threats that are present with the existing property and also the area that is proposed for extension, notwithstanding the clear commitments that have been made. We know that these are challenging issues because they have been issues that have come to the Committee on a number of occasions with the existing property, and the mission could see that these are not going to be matters that are dealt with overnight.

So, I think we also note that the clear role of this Committee to support but also to request States Parties to continue to protect sites once they are listed will remain extremely important for this property, given the need to ensure the Outstanding Universal Value is preserved in the long term.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I will pass the floor now to Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

As our expert said earlier, I think we have to have a very cautious and extensive discussion in case we have deferral recommendations. That is why we wanted to ask questions first and hear the views of the Member State concerned as well as the Evaluation Bodies. And also, we wanted to hear views from the members of the Committee at the same time. That is why I had to come back at this moment in time.

Now, on the basis of the discussions which we have heard, several things are very clear.

First of all, the issue of criteria, as both Viet Nam and the IUCN confirmed, there is a OUV. IUCN has to say that it's a potential OUV but, of course, respecting that, there is a kind of OUV on (vii) and (viii).

And also, IUCN did raise the question of management for protection. There were several points which did not exist before but, obviously now, we have the representatives, the Vice-Chairpersons of the two provinces, and then they showed a very clear commitment. I'm sure that other Committee members have heard those clear commitments from those two very senior officials of those two provinces, that will make a lot of differences.

And also, IUCN did express concern about the tourism issue, but again here, we understand that Viet Nameese authorities, including the instructions or letter from the Deputy Prime Minister on those. As a result of those actions, we have enough confidence in what Viet Nam is going to do in regard to this issue.

Now, this is an extension case, so this could be an extension of protection. That has its own meaning. And on top of that, I think we can probably come back to this issue after a few years in terms of the SOC report of this particular property, so we will have an occasion to see how implementation is going to be secured in the years ahead.

All in all, and again, thank you very much, IUCN, and thank you very much, Viet Nam, to have this constructive dialogue that will make our work a lot easier and clear.

So, with all of that, we would like to join the other Delegations in supporting the proposal from Thailand.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

I support what the Ambassador of Japan has said, and we all support Viet Nam in this regard, primarily because of the commitment. And I re-emphasize it is the commitment being shown at the highest level of Viet Nameese leadership, none other than the Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam has written about this commitment. This shows how deeply committed the State Party of Viet Nam is to the 1972 Convention and the World Heritage Convention.

The recommendation of deferral was at one point in time. However, thereafter a lot of water has flown. Viet Nam has had extensive discussion with IUCN, and there is a level of recognition and commitment and coordination between the two provinces of Viet Nam, the Hai Phong City and the Quang Ngai Province, Excellency.

Having said that, Excellency, we are wait and we welcome the inclusion of this property on the World Heritage List.

I thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

It seems the vast majority are in favour and to this proposal.

So, there are no more comments or interventions.

I would like to invite you to examine and adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.3**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Thailand, which was co-authored by the Distinguished Delegations of India, Mali, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Zambia, Belgium and Qatar. And from the floor, we have received endorsements from the Distinguished Delegations of Oman, Italy, Mexico, Argentina, Greece, Bulgaria, Russian Federation, South Africa, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia and Japan.

The amendment as proposed to Para 3...

The Chairperson:

Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, to intervene at this stage, but we had sent, during lunch time, our support to the amendment, and I have confirmed it in my intervention.

Thank you very much indeed.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

The Rapporteur:

Sorry.

So, the revised Para 3: "Approves the significant boundary modification of Ha Long Bay (Viet Nam) to include the Cat Ba Archipelago to become Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago (Viet Nam), on the basis of criteria (vii) and '(viii)';".

Revised Para 4: "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:".

We can go down to Para 5. Revised Para 5: "Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Revised the boundaries of Cat Ba National Park to align with the boundaries of the Cat Ba Archipelago extension to the Ha Long Bay World Heritage property,
- b) Revised development projects of all kinds in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, undertake Heritage Impact Assessment for any relevant projects in the buffer zone and adjacent to the buffer zone, and continue to strengthen the legal protection status of the buffer zone,
- c) Expand the existing ecological carrying capacity analysis conducted for Ha Long Bay to the entire property, ensuring effective tourism management that respects the Outstanding Universal Value of the property,
- d) Revise and complete the management plan to address key threats to the property and strengthen law enforcement accordingly, including threats from mass tourism, a major shipping lane, growth of settlements, poaching, exploitation of marine resources and forest products, overfishing, unsustainable aquaculture, pollution *in bracket* (oil, noise, sewage litter including from river catchment inputs), and significant developments in the buffer zone, and consider to study the development of a monitoring plan and management indicators in order to manage the property effectively and efficiently,".

This point is suggested by IUCN to become a separate Para 6, so we can move it down.

The revised e) point under Para 5 would be:

- "e) Continue appropriate consultations with the local communities, particularly those who might be affected and be relocated from the core area, conduct support policy and programs to facilitate the integration of the relocated communities, including subsidy, financial schemes and social services, and consider assessing the needs of relocated communities in order to ensure adequate support from the State Party;".

The revised Para 6: "Encourages the State Party to also consider nominating the property under criteria (x)";".

Para 7: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for review by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

End of amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We hadn't expressed our support previously, but we'd like to express our support now. We are happy to support the amendments tabled, and we commend the dialogue which has been held between the State Party and IUCN. And we also commend the efforts undertaken by Viet Nam in order to come up with these amendments, which we support.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I'd like now to invite you to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 2, there are no amendments. Do you agree to accept them as they are?

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

If we are following a criteria of how the names of Member States are being mentioned, Egypt had mentioned the support before the State Party of Mexico did, and the State Party of Mexico has supported at this point in time. That's why it becomes imperative that Mexico's name be placed after Japan, Excellency, if that is okay with the State Party of Mexico.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

There is no problem with that, Chair, as long as the support is reflected.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, Paragraph 1 and 2, there are no amendments. Do we agree to accept them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposed text. Do you, agree with the proposed amendment. I see none, so adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have proposed text. Do we agree with the proposed paragraph. I see no objection. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with the proposed paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues, I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole, and if there are no objections, I declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.3 adopted** as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Let me congratulate Viet Nam on behalf of the entire Committee for the approval of the extension of this property.

Viet Nam, you have the floor for a brief two-minute statement.

The Observer Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

At this moment, Viet Nameese people, including Quang Ninh Province and Hai Phong City, are very happy. Thus, Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba is inscribed in the World Heritage List. For us, this is very important for local Government. Hai Phong and Quang Ninh are committed to effectively preserving and protecting the property.

The inscriptions of Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Archipelago to promote pride, raise communities, one of the important and good values of the heritage and contribute to enhancing the responsibility to protect and promote the heritage. With the consent of the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on behalf of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the Government and the community, we are committed to issuing a national programme of action in accordance with the UNESCO Convention, taking necessary measures to protect the values of heritage.

Finally, I would like to thank, Mr. Chair, the Committee members, Secretariat and IUCN for very work hard and supporting for inscriptions of this property of Viet Nam. May I wish all of you have a good health, happiness and success.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

8B.4 Volcanoes and Forests of Mount Pelée and the *Pitons* of Northern Martinique (France) // Volcans et forêts de la Montagne Pelée et des pitons du nord de la Martinique (France)

The Chairperson:

I now invite IUCN to present the nomination of Volcanoes and Forests of Mount Pelée and the *Pitons* of Northern Martinique, France.

IUCN, you may have the floor.

IUCN :

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

[Prochaine diapo, s'il vous plaît]

L'évaluation de l'IUCN se trouve sur les pages indiquées sur cette diapositive.

La Montagne Pelée est une icône volcanique, remarquable par son type éruptif notable lié aux dômes de lave, à la viscosité élevée et aux explosions dirigées latéralement.

Les forêts de la Martinique sont présentées comme les plus diverses et les moins fragmentées des Petites Antilles, et abritent plus que 1 000 espèces de plantes vasculaires indigènes.

L'inscription du bien est ainsi proposée au titre des critères (viii) et (x).

Le bien proposé compte presque 14 000 ha et se compose du massif du Mont Conil, associé au système volcanique récent de la Montagne Pelée ainsi que des massifs du Morne Jacob et des Pitons du Carbet.

Une seule zone tampon de presque 30 000 ha enveloppe les deux éléments composants.

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Concernant le critère (x), le Panel du patrimoine mondial de l'IUCN a noté le nombre élevé d'espèces de plantes et d'animaux endémiques présentes dans le bien proposé. Certaines espèces sont strictement endémiques de la Martinique, y compris des espèces en danger critique d'extinction. Le bien proposé chevauche trois aires protégées considérées parmi les plus irremplaçables du monde pour la conservation des mammifères, des oiseaux et des amphibiens.

Outre l'endémisme et la biodiversité dans les Petites Antilles, l'analyse comparative de l'État partie fait remarquer que la Martinique possède la plus longue étendue continue de forêts, de la mer aux sommets volcaniques, une caractéristique qui n'existe plus dans les autres îles des Petites Antilles.

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Cependant, en ce qui concerne le critère (viii), l'analyse comparative ne compare pas clairement le site proposé avec les biens du patrimoine mondial de la Zone de gestion des pitons (Sainte-Lucie) et du Parc national de Morne Trois Pitons (Dominique). Sur demande du Panel de l'IUCN, l'État partie a fourni une analyse comparative détaillée pour le critère (viii). Toutefois, le Panel a fait remarquer que cette analyse comparative n'identifie pas clairement les attributs constituant une éventuelle valeur universelle exceptionnelle selon le critère (viii). Par ailleurs, pour démontrer l'importance mondiale du bien, l'analyse devrait inclure une comparaison plus étendue des éruptions pliniennes et des volcans à dômes semblables. De plus, le Mont Pelée n'est que partiellement inclus dans le bien proposé.

L'IUCN estime, selon la représentation des attributs géologiques notée dans les informations complémentaires, que cette représentation n'est pas complète. À cet égard, l'IUCN note que 13 des 20 géo-sites jugés importants dans l'information complémentaire se trouvent dans la zone tampon et ne sont donc pas inclus dans le bien proposé.

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Par conséquent, en plus d'une révision de l'analyse comparative, la proposition nécessite également une révision des limites pour couvrir les valeurs géologiques d'une manière adéquate. De plus, l'IUCN considère qu'il serait

nécessaire de renforcer la capacité de gestion du bien proposé du point de vue de la protection et de la gestion des valeurs géologiques.

En ce qui concerne les valeurs de biodiversité, l'information complémentaire indique des aires importantes que l'on trouve dans des zones qui ne font pas l'objet d'un régime de protection strict, comme...

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... comme le plus grand groupe de forêts hygrophiles, ces forêts qui sont rares en Martinique et possèdent la biomasse et le nombre d'espèces les plus élevés.

Le Panel de l'UICN considère donc que le degré de protection juridique n'est pas actuellement adéquat pour le critère (x).

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M. le Président,

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Le projet de décision se trouve dans le Document 8B, comme indiqué sur la diapositive, et contient la recommandation de l'UICN de différer la proposition d'inscription des Volcans et forêts de la montagne Pelée et des pitons du nord de la Martinique, tout en notant du potentiel important de ce bien proposé pour satisfaire les critères (viii) et (x).

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to ask if there are any comments regarding this nomination.

Egypt.

La Délégation de l'Égypte :

M. le Président,

Je veux suivre le représentant de l'UICN en parlant en français.

Tout d'abord, je voudrais le remercier pour sa présentation complète et détaillée de cette importante proposition d'inscription.

L'État partie a eu la possibilité de soumettre des informations supplémentaires dans le délai imparti.

En ce qui concerne les points soulevés par l'UICN dans son rapport, j'aimerais apporter quelques éclaircissements sur l'intégrité et la protection des sites, que je considère comme essentiels pour ce Comité.

En ce qui concerne l'intégrité du site, il faut considérer le contexte régional pour l'apprécier. Ce site présente, je cite l'UICN à ce sujet, « deux bandes impressionnantes de forêts contiguës, s'étendant de la côte aux sommets volcaniques ». L'analyse comparative démontre clairement que le bien proposé se distingue comme l'ensemble forestier le plus diversifié et le mieux conservé dans le contexte des Petites Antilles. Ce fait est le résultat d'une combinaison de plusieurs facteurs : premièrement, l'île est au centre de l'arc volcanique ; deuxièmement, c'est l'une des trois îles les plus grandes et les plus hautes ; et troisièmement, le nord de la Martinique a été fortement dépeuplé depuis la tragédie de mai 1902, lorsque les éruptions de la Montagne Pelée ont tué tous les habitants de sa capitale, 30 000 victimes, permettant la régénération naturelle de la forêt sur les cendres du volcan. Tous les types forestiers que l'on trouve dans les Petites Antilles sont représentés dans le bien qui comprend 90 % des arbres endémiques des Petites Antilles. Ceci confère une responsabilité importante dans la conservation de la biodiversité de cet archipel.

En ce qui concerne le critère (viii), comme le souligne l'UICN dans ce rapport, bien qu'il existe des sites géologiques notables dans la zone tampon, leur valeur patrimoniale est principalement d'importance locale ou nationale. De faible surface et éloignés par rapport au périmètre du bien, ces sites ne remplissent pas les conditions d'intégrité et ne contribuent pas de manière significative au critère du bien proposé pour l'inscription. Par conséquent, nous ne sommes pas d'accord avec la recommandation de l'UICN de revoir le périmètre de cette proposition d'inscription, car nous considérons que tous les attributs se trouvent dans les limites du site pour exprimer les deux critères de la VUE.

En ce qui concerne la protection du site, l'ensemble du bien est inclus au sein de l'aire protégée du Parc naturel régional de la Martinique, comprenant 80 % des forêts publiques. Ces forêts sont, en grande partie, protégées par des réserves biologiques intégrales offrant le niveau de protection le plus élevé. Le bien dispose donc de mesures de protection efficaces, claires et rigoureuses dans le contexte d'un bien insulaire englobant à la fois la biodiversité et les caractéristiques géologiques dans le système de gestion. Il existe un contrôle strict des activités dans le bien proposé qui, selon moi, est conforme aux exigences de cette Convention et de notre Comité. Aujourd'hui, le

système de protection réglementaire garantit dans le site qu'il n'y a pas des habitants, qu'aucune construction n'est autorisée et qu'aucune exploitation des ressources forestières, pas de chasse et aucune exploration ou exploitation des ressources souterraines ou d'agriculture. L'État partie s'est engagé, dans le plan de gestion, à poursuivre l'élargissement des zones protégées garantissant le maintien de l'intégrité du bien.

En gardant ces considérations à l'esprit et après avoir soigneusement étudié les recommandations de l'UICN, nous sommes convaincus que les préoccupations exprimées sur l'intégrité et la protection du site n'affectent pas la qualité générale de la proposition d'inscription.

L'Égypte exprime donc son soutien à l'inscription de cette proposition d'inscription et nous avons soumis un amendement à cet effet.

Avec votre permission, M. le Président, j'espère que vous puissiez donner la parole au pays membre pour répondre et donner des clarifications additionnelles.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Oman wishes to acknowledge the efforts made by the State Party and Advisory Bodies to address all requirements to recognize the potential of the OUV of the property.

The proposed site is one of the most hundred unique areas in the world for the conservation of endangered species, and Mount Pelée has identified as a global reference for the modern volcanology iconic, according to the three thematic IUCN studies from 1982, 2002 and 2019.

The site nominated under the criteria (viii) and (x), and the two component parts of the site, consist of the two major geomorphological components of the volcanic origin in northern Martinique. In addition to its worldwide importance for the earth science within the Caribbean volcanic system and the island arc of the Lesser Antilles.

However, the State Party commitment to implement effective management plans, conservation activities and awareness programme is highly commendable and, indeed, will ensure the contribution to the global efforts of protecting such natural treasures.

Therefore, we support the amendments on draft decision and ask you, Mr. Chairperson, to give the floor to the State Party for further clarification, for its effort to ensure the importance of this property and its OUV.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Le site naturel des Volcans et forêts de la Montagne Pelée et des pitons du nord de la Martinique représente un trésor naturel d'une réelle beauté, qui abrite une biodiversité exceptionnelle et constitue un écosystème fragile, méritant ainsi une protection et une reconnaissance internationale.

Nous savons que les biens naturels de cette partie du monde qu'est la Martinique ont servi à développer une conscience écologique aiguë et à promouvoir une vision du monde basée sur la préservation de la diversité biologique et culturelle. Nous souhaitons que cette prise de conscience puisse se consolider.

En tout état de cause, le Mali y contribuera, en tant que pays riche d'une histoire et d'une culture qui consacrent la préservation de la nature, ainsi que l'attestent, du reste, les premiers articles de la Charte du Mandén, dès le XIII^e siècle. C'est dire que nous comprenons l'importance de la protection et de la valorisation des trésors de la nature et du patrimoine culturel pour les générations actuelles et futures.

Nous soutenons donc l'amendement proposé par l'Égypte en faveur de l'inscription de ce bien, tout en encourageant l'État partie à mettre en œuvre un régime de protection davantage cohérent et efficace, d'une part, et d'autre part, à renforcer la capacité de gestion sur le site pour y assurer la protection et la gestion des valeurs géologiques.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar.*

La Délégation du Qatar :

M. le Président,

La Délégation de l'État du Qatar a pris connaissance du projet d'inscription des Volcans et forêts de la Montagne Pelée et des pitons du nord de la Martinique sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Nous observons dans le cas de la Martinique, une convergence intéressante de particularités remarquables, telle une localisation au sein d'un *hotspot* mondial de biodiversité dans une zone sous-représentée sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Nous soulignons également les valeurs intrinsèques de périmètre volcanique et forestier du nord de la Martinique, attestées depuis plus d'une quarantaine d'années par de nombreuses études de l'UICN, au titre de sa géodiversité et de sa biodiversité.

Dans le cadre de ce projet, nous observons singulièrement que le cadre d'exigences défini par la protection de ce patrimoine exceptionnel s'inscrit dans une optique continue de progrès. En témoigne la décision de la Martinique d'interdire, dans le périmètre du bien, l'exploitation forestière et la chasse.

Au final, nous sommes convaincus que l'énergie mise en œuvre collectivement par la transmission de ce patrimoine aux générations futures en plus et aux dynamiques de développement durable pour le territoire et son environnement régional dynamique, particulièrement vital dans ce contexte post-crise planétaire.

La valeur universelle exceptionnelle des Volcans et forêts du nord de la Martinique ne nous semble plus à démontrer et apparaît comme un puissant vecteur de valorisation et de préservation.

Le Qatar considère que ce projet d'inscription s'inscrit dans le cadre des Orientations devant guider la mise en œuvre du patrimoine mondial et dans l'objectif d'y intégrer une Liste représentative, équilibrée et crédible.

Nous soutenons l'amendement en faveur de l'inscription du site Volcans et forêts de la Montagne Pelée et des pitons du nord de la Martinique sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India, please.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor on the Agenda Item 45 [COM] 8B.4, Volcanoes and Forests of Mount Pelée and Pitons of Northern Martinique (France), which has got a deferral recommendation by the Expert Body.

But now, we have been presented with amendments for inscription. We respect the views of the Advisory Body. Hence, when the Advisory Bodies has given a deferral recommendation, then there are major considerations involved. If the amendment is from deferral to inscription, then serious discussion and clarifications are required. We also understand the need for more properties from Small Islands to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, and understand that the inscription of this nomination will aid the entire region of the Caribbean.

Given India's commitment to the World Heritage Convention, we travelled to the nominated property at our own cost and have seen the property nominated firsthand. We met with the local community and the local Government bodies of Martinique and heard of their commitment.

This nomination was made under criteria (viii) and (x) for natural sites. A differing recommendation was given to allow the State Party to prepare a revised nomination. It considers that the nominated property has potential to meet World Heritage criteria, but does not fulfil the integrity requirements for one of the criteria at this stage, but has welcomed the management plan. The property has had an operational management plan for the last three years, approved by all local elected officials.

This property has 1,058 species of native and globally threatened species. The combination of protection and the ownership regimes ensures strict regulations such as no inhabitants, no construction permitted, no exploitation of the forest resources, no hunting, no exploration or exploitation of underground resources, no agricultural exploitation. Protected areas will be strengthened through the acquisition of private lands to ensure complete land control, in addition to existing protections. Additionally, the highest level of protection will be extended: project for reinforced protection on an additional 2,000 ha of forest; and specific State measures to protect the main geo sites.

India supports France and, therefore, the amendments for inscription, but request that the floor be given to the State Party of France to respond to the concerns raised by the Advisory Body.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

First of all, I'd like to thank the Advisory Bodies for the presentation of the report on the Volcanoes and Forests of Mount Pelée and the *Pitons* of Northern Martinique. We'd also like to thank the Secretariat for the draft decision.

In the Caribbean, World Heritage sites are not sufficiently represented on the Heritage list. This is why we supported the amendment as co-authors because we believe that the property meets the requirements of the Convention.

IUCN already recognized the north of Martinique as a gap area in the World Heritage List. Since then, there have been four thematic studies which demonstrate the potential of the site to meet the OUV under (viii) and (x).

The nomination file appears robust to us, and this is why we support inscription.

We would like to ask the State Party to take commitments in terms of management and protection.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to join others who have spoken before me to appreciate the Advisory Bodies for the report on this item.

The Nigerian Delegation wishes to express support for the inscription of the Volcanoes and the Forest of Mount Pelée and the *Pitons* of Northern Martinique as a UNESCO World Heritage site under category (viii) and (x).

Nigeria and Martinique share a common history marked by dynamic exchanges and exceptional cultural richness. This inscription is a unique opportunity to strengthen the bonds and celebrate our shared heritage. As a nation blessed with diverse natural landscape, Nigeria understands the importance of preserving our natural and cultural heritage. We take pride in our World cultural Heritage sites such as the Sukur Cultural Landscape as well as other yet to be inscribed like the Cross River National Park, which demonstrates our commitment to the biodiversity conservation and natural heritage preservation. We stand ready to share our expertise and experience to support Martinique's inscription.

The recognition of this site as a UNESCO World Heritage will strengthen the protection and conservation of these exceptional landscapes.

By supporting this inscription, we express our solidarity with Martinique and our shared commitment to preserving our natural and cultural heritage. This recognition also strengthens the bond between our two nations and also encourage closer cooperation in the field of heritage preservation.

Mr. Chair,

Let me conclude by expressing my deepest gratitude to Martinique for this commitment to preserving this extraordinary site. As the Ambassador of Nigeria, I assure you of our full support, willingness to work together to safeguard our shared heritage, promote the cultural and natural diversity that enriches our world.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Considering the under-representation of geological sites on the World Heritage Listing from the thematic perspective, as the Delegation of Zambia, we wish to extend our resolute endorsement of the nomination of the Volcanoes and Forests of Mount Pelée and the *Pitons* of Northern Martinique as a natural World Heritage site, with a strong basis in the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention and its relevant articles.

This nomination aligns seamlessly with the fundamental principles outlined in the Convention's Operational Guidelines. Specifically, it adheres to the criteria set forth in criterion (viii) and criterion (x), as stipulated in Article 2 of the Convention. Criterion (viii) pertains to the outstanding examples of geomorphological processes, while criterion (x) relates to the significant ecological and biological processes.

Mr. Chairman,

Coming from the background of conserving a geological site such as the Victoria Falls World Heritage site, we seem to see some similarities from the geological perspective and from this point of view, Mr. Chairman, we would like to join the rest of the delegates in supporting the nomination of this wonderful site to the World Heritage Listing.

I submit, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Although this nomination is not a nomination from Small Island Developing country, we consider this site could become a good practice model for the nomination and management of the site on Small Islands.

In this context, we would like to ask the State Party, because it looks like the State Party has different opinion from IUCN regarding the attributes of criterion (viii), we would like to ask the State Party their view on the attributes and the OUV as well as the major obstacles to extend the boundary of the nomination, if there is any.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chairman,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has examined the amendment, the dossier, and received presentations from the State Party in respect of the Volcanoes and Forests of Mount Pelée and the *Pitons* of Northern Martinique.

Martinique is an island in the Caribbean and it's not existing in France, but it is a dependency of.

The attributes of this site include its uniqueness as an area of study of earth sciences. It possesses two of the most remarkable expressions of volcanic processes in the Lesser Antilles: its volcanic structure based on lava dome with lateral eruptions; significant biodiversity value; and uniqueness of its endemic species. The longest stretch of diverse and least fragmented forests here exists which does not exist on any of the other islands of the Lesser Antilles. Collectively, they give rise to its Outstanding Universal Value.

Indeed, the 1902 volcanic eruption in Martinique triggered the development of this area of earth science, with the establishment of an observatory for monitoring volcanic activity in the Caribbean region.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines believes that the World Heritage inscription would offer a powerful and precious tool of conservation and recognition for Martinique and the Lesser Antilles, particularly Saint Lucia, Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, currently facing the pressures threatening these small territories and where active and dormant volcanoes do exist. The landscapes and species therein are striking natural scenery in the Lesser Antilles.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, therefore, supports the inscription of this site, and we look forward to the report from the State Party, which will be presented by December 2025.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium, you may have the floor.

Le Délégué de la Belgique :

M. le Président,

Après examen du dossier et un entretien complémentaire entre nos experts belges et français ayant permis une clarification de l'Article 7 des amendements tels que proposés par l'Égypte, la Belgique considère que les limites du bien proposé incluent les attributs soutenant la valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

L'ensemble des géosites situés tant dans les limites du site proposé que dans la zone tampon bénéficient effectivement du plus haut niveau de protection nationale pour ce bien. Préserver la biodiversité dans la région caraïbe, jusqu'ici sous représentée dans la Liste du patrimoine mondial, est un enjeu majeur, tandis que les forêts de Martinique sont capitales pour la conservation de la flore endémique des Petites Antilles. Nous prenons donc en considération l'engagement de l'État partie d'étendre les mesures de protection de la biodiversité.

Pour l'ensemble de ces raisons, la Belgique soutient les amendements visant à l'inscription des Volcans et forêts de la Montagne Pelée et des pitons du nord de la Martinique sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

M. le Président,

La Délégation du Rwanda remercie la Délégation égyptienne pour la présentation faite sur la proposition d'inscription du bien naturel des Volcans et forêts de la Montagne Pelée et des pitons du nord de la Martinique sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

M. le Président,

Ce site représente un paysage naturel, captivant qui a profondément influencé la vision artistique d'Aimé Césaire. Ce site incarne parfaitement les critères de la Convention, mettant en évidence sa valeur universelle exceptionnelle et la nécessité de sa préservation pour les générations futures.

En conclusion, M. le Président, la Délégation du Rwanda approuve la nomination du bien naturel présenté et soutient l'amendement en faveur de son inscription.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation considers that the nominated property demonstrates global importance according to both biodiversity and geodiversity criteria, over the entire perimeter of the site.

Regarding criterion (viii), in particular, expressing the values of the geological heritage, we believe that the relevant attributes are integrated into the property, especially as far as characteristic volcanic morphologies are concerned, such as domes, blocks, products of eruption, and collapses. Such morphologies are generally underrepresented in the World Heritage List, a fact which probably should be taken into consideration. Moreover, the comparative analysis presented in the official documentation of the file and the additional report is based on a corpus of volcanic sites with common characteristics, making it possible to demonstrate the unique values of this property.

Taking into account the fact that there is a protection system in place to ensure the integrity of the property and the rigorous regulation of the activities throughout the site as well as the conservation of the biological and geological heritage in the long term, we strongly support this amendment submitted by Egypt, and we would like to invite and hear from the State Party of France to address IUCN's concerns.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

I would like to pass the floor to the State Party to respond to the Committee's questions and Advisory Bodies. France, you may have the floor.

La Délégation de la France (Observateur) :

M. le Président,

Je vous remercie de me passer la parole.

Je voudrais apporter des précisions nécessaires et par rapport à l'analyse de l'UICN, et je remercie l'UICN pour sa contribution et surtout l'expertise présentée.

Je vais m'attarder sur la question du critère (viii).

La Montagne Pelée est le dernier des quatre volcans référence mondiale pas encore représenté sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, avec Hawaï, les Îles Éoliennes et le Vésuve/Pompéi, ayant légué leur nom aux grandes figures volcaniques mondiales.

Je souhaite rappeler ici la constante de l'UICN, qui a identifié pas moins de quatre études depuis plus de 40 ans, la Martinique comme lacune de la liste : dès 1982, dans sa toute première étude mondiale ; en 2009, dans son étude sur les volcans du patrimoine mondial ; en 2013, dans son étude sur les sites les plus irremplaçables pour la biodiversité ; et en 2019, sur les lacunes géologiques de la Liste.

Concernant les critères de l'analyse comparative, l'UICN recommande d'élargir l'analyse à des volcans pliniens. Cependant, la montagne Pelée est reconnue mondialement pour les éruptions de 1902, tant pour la portée historique, scientifique, esthétique et sociétale de cet édifice volcanique majeur. De ce fait, l'analyse s'est concentrée sur les principaux volcans péléens connus. Cette analyse nous paraît cohérente et démontre sans ambiguïté la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien.

J'insiste sur la question du géosite ; des arrêtés seront pris pour renforcer bien sûr la protection.

Concernant la gouvernance, et ce n'est pas atypique, c'est comme cela que ça se passe aussi en Calédonie par rapport au lagon, nous considérons que former la résilience est fondamentale et, à ce titre-là, associer la population et avoir un partenariat suffisamment ouvert pour que la gouvernance soit efficace sur le terrain, à proximité de la population et des valeurs écologiques, me semble essentiel.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

Ethiopia.

La Délégation de l'Éthiopie :

Merci, M. le Président.

Après avoir suivi le débat et la contribution de l'État partie, l'Éthiopie souhaite s'inscrire sur la liste des pays ayant soutenu l'amendement qui a été proposé par l'Égypte.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

In this particular case, the views of the State Party concern and the IUCN are quite different, and I wonder if the Chair can give the floor to the IUCN.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, indeed, Your Excellency. IUCN.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair.

I think the key point, here, is the question of our requirement in IUCN to respond to the Operational Guidelines. And you'll find on page 70 of IUCN's evaluation, we note that part of Paragraph 93 that makes clear that in the case of volcanoes, "the magmatic series should be complete and all or most of the varieties of effusive rocks and types of eruptions should be represented".

Although I noted the comments of Belgium, I think we have the sense that, based on clear analysis, the geosites that are in the buffer zone are important, but the OUV is defined by the inscribed property.

We have no wish to stand in the way of consensus, because there is clearly enormous biodiversity values and significant geodiversity values in Martinique.

Perhaps the last comment I would just make is that we do have the process of submission of possible factual errors, which allows an exchange on this sort of matters before the Committee debates. We've seen that process used to good effect this afternoon with the inscriptions for Congo and for Viet Nam. I do think it would be helpful that States Parties avail of that opportunity because it means we can avoid needing to pass these sorts of issues in real time in the Committee meeting, when we have a long time before the Committee meets to try to reach a consensus.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Well, thank you very much.

It would have been better if sufficient dialogue has been conducted between the IUCN and the State Party but, at the same time, we have to note that this is a rare example of a SIDS property. And also, we understand that there is nobody living, no hunting, no logging, and this is a perfect area for preservation.

Now, I understand that there are some issues surrounding the criteria (viii) and (x), and there seems to be some differences of views between the concerned Parties.

Now in this particular case, we do not stand against consensus, but we don't necessarily support the conclusion, but, you know, we don't want to stand against the consensus. We do recognize that almost everybody in the Committee is now in support of the inscription, so we do not go against the consensus but, nevertheless, I want to register some concerns.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, I see no more comments.

Therefore, I would like to invite you, my dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.4**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Egypt, which has been co-authored by the Distinguished Delegations of Argentina and Oman, and we have received support from the floor from the Distinguished Delegations of Mali, Qatar, India, Nigeria, Zambia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belgium, Rwanda, Greece, Ethiopia and Japan.

The revised Para 2: "Inscribes the Volcanoes and Forests of Mount Pelée and the *Pitons* of Northern Martinique, France, on the World Heritage List, on the basis of criteria (viii) and (x);".

Revised Para 3: "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:".

Moving to revised Para 4: "Underlines the global importance of biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean region, a biodiversity hotspot, and the worldwide importance of the forests of Martinique for the conservation of the endemic flora of the Lesser Antilles;".

Para 5: "Also underlines the worldwide importance for earth sciences of Mount Pelée and the Carbet Pitons within the Caribbean volcanic systems and the island arc of the Lesser Antilles;".

Para 6: "Notes that the property includes the fundamental elements of the Outstanding Universal Value on the basis of the two criteria, in particular the major geological attributes;".

Para 7: "Recommends the State Party to ensure the conservation of the entire property and buffer zone by giving consideration to the following:

- a) Complement the existing protection system with coherent and effective protection for geosites of scientific and educational interests located in the buffer zone, and strengthen the management capacity for the geological attributes of the property to ensure the protection and management of geological values,
- b) Extend biodiversity protection measures, possibly through an extension of the *Réserves Biologiques Intégrales* inside the property;".

Para 8: "Encourages the State Party to continue and strengthen cooperation with the other States Parties of the Lesser Antilles for the conservation of species, environments and geological values;".

Revised Para 9: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2025, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session."

End of amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

[interpretation from Arabic] Good afternoon. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

We support this amendment.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Thailand.

La Délégation de la Thaïlande :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous voudrions nous joindre aux autres membres du Comité en apportant notre soutien à l'amendement proposé par l'Égypte.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

South Africa also supports the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you.

From time to time, we have to be honest, you know, France is our important ally, this is a SIDS project, and also, nobody is living there, no logging, so it's a perfect natural environment.

I would very much like to support this but, at the same time, we do recognize that IUCN has provided some issues, and it seems that there has been no convergence of views between IUCN and the State Party concerned.

So, this is a very occasion, but I would like to delete our name from the list of supporters. As I said, we don't stand against the consensus but, at the same time I just wanted to register the issue.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Italy would like to join the other countries in supporting the amendments.

La Délégation de la Bulgarie :

M. le Président, Excellences, chers collègues,

La Bulgarie soutient également les amendements proposés.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I see no more... and, therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to examine the draft decision, paragraph by paragraph.

And for Paragraph no. 1, we don't have any amendments. Do you agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with the proposed paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with the paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this amendment? I see no objection. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues, I invite you to adopt the decision draft as a whole.

There are no objections.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.4** adopted as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Let me congratulate France on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property.

France, you have the floor for a brief two-minute statement. You may have the floor.

La Délégation de de la France (Observateur) :

[premier orateur] M. le Président du Comité, M. l'ADG Culture, M. le Directeur du patrimoine mondial, Mmes les expertes, MM. les experts, Excellences du Comité du patrimoine,

Je salue l'organisation parfaite du Royaume d'Arabie saoudite.

Je salue la gestion éclairée du Président du Comité.

Je remercie chaleureusement l'Égypte d'avoir proposé l'inscription du bien. Je remercie tous les pays co-auteurs. Un immense merci pour votre soutien.

La Montagne Pelée est un des plus beaux sites de France, mais comme il a été dit à plusieurs reprises, c'est tous les Caraïbes qui vont fêter cette inscription aujourd'hui.

En tant qu'ambassadeur, je suis le garant de l'engagement fort des autorités françaises à gérer et protéger le bien conformément aux recommandations et en dialogue étroit avec l'UICN et le Comité.

Je passe la parole au Président du Conseil exécutif de Martinique, le Président Serge Letchimy.

[deuxième orateur] M. le Président,

Je voudrais remercier l'ensemble des pays et ambassadeurs, et plus particulièrement, l'Égypte.

C'est un moment historique pour la Martinique, mais au-delà, pour la Caraïbe et pour le monde entier.

L'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial représente un outil puissant et précieux de conservation, mais c'est aussi l'expression d'une identité écologique qui résume parfaitement les propos d'Aimé Césaire, poète de la négritude, qui disait de la Montagne Pelée : « Lion décapité, harnaché de toutes nos blessures, griffonné de lave trop hâtive qui nous ouvre l'espace et le temps de s'installer à l'horizon ».

C'est un message au monde. Merci à la France d'avoir su dépasser l'ensemble des éléments et apporté sa contribution pour reconnaître le particularisme exceptionnel que sont les pays d'outre-mer.

Je vous remercie, M. l'Ambassadeur et merci à l'UNESCO qui, au-delà des frontières, au-delà des enjeux du monde, a cherché et cherche à fortifier la nécessaire résilience de l'humanité face aux défis écologiques. C'est l'exemple que vous venez de donner dans la zone caraïbe, qui vous est reconnaissante. *[applaudissements]*

The Chairperson:

So, our session is coming to an end.

I would like to pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre for some general announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Just to inform you, Distinguished members of the Committee, that there is a side event which will start in a few minutes at the Hegra Room, which is the Advisory Bodies space, organized by ICOMOS China on "The Maritime Silk Road and the Shared Future of World Heritage".

I would also like to announce that at the exhibition of the "Dive into Heritage", there is a cocktail, which will also start at 6:30, which is in a few minutes. This cocktail is organized by UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture of Saudi Arabia on the "Dive into Heritage Digital World Heritage Platform" exhibition in the Historic Jeddah Room, and we invite you all to come and discover a live demonstration of the prototype of the online platform and interact with the high-resolution 3D models processed and optimized by UNESCO.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Director.

Also, I would like to remind you that the Bureau meeting tomorrow is at 9:30.

I would like to thank the interpreters for staying longer than their actual time. So, let's give them a round of applause.
[applause]

Thank you so much and wish you a wonderful evening. [gavel]

The meeting rose at 6:31 pm. // La séance a été levée à 18h31.

SEVENTH DAY
Sunday, 17 September 2023
TWELFTH PLENARY MEETING
10:06 am – 12:45 am
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

SEPTIÈME JOUR
Dimanche 17 septembre 2023
DOUZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h06 – 12h45
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

Please note that the Bureau, at its seventh meeting this morning, recommended to the Plenary that, as indicated during our fourth meeting, following the requests received from the States Parties to move their timing of their nominations, I wish to inform you that the following nominations will be examined first today during our morning session:

- Ancient Jericho/Tell Es-Sultan (Palestine); and
- The Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan).

We will then have another 12 nominations files to examine today. The list can be found on the updated calendar posted by the Secretariat on the World Heritage Centre's web page for this session.

Furthermore, I wish to inform you that we have received requests for two more nominations to be moved:

- Cultural Landscape of Khunlig People and "Köç Yolu" (Azerbaijan) to be advanced from Tuesday 19 September morning to Monday 18 September in the morning; also
- Bale Mountains National Park (Ethiopia), 8B.27, to be advanced from Wednesday 20 September morning to Monday 18 September in the afternoon.

Thank you very much.

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

2022 CYCLE (Ct'd) // CYCLE 2022 (suite)

CULTURAL HERITAGE // PATRIMOINE CULTUREL

8B.36 Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan (State of Palestine) // Ancien Jéricho/Tell es-Sultan (État de Palestine)

The Chairperson:

Before inviting ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan (Palestine), I would like to pass the floor to the Assistant Director-General for Culture for a short remark. You may have the floor.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I just wanted to recall that the property proposed for nomination is the prehistoric archaeological site of Tell es-Sultan, located outside the antique site of Jericho.

Later historical developments, which span over millennia and are demonstrated by material remains beyond the boundaries of Tell es-Sultan, constitute a rich cultural context, worth of historical interest and preservation, covering, among others, Jewish and Christian heritage.

However, this is not the focus of the proposed nomination.

On another note, we received a factual error notification which is on page 132 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B4.

I would like to inform you that there is consensus on the adoption of the draft decision as a whole without amendments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair and good morning, all.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan (Palestine). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 308 of the English version and page 401 of the French version. On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some clarifications provided by the State Party.

[Next slide, please]

Located in the Jordan Valley, the nominated property is the archaeological site of Tell es-Sultan, an oval-shaped tell that contains the archaeological deposits of millennia of human activity.

The chronological framework for the nominated property with respect to its proposed Outstanding Universal Value is limited to the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods.

Archaeological and historical evidence related to the functioning of the city of Jericho in the antiquity that falls outside of this timeframe is not included in the nominated property.

Earlier and later historical developments, which span several millennia and are demonstrated by material remains beyond the boundaries of the nominated property into the wider setting of the Jericho oasis, constitute the cultural context and are not the focus of the nomination.

By the 9th to 8th millennium BCE, a sizeable Neolithic settlement with monumental features and communal structures developed at the site of Tell es-Sultan. It reflected the process of development of large and permanent settlements, and introduction of sedentary lifestyle, across the Levant.

The Early Bronze Age archaeological evidence shows signs of urban planning, and vestiges from the Middle Bronze Age reveal the presence of a large Canaanite city-state occupied by a socially complex population.

The 'Ain es-Sultan spring has been an important source of water for the inhabitants of this area and is part of the nominated property.

Tell es-Sultan is an outstanding example of a permanent settlement with a long history that illustrates the transition of the people of the Levant to a sedentary lifestyle, which was accompanied by the development of new subsistence economies. The rich archaeological material includes shared structures, monumental features and post-mortem treatment of human remains testify to the development of new social and ritual methods of communal living.

Tell es-Sultan further allows to observe the developments of building traditions in both private and public spheres in the Neolithic and later in the Bronze Age. The ramparts dating to the Middle Bronze Age show outstanding evidence in innovative construction techniques.

The comparative analysis was improved by the State Party during the evaluation process and demonstrates the significance of this site within its geocultural context.

The nominated property demonstrates criteria (iii) and (iv), but ICOMOS has concluded that criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated.

[Next slide, please]

The nominated property is a national archaeological park. The State Party has proposed a buffer zone, and an additional outer zone of protection both of which should preferably be combined in the future. The archaeological sites that testify to the relocation of the urban centre of the Jericho oasis away from Tell es-Sultan in the Hellenistic period have been left outside the buffer zone, as they are a considerable distance from the nominated property.

The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met.

[Next slide, please]

The legal protection at local and national levels is satisfactory. The management system is also satisfactory, although key elements of the overall strategy will be established by the Management and Conservation Plan which is under preparation. There is a need to acquire copies of documentation of earlier archaeological work held by institutions in other countries, and to enhance the human and financial resources available to the nominated property.

Archaeological investigations have occurred at the tell since the late 19th century, and include excavations that have been taking place since the early 20th century. A research strategy is being developed as part of the management system.

The nominated property is affected by erosion, tourism pressures and urbanization. The State Party has indicated that it has started negotiations to relocate a tourist facility that is currently encroaching on the site. It has also

indicated that It will seek to remove, in the future, an intrusive cable car system. Recently, conservation works have taken place, including backfilling of trenches, restoration of collapsed structures, and consolidation of walls. Rehabilitation works have also been done at the spring. Some elements and areas within the nominated property require urgent conservation attention and continued maintenance.

[Next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide, please]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan (Palestine) be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (iv) and has included a number of recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide, please]

Thank you very much for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS, for your presentation.

I now invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.36**.

There is no intervention for the floor.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.36** adopted *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Congratulations to the State of Palestine on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property.

Palestine, you have the floor for a two-minute statement.

The Observer Delegation of the State of Palestine:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

Let me first highlight the fact that is the first nomination submitted by the State of Palestine on a normal procedure and prepared by our local experts, with the support of four international experts who served as critical friends. All my thanks and appreciation to these experts, some of them are present here today, to the Mayor of Jericho and his dedicated team for their contribution to the success of this nomination. Unfortunately, they could not be present for some technical reasons. I regret their absence.

We are glad that Ancient Jericho/Tell es Sultan (Palestine) was recommended for immediate inscription because of its OUV but also for its uniqueness.

Allow me, Mr. Chair, to express my gratitude and sincere thanks to members of the Committee, to the Advisory Bodies, especially ICOMOS, to all the excellent team of the World Heritage Centre under the leadership of its Director, Mr. Lazare Eloundou and Mr. ADG for Culture, Mr. Ernesto Ottone.

Allow me also, Mr. Chair, to cordially invite you and all members of the Committee, the Secretariat, all States Parties present here as well as Observers to the side event that will be held at 1:00 in Wahat Al Asqa Room.

Last but not least, my message today is that all those I mentioned, I mean, Member States, the Secretariat, the Advisory Body and all partners of UNESCO constitute a close-knit family. Sometimes family members have different opinions and views. My wish is to maintain and protect the spirit of a united family at UNESCO. Yes, we can, and yes, we should.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations.

The Observer Delegation of the State of Palestine:

Please, no applause, now. Please keep the applause for the intervention of my Minister.

Over to my Minister.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Please, conclude in an assured manner.

The Observer Delegation of the State of Palestine: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Let me, at the beginning, to extend my thanks and appreciation to you and to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz and his faithful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, may God protect them. We thank them for this generous hosting.

In the name of Palestine and in the name, on behalf of the President Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian people, I'd like to thank you for inscribing the site of ancient Jericho/Tell es-Sultan on the World Heritage List. Today, the State of Palestine celebrates the inscription of one of its most important archaeological sites on the World Heritage List as a global human heritage that bears witness to the development of human civilization in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, and demonstrates the importance of Palestine's role in preserving the site for all of humanity.

Indeed, Ancient Jericho/Tel al-Sultan is the oldest fortified agricultural city in the world. It was established 10,000 years ago, and 4,000 years before the establishment of fortified cities in later periods. It is a cultural achievement that uniquely characterized ancient Jericho and distinguished it from other sites. It was the first successful model of permanent human settlements organized within a unique architectural style and a prosperous political, social and economic system, and one of the most important basic centres of the agricultural revolution based on the domestication of plants and animals. It inspired the world to build and organize civilizational centres and move to the stage of food production, which laid the foundations for building the world. Without understanding and recognizing these values, cultural history books remain incomplete and miss important chapters for understanding the development of human civilization.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that the main goal of this inscription is to preserve the site for all of humanity, which is extremely important for humanity to know itself, and I am pleased to invite you to visit this unique Palestinian site and explore the cradle of civilizations.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Palestine.

8B.13 Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) // Routes de la soie : corridor de Zeravchan-Karakoum (Tadjikistan, Turkménistan, Ouzbékistan)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the transnational nomination Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 94 of the English version and page 100 of the French version.

The three States Parties invited an ICOMOS Advisory Mission in 2016 as part of their development of this nomination.

[Next slide, please]

Extending over 866 km in Central Asia and spanning from the 2nd century BCE to the 16th century CE, the Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor comprises 34 component sites within the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The Corridor traverses three main geocultural areas: the mountain section in the east, the plain section in the centre, and the desert section in the west.

[Next slide, please]

The nominated serial property is a major segment of the Silk Roads in Central Asia, a central nodal point of international trade. People travelled, traded, settled, conquered or were defeated here, involving an immense diversity of peoples, ethnicities, cultures, religions, sciences and technologies over time. The component parts include archaeological sites, small towns, forts, way stations, and commercial and religious buildings, and demonstrate the array of raw materials, foods and high-value commodities that were traded.

Control of these corridors was of vital significance to many of the great Silk Roads empires and some of the component parts demonstrate the tremendous wealth generated by Silk Roads merchants. There were three especially prosperous periods starting with the rise of Sogdian merchants between the 5th and 8th centuries CE, the flourishing trade with the Muslim world between the 10th and 12th centuries CE, and during the period of Mongol rule from the 13th to the 17th century CE.

[Next slide, please]

Based on extensive collaborative work, an ICOMOS Thematic Study on the Silk Roads identified 54 distinctive corridors. This nomination covers one of these and part of another. The comparative analysis justifies the consideration of the nominated transnational property on the World Heritage List.

While proposed on the basis of a larger suite of cultural criteria, ICOMOS considers that the transnational serial property meets criteria (ii), (iii) and (v).

[Next slide, please]

The 866km Corridor spans from east to west along the Zarafshan River, following ancient caravan roads, and crossing the Karakum Desert to the Merv Oasis.

The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met. The serial property as a whole showcases the exchange of ideas and knowledge along the Silk Roads as the result of the movement of people and goods.

At the individual component part level, all the attributes that are needed to convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the property are included.

There are nine component parts located in Tajikistan, 16 in Uzbekistan, and nine in Turkmenistan. The rationale for the selection of the components is well-explained, and ICOMOS considers that the 34 component parts are sufficient to justify Outstanding Universal Value, but also suggests that additional sites could be proposed as potential future extensions when conditions allow, particularly sites associated with water management and irrigation systems.

[Next slide, please]

The legal protection is satisfactory, although it requires consistent enforcement.

In relation to the state of conservation, a number of the component parts are vulnerable to wind erosion, rising damp and salt, requiring regular maintenance, continued research and monitoring.

Although past conservation interventions resulted in some losses of authenticity, recent conservation measures have applied internationally accepted principles.

The management system is adequate, although the full development of management plans and associated elements are still in progress. Additional recommendations have been provided to continue to strengthen its ability to address the pressures and enhance the interpretation of the Silk Roads.

[Next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide, please]

Since the 2016 Advisory mission, ICOMOS notes the detailed and high-standard work done by the three States Parties, which has greatly augmented this proposal.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (v), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide, please]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS.

I would like to see if there are any comments from the floor concerning this nomination.

L'Inde.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

Thank you for giving floor to India on the Agenda Item 45 COM 8B.13, Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) which has got an inscription recommendation by the Expert Body for cultural sites.

The nomination was submitted under criteria (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), (vi) and is recommended for inscription under criteria (ii), (iii) and (v).

The nomination is located along the [Zarafshan] River, its wider hydrological basin, and the Karakum Desert.

It was identified in the Silk Roads ICOMOS Thematic Study as the fourth and fifth corridors out of 54. These areas are in India's neighbourhood, in the northwest. India has historical and civilizational links with Central Asia and congratulates the people and Governments of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for the success of this historical nomination and dossier.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation strongly supports the inscription of the Silk Road serial and transboundary nomination of Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor under criteria (ii), (iii) and (v).

We also commend the States Parties for the excellent collaborative work for the preparation of the dossier.

We consider that this nomination fully benefited from the extensive research and experience acquired from the description of other Silk Road corridors...

The Chairperson:

Oman. Point of order.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I mean, to our understanding, when there is inscription, we don't debate. So, you are opening the debate now for inscription. We want to know.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, as discussed previously, if it is adopted without discussion or debate, without something, we encourage to move forward with the heavy Agenda. But it is the call of the Committee members if they want to take the floor or not. But this is our proposal to move forward without debate.

The Delegation of Greece:

Excuse me. Could I conclude this statement?

The Chairperson:

Indeed.

The Delegation of Greece:

Okay, thank you.

From our point of view, among the strongest elements of this nomination is its complementarity and interaction with...

The Chairperson:

Point of order. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

We had raised our board before.

I want the Legal Advisor to, please, let us know under which Rules of Procedure or the Operational Guidelines was the Omani objection raised and under which Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidelines was the Omani objection responded to.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Legal Advisor, you have the floor.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

I should recall Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, which says, among others, that you, the Chairperson of the Committee, "shall direct the discussions, ensure the observance of these Rules, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions".

In that capacity, Mr. Chair, you have the authority to organize the debate and accord the right to speak.

Mr. Chair,

I would defer to you and the Secretariat to recall the recommendations that you have made at the beginning of the debate on this Item 8 with respect to nominations and how the debate should be conducted.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Greece, you may conclude, and we move forward.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you.

From our point of view, among the strongest elements of this nomination is its complementarity and interaction with similar yet diverse components located in different geographical areas of Central Asia. All combined highlight the concept of the *Itineraria* as well as a set of values and attributes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Now, I invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.13**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed?

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.13**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Therefore, are there any comments on this matter? I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.13** adopted. *[gavel]*

Congratulations to Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on behalf of the entire Committee.

I would like to give the floor to the three States Parties, but before doing so, we will start with Her Excellency Ms. Amirova from Uzbekistan.

Please, stay to the strict two minutes that we allocated for each State Member.

The Observer Delegation of Uzbekistan:

Dear Chair, Distinguished members of the World Heritage Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking the Government of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for excellent organization of the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee of the City of Riyadh.

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Government of Uzbekistan as we celebrate today a truly historical milestone for Central Asian countries.

It is an exceptional occasion, especially for Uzbekistan. The inscription of the Silk Road: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor marks more than 20 years since the last cultural element of Uzbekistan was included in the World Heritage List.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all stakeholders who made this contribution in promotion of its important initiative. We thank the International Institute for Central Asian Studies and the Director, Dmitriy Voyakin, as well as the Esteemed colleagues from Tajikistan and Turkmenistan for their invaluable cooperation to prepare the nomination. I also express my gratitude to the World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies for the diligent work and impartial evaluation of the dossier.

The decision adopted by the Committee is a crucial step towards recognition of unique historical and cultural value of 31 monuments, 15 of which are located in Uzbekistan. Throughout the millennia, these cities have been served as a main connecting networks that facilitated the exchange of diverse cultural languages, ideas and goods between the East and the West, from the start point as equally significant, not only the people of the region but also humanity.

During the last years, Uzbekistan has intensified efforts and safeguards to promote its rich cultural heritage, which is fully in line with our commitment under the 1972 Convention. In close collaboration with other participating States, we will take all the necessary collective measurements to implement the advises and recommendations outlined in this decision. In this, we also rely on support of UNESCO World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies to carefully transmit this outstanding heritage to the generations to come.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Tajikistan, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Tajikistan:

Shukran, Said Rais, Distinguished Committee members, Excellencies,

I am honoured to take the floor.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for generosity and holding this session.

As we all know, the main purpose of inscription of historical sites in UNESCO World Heritage List is the preservation and study of those sites that are important for the World history of humanity, and today's event is a vivid example of this.

Today, our friendly countries, along with promoting constructive initiatives in the political, economic, humanitarian and educational fields, present a joint worthy history and culture to the world community. In this regard, it is gratifying to note that, at this session, the joint nomination of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor, which clearly demonstrates the centuries-old strong fraternal relations between countries of Central Asia, is inscribed in UNESCO World Heritage List.

Thanks to close cooperation with the representatives of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, today, we have achieved significant and desired achievement.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Government of Tajikistan, I express our gratitude and appreciation to Evaluation Body of Committee for inscription of our joint nomination.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Turkmenistan.

The Observer Delegation of Turkmenistan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Distinguished Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At first, taking this opportunity, I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the hospitality and successful holding of this session at a high level.

Today, the Great Silk Road, where Turkmenistan has historically played a significant role, is viewed as a unique historical and cultural phenomenon given the substantial influence, this ancient caravan road has had on the international trade networks, economies and cultures of several countries in Asia and Europe.

Today, our friendly nation, together with our brotherly counterparts, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, presents the important legacy of the Great Silk Road to the global stage through our joint nomination, Silk roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor.

This initiative not only continues the ancient traditions of the road, but also underscores the long-standing friendly relations between the countries of Central Asia. Thanks to the strengthened collaboration between Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, we have achieved significant milestones.

On behalf of the Government of Turkmenistan, I express our deep gratitude to the Evaluation Body of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for including our joint nomination in the World Heritage List.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

NATURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE NATUREL (suite)

8B.5 Hyrcanian Forests [extension and renomination of Hyrcanian Forests, Iran (Islamic Republic of)] (Azerbaijan, Iran (Islamic Republic of)) // Forêts hyrcaniennes [extension et nouvelle proposition d'inscription des « Forêts hyrcaniennes » Iran (République islamique d')] (Azerbaïdjan, Iran (République islamique d'))

The Chairperson:

I now invite IUCN to present the significant boundary modification and renomination of the Hyrcanian Forests, (Azerbaijan and Islamic Republic of Iran). But before I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

For the evaluation of this nomination, we received a factual error notification, which is on page 3 of both the English and French version of the Document INF.8B4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

IUCN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

IUCN's evaluation of the Hyrcanian Forests can be found on the pages indicated on the slide.

IUCN recommends the Committee to approve as an extension of the Hyrcanian Forests World Heritage property, the addition of Dangyaband and Istisuchay Valley in Azerbaijan under criterion (ix).

[Next slide, please]

In 2019, the Committee inscribed the Hyrcanian Forests in the Islamic Republic of Iran as a serial site of 15 component parts under criterion (ix).

The present nomination consists of five nominated component parts, including three located in Azerbaijan whilst two are located in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Besides the extension proposal, the existing site is re-nominated to include criterion (x).

Overall, this extension nomination covers an area of more than 31,000 ha, with a buffer zone of more than 117,000 ha.

[Next slide, please]

Regarding criterion (ix), the IUCN World Heritage Panel noted the importance of the nominated component parts of Dangyaband, Khanbulan and Istisuchay Valley in Azerbaijan, which contain highly valuable ancient forests belonging to the same arch of Hyrcanian Forests, straddling along the Caspian Sea. The oldest trees count 300-400 years, with some possibly up to 500 years. The three nominated component parts complement the 15 inscribed component parts in the Islamic Republic of Iran and represent the northernmost extension of the Hyrcanian Forests.

IUCN considers that the nominated component parts of Dizmar West and Dizmar East are not substantially linked to the existing series and are thus not recommended for consideration in this series. However, IUCN also noted similarities between the Dizmar Forests and the adjacent, previously nominated, and subsequently deferred Arasbaran Protected Area.

In this respect, IUCN welcomes the in-depth scientific dialogue established with the State Party of the Islamic Republic of Iran through the exchange recorded in the factual error letter. IUCN stands ready for further consultations on future options for the protection of both component parts and the Arasbaran Protected Area.

[Next slide, please]

Regarding criterion (x), IUCN notes Committee Decision **43 COM 8B.4** through which the Committee inscribed the first 15 component parts in the Islamic Republic of Iran whilst taking “note of the potential for this property to also meet criterion (x)”. This decision recommended further analysis of species inventories to confirm species composition and population conservation status to ascertain the relevant values are sufficient to meet criterion (x). However, IUCN noted that this information “remains limited to this day”, as also acknowledged in supplementary information provided by the States Parties for the present nomination file.

Additional evidence, especially more detailed spatial distribution and population status data is needed to re-assess the nominated property under criterion (x).

[Next slide, please]

In terms of protection and management, all nominated component parts benefit from a rigorous protection and management regime. Their boundaries are commensurate with the respective protected areas, only the boundaries of the nominated component part of Khanbulan in Azerbaijan would require alignment to fully correspond with the boundaries of the central and strictly protected part of the Hirkan National Park.

IUCN appreciates the dialogue, including dialogue during the present session with Azerbaijan on the best way forward for the Khanbulan component part.

[Next slide, please]

Mr. Chair,

The draft decision can be found in Document 8B as shown on the slide, and contains IUCN's recommendation to approve the significant boundary modification of the Hyrcanian Forests through the addition of Dangyaband Istisuchay Valley based on criterion (ix). This would create a transboundary World Heritage property with 15 component parts in the Islamic Republic of Iran and two component parts in Azerbaijan.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

As this property is recommended for inscription, I, therefore, suggest that we move to the adoption of the draft decision.

If there are no objections..., do we have?

Then, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.5** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to the States Parties of Azerbaijan and Iran on behalf of the entire Committee.

Azerbaijan, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Azerbaijan:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Distinguished Committee members, dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to sincerely thank the Committee members for the adopted decision. I also would like to thank the Secretariat and the IUCN for its evaluation of the file.

This is a historic moment for Azerbaijan, as Hyrcanian Forest is the first natural site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. This remarkable natural wonder, known for its exceptional biodiversity, ancient origins and cultural significance, has rightfully earned its place among the World's most cherished sites. The Hyrcanian Forest, a living testament to the resilience and beauty of our planet's ecosystems, now stands as a beacon of hope and conservation for future generations. Its inclusion signifies our commitment to safeguarding the rich biodiversity of life it hosts, from its endemic species to the delicate balance of its ecosystems.

This achievement is a testament to the collaborative efforts of nations, conservationists, local communities and supporters worldwide who recognize the urgent need to protect this unique treasure. We are united in our

commitment to preserving the Hyrcanian Forest, not just for the present, but the countless generations that will come to cherish and benefit from its natural wonders.

As we celebrate this momentous occasion, let us remember that the responsibility to safeguard these forests does not end here. It is an ongoing commitment, a promise to future generations to nurture and protect this invaluable ecosystem, ensuring that it thrives for millennia to come. The inclusion of Hyrcanian Forest on the UNESCO World Heritage List is a testament to our shared dedication to preserving the wonders of our natural world. Let us continue to work together, in the spirit of global cooperation, to protect and cherish this magnificent forest and all the World's natural and cultural treasures.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Iran, you may have the floor. Iran, if you would like to take the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

No, thank you.

We don't want to take the floor.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

CULTURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

8B.6 The Gedeo Cultural landscape (Ethiopia) // Le paysage culturel du pays gedéo (Éthiopie)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of The Gedeo Cultural Landscape (Ethiopia), but before I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Concerning the evaluation of the Gedeo Cultural Landscape, we received a factual error notification, which is on page 49 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of The Gedeo Cultural Landscape (Ethiopia). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1, on page 21 of the English version and page 21 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide, please]

Located on the steep escarpments of the Ethiopian highlands, the Gedeo Cultural Landscape is an area of agroforestry characterized by multilayer cultivation with large trees sheltering indigenous *enset*, the main food crop, under which grows coffee, the main cash crop, and other shrubs. The area is densely populated by members of the Gedeo people whose traditional knowledge underpins the forest regimes. Within the cultivated mountain slopes are small areas of sacred forest traditionally used by local communities for rituals associated with the Gedeo religion. Along the mountain ridge are found dense clusters of megalithic monuments, which came to be revered by the Gedeo and cared for by their elders.

The comparative analysis has demonstrated that the Gedeo Cultural Landscape is an exceptional testimony to a long-standing and still living indigenous cultural tradition of agroforestry with its layered cultivation of mature trees

providing shelter for *enset*, coffee and other food crops. This symbiotic system is underpinned by traditional knowledge systems of the Gedeo community, and has the capacity to sustain livelihoods while ensuring environmental sustainability; it not only supports the highest density of population in Africa, it also maintains harmony with species, a rich biodiversity and produces high quality organic coffee. Both proposed criteria (iii) and (v) have been justified.

[Next slide.]

The property covers about 300 km² and encompasses the traditional agroforestry system, coffee and food crops cultivated areas, clusters of megalithic steles, widespread also beyond the boundaries of the nominated property, prehistoric rock art sites and several hundred settlements.

Whilst integrity and authenticity have been demonstrated, they are highly vulnerable, as acknowledged by the nomination dossier, due to fast changing demographic, economic and landscape management issues.

The boundaries are adequate but may need minor adjustments, whilst the addition of a buffer zone to protect the immediate setting needs to be considered.

[Next slide.]

Legal protection measures put in place at the federal and, in particular, the specific proclamation 189 issued in 2021 at the State level, provide a good basis for management.

ICOMOS commends the State Party for defining legal and management structures and for emphasis put on the traditional structures and processes. However, sufficient measures to address the severe challenges facing the nominated property, to halt the highly negative trends are not in place yet.

The state of conservation of the property is extremely fragile and under threat, due to an alarming rate of population increase, intense cultivation extending to unstable slopes, fast reduction of the agroforestry system. As stated in the nomination dossier, the land versus population imbalance is the major threat for the integrity and OUV of the cultural landscape, which is reaching beyond its carrying capacity and will lead to degradation if conservation and livelihood measures will not take place.

[Next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property

Given the vulnerability and fragility of the nominated property, a sustainable land use plan is key to achieving a balance between the many competing needs, such as protecting traditional practices, improving prices for the high-quality organic coffee, raising the overall standards of living of communities. ICOMOS welcomes the commitment by the State Party to producing such a plan and notes that work on its development has started. The timeframe for its completion – six months – appears very tight in relation to the scope of the project, the level of detail required, to obtain the support of the agroforestry communities, and to devise specific measures for addressing the dangers that the property now faces.

[Next slide, please]

Despite the progress being made, including throughout the evaluation process, ICOMOS considers that the property is faced with specific and proven imminent dangers, which could lead to significant loss of historical authenticity and of cultural significance. The major threats that the property is facing could be considered as ascertained danger, in accordance with Paragraph 179 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Inscription alone, in ICOMOS view, is insufficient to address these dangers. Accordingly, ICOMOS recommends that The Gedeo Cultural Landscape should be inscribed on the World Heritage List under criteria (iii) and (v) and simultaneously be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

In this way sufficient time can be given to prepare a sustainable land use plan that can deliver the specific needed corrective measures for the property. The inscription on the World Heritage List in Danger is an opportunity to gain the attention and support of the international community for the protection and the conservation of the property and its remarkable agroforestry system.

ICOMOS also recommends that a reactive monitoring mission be invited to the property to establish a Desired state of conservation and a programme of corrective measures, in accordance with State Party, to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

[Next slide, please]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS.

I would like to see if there are any comments from the floor regarding this nomination.

Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Mr. Chair.

The State of Qatar requested decision of the draft decision amendment concerning the Gedeo Landscape.

Qatar appreciates all the efforts deployed by the Secretariat and the evaluation carried out by Advisory Body toward the inscription of Gedeo Cultural Landscape.

Qatar requesting an amendment on Paragraph 4, 5 and 7 of the draft decision.

In Paragraph 4, where to inscribe the site in List of the World Heritage in Danger, the draft decision from the evaluation report of ICOMOS and IUCN listed three issues:

- First, population pressure which has exceeded limits, thus threatening the cultural property;
- Second, dramatic generation gap and the abandon of traditional ways of life by the young people;
- Third, a shift in value system changes in the economic engagement.

It is known Gedeo is one of the most densely populated administrative zone in Ethiopia. The nomination dossier by the State Party honestly indicated this fact as a potential factor affecting property, however, not an imminent threat. Population growth density is not a recent new phenomenon to the Gedeo zone.

Also, the file highlighting the ritual tradition contribute a lot to the balance of the nature and society.

Secondly, legalization at a federal, regional and local level are formulated to ensure the protection of the property. Further to the legal provision, the social norms and tradition of the Gedeo people play a key role in the protection of the cultural landscape. The majority of Gedeo population still continue their traditional way of life, traditional socio-economic institutions are still practiced.

The State Party would like also to raise a procedure issue regarding Paragraph 4 of the draft decision, based on the provision of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

According to Chapter [IV].B, Article 177, paragraph of the Operational Guidelines, for a cultural property to be inscribed in the List of World Heritage in Danger, first, the property under the consideration is in the World Heritage List. In this particular case, the nominated property, the Gedeo Cultural Landscape, is not yet inscribed in the World Heritage List,

In the same chapter, Article 179, Sub-articles a) and b), the nominated property is neither under asserted nor a potential danger and, as is stated in the nomination dossier: "Population pressure and growth of cultivation in particular does not present any threat, rather future threats".

Paragraph 5 recommended that the State Party invite a Reactive Monitoring mission to the property. The State Party requested this paragraph to be deleted. Simply that once of the nominated property is not included in the List of the World Heritage in Danger, there is no need for inviting Reactive Monitoring mission.

Paragraph 7 requests the State Party to submit the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2024. The justification of this amendment is that once Paragraph 4 and 5 amended, the State Party will have to submit a report. However, the due date in the draft decision is really short.

So, thank you. We are in support.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan, Dawlat Qatar. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you very much, Chair.

The site presented by the State Party is an agroforestry system based on an indigenous knowledge system deserving to be in the World Heritage List.

Chair,

We have been informed by the State Party that most of the issues that are considered as a threat to the nominated property have already been addressed, and a few are underway. Therefore, the Rwandan Delegation is of the view that Paragraph 4 of the draft decision which suggests to inscribe the dominated property in the List of World Heritage in Danger is premature.

A management plan involving all stakeholders, particularly in acknowledging and empowering the traditional institutions which have a key role in the protection of the property, is put in action. Legal frameworks to protect cultural heritage, including the nominated property, ranging from federal to local level are operational long before the property under debate is inscribed in the Tentative List. A community-based monitoring system is already existing, and the only thing needed is support from regional and federal Government is underway.

Chair,

Recently, incentives for farmers who grow a high-quality organic coffee have commenced, namely directly linking the farmers with the international market and provision of agricultural inputs. The cultivation of crops new to traditional agroforestry system and planting of trees aligned to ecosystem of the property is prohibited.

Based on these and other efforts which the State Party is undertaking, Rwanda support the amendment submitted by Qatar.

Shukran jazeelan, Said Rais.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Russian experts have been following this report with a great deal of attention and, given the information provided by the Advisory Bodies as well as the information provided by the State Party, we've come to the following conclusion: this is a unique property and there's absolutely no doubt that it has potential OUV.

Among the major attributes of this cultural landscape are various aspects related to the knowledge of the Gedeo local communities; the agroforestry techniques, not only the long standing structural, but also their environmental protection techniques, which means that they can protect the environment in its most natural form.

Among the other attributes, we could also cite the sacred forests, which obviously have spiritual importance for the local communities.

All of this contributes to the preservation of the flora and fauna in the area.

In this area, there are traditional management practices in place, and there is advice from the elders, and this means that it not only makes it possible to strike and maintain the delicate balance, but also make sure that this agroforestry techniques continue the longevity of the holy forest and the neolithic sites.

That is why we are fully in favour of inscription on the World Heritage List. However, we are not sure that it would also be justified putting it into the Endangered List.

We are of the opinion that the activities undertaken under the Sustainable Management Plan would have a negative impact on the property, and we think that its status on the World Heritage List would actually bolster the management and protection of the site. When it comes to the sustainable safeguarding of the lands, the Management Plan through 2026 does, in fact, cover all of those negative aspects, and all of the initiatives undertaken have been envisaged for the long term. In accordance with the Plan, if all of these are implemented, then all necessary efforts will be deployed. We feel that the long-term Management Plan for the area will also contribute to the safeguarding of the property, ensuring its continued OUV.

That is why we can support Qatar's proposed amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. *Italia.*

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As already highlighted by the Advisory Body, the Gedeo Cultural Landscape is an exceptional testimony to a long-standing and still living indigenous Gedeo cultural tradition of agroforestry.

It links culture and nature in an extremely positive, sustainable manner, and this is the main reason why it is nominated to be in the World Heritage List.

The site, however, is affording some challenges and shows some fragilities. The main threats seem to be the growth of population that may affect the traditional agroforestry system, but the growth of population in itself does not represent a real threat. At the same time, the State Party is aware of these fragilities, and it is committed in addressing such threats.

Having said that, we consider the recommendation of the inscription of the nominated property in the World Heritage List in Danger not sufficiently demonstrated.

Moreover, the State Party's strong efforts to ensure the protection of the nominated property should be commended and the sufficient time to implement the recommendations in the draft decision be assured.

Therefore, Italy supports the amendment proposed by Qatar.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Good morning, everyone.

The Gedeo natural Cultural Landscape is an exceptional testimony to the long-standing and still living indigenous Gedeo way of life. It is a combination of culture and nature, underpinned by the traditional knowledge systems of the Gedeo people, in an area with one of the highest population densities in rural Africa.

This is a remarkable nomination that deserves to be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

This is not just our opinion, it is also the opinion of the Advisory Body, whom we would like to thank for the high quality of its work, not just in this particular case but also in general.

We, therefore, need to draw also attention to some concerns expressed by ICOMOS.

The state of conservation to the attributes is fragile, and there are a number of factors at play that are not easy to address.

We encourage the State Party of Ethiopia to take these recommendations regarding the threats the property is facing into consideration. We trust that upon request from the State Party, the Secretariat and ICOMOS will also be available to assist where needed in that regard.

Considering the complexity of the situation, we conclude it makes little sense to report back next year already, which is in less than six months, and we agree that more time needs to be allocated, as foreseen in the amendment proposing to inscribe the Gedeo Cultural Landscape on the World Heritage List.

We'd, therefore, also like to co-author the amendment introduced by the Delegation of Qatar.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

This is a wonderful property with clear OUV, and we fully support the inscription as recommended by the Evaluation Bodies.

Now, we have another recommendation from the Evaluation Bodies for the immediate inscription in the List of the World Heritage in Danger.

In this particular case, the State Party understands the issues pointed by the Evaluation Body and has shown willingness and commitment to deal with those issues in addition to the efforts already made.

State Party of Ethiopia needs more time to address those challenges, and therefore, we support the amendments proposed by Qatar.

We look forward to hearing good reports by the State Party of Ethiopia in 1996, I'm sorry, 2026.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Nous souhaitons tout d'abord rappeler que le paysage culturel du pays gedéo, s'étendant sur les contreforts orientaux des hauts plateaux éthiopiens, est le foyer d'un peu plus de 250 000 Gedéo.

Il s'agit d'un site qui reflète un témoignage unique exceptionnel sur des traditions culturelles et une civilisation humaine riche, qui nous enseigne à maints égards. En effet, depuis des siècles, voire des millénaires, les pratiques traditionnelles d'agroforesterie impliquant l'*enset*, et plus récemment le café, associées à une diversité d'arbres et d'arbustes ainsi qu'à d'autres cultures vivrières ont permis aux communautés de vivre durablement sur la base de savoirs et de systèmes de croyances traditionnels qui, jusqu'à récemment, incorporent des groupes de mégalithes comme sites rituels.

De même, le système autochtone du *Ballee* des Gedéo associe des lois coutumières, les règles et réglementations, les normes et les codes sociaux afin de gérer l'interaction avec la nature. Ainsi, non seulement le paysage qui en résulte nourrit la plus forte densité de population en Afrique, mais il entretient de surcroît une harmonie avec les espèces et la richesse de la biodiversité, et produit du café biologique de haute qualité.

L'intégrité et l'authenticité du site sont donc démontrées et évaluées.

Au vu de ce qui précède, nous soutenons l'approbation de cette décision afin d'inscrire le paysage culturel du pays gedéo sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO.

Nous encourageons l'État partie à continuer son travail de conservation.

Nous invitons le Comité à attendre les résultats des rapports sur la mise en œuvre des recommandations des Organes d'évaluation, notamment sur les actions de conservation, pour envisager de statuer sur l'opportunité de l'inscription ou non sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril. Cela devrait pouvoir se faire dans un délai raisonnable, qui permettra à l'Éthiopie de présenter un rapport complet et solide.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Oman acknowledged considerable efforts being made by the Ethiopian authorities and the preparation of this nomination dossier.

Oman also recognized the importance of the nomination of the Gedéo cultural landscape. So, this nomination property has the potential to justify the Outstanding Universal Value under criteria (iii) and (v), and the identification of its potential attributes is satisfactory.

Having seen the related documents, it's clear that the site is an exceptional testimony to the long-standing and still living indigenous Gedéo cultural tradition of agroforestry. It is also an outstanding example of how communities, over time, have devised systems to optimizing the constraints and opportunities of their natural environment.

We acknowledge all efforts that have been made by the State Party to ensure the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property as well as its proper management.

Taking this commitment and efforts from the State Party into account, Oman recommends that the nomination of the Gedéo Cultural Landscape to be inscribed in the World Heritage List, but not in the World Heritage List in Danger.

Therefore, we support the amended draft decision proposed by Qatar.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

My Delegation appreciates the work and recommendation by ICOMOS, and also wishes to commend the State Party of Ethiopia on the commitment in addressing issues raised by the Advisory Body.

We welcome ICOMOS recommendation to inscribe the Gedéo Cultural Landscape to the List of World Heritage sites.

My Delegation believes that the inscription would encourage and help intensify the efforts of the State Party on progressing the Sustainable Land Use Plan, as well as strengthening management plan and monitoring system.

Thailand also welcomes the close engagement between the State Party and the Advisory Body that started during the evaluation process, and encourages the State Party to continue further consultations to ensure that remaining concerns and challenges are tackled, and the conservation of the site is duly strengthened.

In this regard, upon studying the documents, we have learned that the State Party has demonstrated that commitment to implement ICOMOS recommendations and that some positive progress is being made.

My Delegation deems appropriate to allow the State Party more time to continue their work, and an assessment should be made at a later stage.

Any conclusion to put the property in the List of World Heritage in Danger should not be drawn yet.

Moreover, my Delegation would also like to recall again that Africa has more than its fair share of the World Heritage sites inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Mr. Chairperson, therefore, my Delegation would like to echo other Committee members in supporting the draft amendment put forward by Qatar.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Egypt. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Egypt welcomes the inscription of the Gedeo Cultural Landscape on the World Heritage List, based on criteria (iii) and (v).

Egypt does not believe that the inscription should be made on the Endangered List.

The decision to inscribe a site as endangered should adhere to the principles set forth in the 1972 Convention and its Operational Guidelines. These Guidelines stipulate that the inscription on the Endangered List should only occur when the site genuinely faces challenges that threaten its Outstanding Universal Value. In this case of the Gedeo Cultural Landscape, such challenges are not apparent.

Furthermore, we would like to emphasize the importance of encouraging and promoting the inscription of more African sites on the World Heritage List.

Africa is a continent rich in its cultural and natural heritage, with multitude of unique and exceptional sites that deserve international recognition and protection. By celebrating and preserving the heritage of African nations, we contribute to more comprehensive representation of our global cultural and natural diversity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

We thank ICOMOS for this report on the Gedeo Cultural Landscape and also for the draft decision relating thereto.

We agree with the arguments put forward by the Advisory Body in terms of its OUV.

Now, when it comes to the idea of putting it on the Danger List, we understand that Ethiopia has already set up a regional and local management plan. So, we'd like to ask the States Parties if we could have further information as to an update on the implementation of that plan.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa would like to commend the State Party of Ethiopia for putting forward such an incredible nomination file, which strikes a balance between environmental conservation, culture and subsistence farming that sustain livelihoods of a growing rural population pressure.

After examining the ICOMOS evaluation report, we note that ICOMOS has indeed confirmed that this site has fulfilled all the requirements for listing on the UNESCO World Heritage List. While ICOMOS recommends that this site be inscribed on the World Heritage List, it also recommends inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Mr. Chair,

The Delegation of South Africa understands that when ICOMOS visited the site, it was to evaluate its credibility for consideration for inscription on the World Heritage List and not to conduct a Monitoring mission, as their report suggests.

Chairperson,

We would like to remind the Committee of Paragraph 177 a), which states that a property may be inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger if "the property under consideration is on the World Heritage List". This is not the case. Whilst precedents may have been set in the past to inscribe sites on the World Heritage List and immediately after in the List of World Heritage in Danger with the concurrence of the State Party, in this instance, the State Party of Ethiopia has not concurred with this recommendation.

South Africa, therefore, concurs with the State Party of Ethiopia as putting it on the World Heritage on the sites in Danger will just add a number for the Africa region, which is already overrepresented in the World Heritage List in Danger, contributing about 47% of all the sites on the List.

Although ICOMOS considers the inscription on the World Heritage List in Danger as an opportunity to garner international support, the inscription of this site on the List in Danger will have a detrimental impact in that it will demotivate the communities of Gedeo, who have put much effort to ensure the conservation and management of this site.

Chair,

South Africa strongly believes that the Delegation of Ethiopia should be afforded sufficient time to address, through the state of conservation report, the recommendations made by ICOMOS in consultation with the World Heritage Centre, particularly with regard to continuing to progress the sustainable land use option.

The State Party of Ethiopia has reassured the Delegation of South Africa that they have so far formulated a strategy to regulate land use within the property.

For this reason, Mr. Chair, the Delegation of South Africa would like to support the amendment put forward by the Delegation of Qatar to delete Paragraph 4 and 6 of the draft decision and allow the State Party to report for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

Thank you for giving India the floor.

Since this property is already listed for inscription, we will keep our intervention very short.

India would like to co-author the amendments being presented by Qatar and supported by Japan, Belgium, Italy, Mali, Oman, Thailand, Egypt and others.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We have carefully reviewed all relevant documents, and our Delegation would like to thank the Advisory Body and the State Party for the detailed information contained in them.

We are convinced that the legal protection is fully guaranteed, as the status and protection of traditionally used land by the local communities is enshrined in the Ethiopian Constitution.

We commend the State Party for the elaboration of a management plan with the full engagement of local communities, authorities and based on agroforestry expertise. We are convinced that the State Party is aware of

the challenges that face the management of the property, and has demonstrated its willingness to address them in a sustainable way.

We are of the view that the need of this property to be included in the List of Danger has not been demonstrated.

In this regard, Bulgaria supports the amendment proposed by Qatar.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The State Party of Zambia considers the Gedeo Cultural Landscape as a site which has met criteria (iii) and (v), and this has been confirmed by the Advisory Body.

As for the need of the buffer zone, we are of the view that the land coverage or the area covered by this cultural landscape is adequate to sustain the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value.

In addition, there is also an existing traditional management system which is adequate to deal with issues of population pressure. The issue of carrying capacity should not arise, considering that this is a cultural landscape, and a cultural landscape is supposed to be dynamic, and here, you have an interaction between the natural environment and human beings. We should not be seen to be freezing people's lives, as if we are to do so, it is tantamount to making the label of UNESCO negative. The concept of carrying capacity does not literally arise in a cultural landscape because this is more or less a scientific measure which works well in a rather strictly protected area.

The Reactive Monitoring measures are considered to be premature considering whatsoever has been submitted on the floor.

We also consider that, having seen that the State Party of Ethiopia has taken a lot of measures to addressing the issues which are being raised by the Advisory Body, including the fact that you have the provision in the National Constitution which looks at issues of land use, we feel that this aspect of trying to push the site on a List of Endangered as something which is retrogressive to that effect.

Mr. Chairman, as the State Party of Zambia, we would like to propose and rather join the rest of the World in congratulating the State Party of Ethiopia for having done a good job in making sure that the site has values which are also appreciated for inscription and, therefore, would like to request that the issue of putting the site on the List of Endangered to be dropped.

I submit, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

After examining the ICOMOS report on the Gedeo Cultural Landscape of Ethiopia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines considers that the inscription of this site on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (v) is well justified.

However, we consider that the inscription on the List in Danger is too premature, and we should give the State Party the opportunity and enough time to implement the recommendations requested. We are confident that the State Party will implement the management plan, thus protecting the OUV of the site.

That is why, Mr. Chair, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines support the amendments presented by Qatar.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Greece has thoroughly examined the nomination file and strongly supports the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List, considering that it will contribute significantly to the protection of this exceptional cultural and natural heritage of Ethiopia.

Furthermore, Gedeo Cultural Landscape, standing out as a unique testimony of agroforestry knowledge and adaptation in Africa, will contribute to a more balanced and more representative World Heritage List.

This inscription will provide the necessary tools and methods to address all threats and dangers, as noted by the Advisory Body, as well as offering opportunities to gain attention and support of the international community for the protection of this property.

Therefore, taking into consideration all the above and in the spirit of UNESCO Priority Africa, we fully support this nomination as well as the amendment proposed by Qatar since we also believe that the State Party needs sufficient time before even considering an eventual inscription on the World Heritage List in Danger.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Good morning and thank you.

In the light of the States Parties' efforts for safeguarding and preserving this property, we can support the Qatari amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Given the current context of climate change and its ensuing crisis, and all of the upsets such as forest wildfires, human efforts are required more than ever to protect these productive and agroforest techniques such as these, is where the answers lie. Nature based solutions, and the way that the ancestral techniques for preserving these landscapes has always worked, I think, is part of the region's vital cultural DNA.

We think that it has a whole range of safeguarding and management protections in place, and that is why this property, I think, is an awesome testimony of how people and land can be connected.

We want to thank ICOMOS for its suggestion of putting this site on the Danger List because we understand its fragility, and yet, we duly take note of the State Party's efforts to stymie these threats.

That is why we are trying to always ensure a representative and credible and balanced List, we feel that the best way forward is to support Qatar's proposed amendment.

Thank you very.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

After examining the recommendations of the Advisory Body for inscription, Nigeria appreciates that, but the further recommendation for inscription into List in Danger, we feel that it's premature.

The State Party of Ethiopia needs more time to work on the recommendations, and therefore, Nigeria wants to support the recommendation made by Qatar.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Mexico, the mic.

Now, I would like to pass the floor to the Delegation of Ethiopia to respond to the question addressed by the Delegation of Argentina.

You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for giving the State Party the opportunity to respond to questions and issues of concern raised by the Advisory Bodies and the Distinguished Delegation of Argentina.

It's a fact that Gedeo is one of the most densely populated locations in Ethiopia and Africa. Population growth is not a recent phenomenon to Gedeo. It is populated as densely as almost today for the past century and a half. The cultivation and use of *enset* as a staple food and the multi-layered agroforestry are partly an adaptation to the growth of population. As indicated in the nomination dossier, population growth is a potential factor affecting the property, not an imminent threat.

It is a ritual among the Gedeo that every time a baby is born in a family, four tree seedlings are planted as a token of celebration. When a person dies, two seedlings of an indigenous tree are planted close to the tomb *in memoriam* of the deceased person. Trees in forests cannot be cut without the permission of *Songo* elders. These rituals and traditions contribute a lot to the balance of nature and society.

Concerning land use management, recently, the Gedeo Zone Administration has formulated a rule to regulate land use in the nominated property. A management plan involving local communities, administrators, elders, women and youth representatives is prepared and implemented.

The overwhelming majority of the Gedeo still continue traditional way of life. Traditional socio-economic institutions are still practiced. There is no change deviating from local knowledge, beliefs, norms and environmental ethics of the Gedeo people.

The State Party is working with all stakeholders to increase the capacity of the local community to protect the cultural landscape.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more...

Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

We want to thank Ethiopia for this information, and that means that we are now in a position to support the proposed amendment by Qatar.

Thank you again very, very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Argentina.

So, now I see no more interventions and, therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.6**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Qatar, which is co-authored by the Distinguished Delegations of Oman, Egypt, Thailand, Bulgaria and Belgium, and further support from the floor, from the Delegations of Rwanda, Russian Federation, Italy, Japan, Mali, South Africa, India, Zambia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Nigeria and Argentina.

The amendments, as already explained by the Distinguished Delegation of Qatar, are to delete Para 4 and 5 and to revise the original Para 7, which becomes now the Para 5 to change the dates to 2026 and submission at the 48th session.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to ICOMOS to point out a technical issue.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

ICOMOS would like to recognize and acknowledge the dialogue and the progress that has been made by the State Party throughout the evaluation process.

This is important for us to reiterate and, in light of this, ICOMOS would like to put on the table for the consideration of the Distinguished members of the Committee whether a Progress report in between the inscription and the date for the official submission of the state of conservation to the Committee might be considered as a form of dialogue in between with the Centre and the Advisory Bodies, only to continue this accompaniment and work that has been done so far throughout the evaluation process.

So, ICOMOS would like to suggest that the Committee might consider to add that the Progress report is submitted to the Centre for consideration by the Advisory Body in an intermediate date that might be December 2024, which allows the State Party to continue to work and maybe to engage in dialogue and cooperation with the Advisory Bodies in order to reach the submission of the statement of the state of conservation report in 2026, really with mutual understanding on how they are progressing.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, dear colleagues, I invite you to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

From Paragraph 1 and 2 and 3, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, so we have proposed text. Do we agree to the proposed paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6. I would like to ask the Rapporteur to demonstrate the update.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There is a slight correction in the dates by the Secretariat.

Since it's not World Heritage in Danger, the date would be 1 December and the year would be 2025, for it to be presented in the 48th session.

So, it reads as: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2025, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, dear colleagues, do we agree with this proposed text? So, I see no objections, then adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues, I would like to ask you to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

And if there are no objections, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.6** adopted as amended. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Congratulations to the State Party of Ethiopia.

You have the floor for a two-minute statement.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I would like to express my gratitude to you, Mr. Chairperson, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the exceptional organization of the World Heritage Committee meeting and the warm reception extended to the Ethiopian Delegation.

Four years ago, in 2019, His Excellency Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launched the visionary national Green Legacy Initiative of planting 20 billion seedlings over four years to combat climate change and uphold traditional practices of sustainable living. Just two months ago, the first national campaign was inaugurated in Gedeo, which is known for its age-old practices of environmental conservation.

We are honoured, today, that the Committee has chosen to inscribe Gedeo as a World Heritage site.

With its breathtaking landscapes, Gedeo has been instrumental in the development of sustainable agricultural practices and unique land management systems. These efforts have contributed to the preservation of an exceptional ecosystem and remarkable biodiversity. A harmonious relationship between society and nature flourishes here. The people of Gedeo not only respect but also protect nature as a fundamental part of their lives. In contrast to the typical scenario where population growth leads to environmental degradation, in Gedeo it leads to afforestation. The tradition is: "More people, more trees".

The inscription of Gedeo as a World Heritage site holds immense significance for its people, acknowledging their generations long dedication to preserving their unique culture. Gedeo equilibrium between humanity and nature serves us a valuable lesson for the world.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude once again to World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, the African World Heritage Centre and the Committee members who have shown their support.

In accordance with the Rules of Procedures of the Convention, the Ethiopian Government reaffirms its unwavering commitment to preserving this exceptional heritage, which greatly benefits present and future generations.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, and congratulations again.

8B.7 Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba [extension to Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba, Togo] (Benin) // Koutammakou, le pays des Batammariba [extension de Koutammakou, le pays des Batammariba, Togo] (Bénin)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Koutammakou, the Land of Batammariba as an extension of Koutammakou, the Land of Batammariba (Togo).

ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Merci, M. le Président.

Il s'agit de la présentation de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS de Koutammakou, le pays des Batammariba (Bénin). Le rapport de l'ICOMOS est disponible dans le Document INF.8B1 à la page 33 de la version en anglais et à la page 34 de la version en français.

[Diapositive suivante]

Le bien est une proposition d'extension du bien Koutammakou, le pays des Batammariba au Togo, inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en 2004 sur la base des critères (v) et (vi). Koutammakou désigne le territoire des Batammariba, qui peut se traduire par les « constructeurs » ou les « architectes ». Il se caractérise par un aménagement du territoire original dont l'habitat appelé *takienta* possède une architecture unique par la prouesse technique de sa construction, l'ingéniosité des espaces qu'elle offre et la richesse de la symbolique qu'elle déploie. Bosquets, sources et rochers sacrés, collines aménagées en terrasse et réseaux de murets de rétention d'eau, forêts et espèces végétales utilisées dans la construction des *sikien*, associés aux rituels et croyances des Batammariba, composent ce paysage culturel. Koutammakou est un exemple des relations étroites qui unissent les êtres humains et la nature, et est crucial pour comprendre la vie synergique des Batammariba autour du massif de l'Atacora.

L'analyse comparative démontre que l'extension proposée forme un continuum cohérent avec la partie togolaise, contribuant à son intégrité, puisqu'elle inclue le berceau historique des Batammariba et des lieux sacrés où des activités religieuses importantes et des fêtes d'initiation continuent à y être célébrées. L'extension proposée répond aux critères (v) et (vi).

[Diapositive suivante]

Le paysage culturel du Koutammakou s'étend du Togo nord-oriental au Bénin nord-occidental. L'extension proposée – avec une surface de 240 658 ha – propose d'ajouter la partie béninoise au bien du patrimoine mondial existant et n'a pas de zone tampon, comme c'est le cas avec la partie togolaise.

L'ICOMOS considère que les délimitations de l'extension proposée sont adéquates.

[Diapositive suivante]

La protection légale, qui inclue la protection des attributs matériels et immatériels, ainsi que les pratiques traditionnelles, est appropriée. L'extension proposée fait l'objet de mécanismes de protection traditionnels, dont font partie par exemple le respect des esprits des ancêtres, et des rites de passage.

Le système de gestion est approprié et combine la gestion traditionnelle au niveau des villages et des clans, et les mesures légales mises en place par l'État partie pour protéger le site et impliquer les populations locales. Un service de gestion et de promotion du Koutammakou est prévu, et un Conseil de gestion du site a été créé.

[Diapositive suivante]

Voici un résumé de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle de l'extension proposée :

« En raison de la superficie de l'extension proposée, une carte localisant l'emplacement des *sikien* sur leur territoire, en détaillant la nature de l'occupation des sols, les collines aménagées en terrasse, le réseau de murets de rétention d'eau, l'emplacement des bosquets et autres lieux sacrés, serait nécessaire. Elle permettrait d'identifier les zones de fortes concentrations d'attributs culturels et naturels, de mieux apprécier l'organisation spatiale originelle de ce territoire spécifique, mais également de garantir que les zones qui mériteraient une approche plus conservatoire puissent faire l'objet d'un suivi très étroit.

Compte tenu des menaces liées à l'érosion, l'ICOMOS considère qu'il serait nécessaire d'intégrer un plan de conservation, un plan de travaux d'entretien, et des mécanismes de suivi renforcé au plan de gestion afin de prendre en compte ces facteurs, avec un plan d'action associé selon des priorités claires à court, moyen et long terme, ainsi que des ressources financières dédiées.

L'ICOMOS note aussi qu'il est nécessaire d'impliquer davantage les communautés locales dans le plan de gestion et de conservation du bien et de prendre en compte les pratiques traditionnelles de gestion et de conservation du Koutammakou. »

[Diapositive suivante]

Pour conclure, l'ICOMOS recommande que Koutammakou, le pays des Batammariba (Bénin) soit renvoyé à l'État partie afin de lui permettre :

- d'établir à court terme une carte localisant l'emplacement des *sikien* sur leur territoire, et en détaillant la nature de l'occupation du sol, les collines aménagées en terrasse, le réseau de murets de rétention d'eau, l'emplacement des bosquets et autres lieux sacrés ;

[Diapositive suivante]

- impliquer davantage à court terme les communautés locales dans le plan de gestion et de conservation de l'extension proposée et prendre en compte les pratiques traditionnelles de gestion et de conservation du Koutammakou ;

[Diapositive suivante]

- définir à court et moyen termes des priorités claires en matière de protection et de conservation pour les zones de fortes concentrations d'attributs.

L'ICOMOS a inclus des recommandations complémentaires dans le projet de décision pour renforcer la conservation du bien à long terme.

[Diapositive suivante]

Merci de votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to see if any of the Committee members would like to take the floor concerning this nomination.

India. You may have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor on the Agenda Item 45 COM 8B.7, Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba, extension of Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba, (Togo), which has got a referral recommendation by the Expert Body, but we have amendments presented for inscription. It was nominated under criteria (v) and (vi).

We appreciate the work done by the World Heritage Secretariat and the reports of the Advisory Body.

The Advisory Body, ICOMOS, has presented that the cultural landscape possesses exceptional characteristics illustrated by scattered land concessions with surrounding agricultural zones, terraced slopes, groves and other sacred places, ritual and funerary spaces, untouched zones and processional routes for clan rituals. As per ICOMOS, the Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated well. It suggested several short-term targets that would be achieved by the State Party as soon as possible.

India acknowledges that the legal protection, management system, and community involvement of the property are also well managed.

India is aware of the uniqueness in terms of the spiritual association between the rituals and the landscape. This fulfils criteria (vi).

India welcomes having African sites nominated on the World Heritage List.

Based on the above, India supports the inscription of this property and would like to congratulate the State Party of Benin, its Government and people for this nomination.

I thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Having looked critically at the explanatory note on the draft decision on this Item, as well as the documents made available to us by State Party of Benin, Nigeria has co-sponsored the amendments to the DR on this Agenda item, in appreciation of the immense effort made by Benin in taking into account the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies and on the following grounds:

- We note, inter alia, that the State Party has provided additional information which sufficiently documents the traditional management of the nominated property, including additional maps necessary to understand the nature of the land used, the terrace hills, water retention walls, networks, etc. and has already taken measures to exploit the result of the "HCT-ATACORA" research project in the management of the site's landscape.
- The continued commitment of the State Party is clearly demonstrated through ongoing conservation action on ground and other planned measures in the strategic action documents of the stakeholders in the country.
- In effect, out of the ten recommendations clearly identified, Benin has taken into account about 90% and is working actively to fulfil the rest of the obligations. It also undertakes to draw, in the short and medium terms, the Municipal Development Master Plan of three association communities once the site is inscribed.

Mr. Chair,

Nigeria believes that the purpose of the inscription of a site on the World Heritage List is to continue to enhance its protection along those they share similar historical background and Outstanding Universal Values.

A great deal of work has been accomplished by State Party in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies towards this end.

We, then, have no doubt that the boundary extension of Koutammakou, Land of the Batammariba (Togo), to include Koutammakou, Land of the Batammariba (Benin), is in perfect harmony with the principle of this Convention.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I also would like to thank the State Party, Benin, for their efforts to extend the property, Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba. I would also like to thank ICOMOS for their positive and constructive reporting.

However, after reviewing the file and listening to India and the justification and effort and mechanism to protect and enhance these sites such as:

- One, initiating management council to meet regularly to review the need of the site;

- Second, in 2018, the Government initiated an ambitious project focused on the conservation and enhancement of the architecture of the Koutammakou;
- Three, they have their management plan since December 2020 and up to 2025; and
- Four, most of the recommendations of the draft decision have already been taken into account.

In addition, the extension of the property would enrich Benin, which hosts a variety of components according to its universal values that guide its inscription.

Therefore, Oman support strongly the inscription of this site and the amendment decision presented by India.

I thank you.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Je voudrais, à l'entame de mon propos, féliciter tous les pays dont les biens sont admis à figurer depuis hier sur notre prestigieuse Liste du patrimoine.

Je voudrais également vous renouveler, à vous-même, mes chaleureuses félicitations pour votre excellente conduite de nos débats,

Distingués Délégués,

Souvenez-vous, il y a deux jours, dans le cadre de l'examen d'un autre bien, je disais que l'État du Bénin avait su développer une nouvelle vision pour la protection du patrimoine culturel et naturel.

La candidature du Koutammakou, du côté béninois, traduit une parfaite illustration de cette nouvelle politique. En effet, le pays des Batammariba, y compris l'extension proposée pour l'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, est un exemple exceptionnel du système traditionnel d'occupation du territoire. Toujours vivant et dynamique, il est soumis à des systèmes et techniques traditionnels très durables et reflète la culture singulière des Batammariba, notamment les remarquables maisons de tourelles appelées *sikien*.

L'extension proposée pour inscription renforce la justification du critère (v) tel qu'il s'applique à la partie togolaise du bien inscrit et ainsi que le souligne clairement les évaluations de l'ICOMOS, dont nous saluons ici le travail remarquable.

Il en ressort que la partie béninoise du Koutammakou comprend tous les éléments pour exprimer sa VUE, tant sur le plan matériel, habitat et environnement, qu'immatériel, pratiques, rituels et croyances liés aux *sikien*.

Quant aux menaces liées aux pressions dues au développement, nous notons avec intérêt les efforts de l'État partie du Bénin, qui a adopté des mesures de planification pour faire face à des pressions de développement. À cela s'ajoute l'existence des modes de gestion traditionnels du foncier, qui fait des terres un espace sacré, épargné par des projets d'infrastructures d'envergure.

En réponse aux recommandations de l'ICOMOS, le Bénin a soumis des cartes réalisées courant juillet 2023, où on voit l'emplacement des *sikien* sur leur territoire, avec des détails requis, la nature de l'occupation du sol et des terres, les zones où les collines sont aménagées en terrasses, les réseaux des murets de rétention d'eau, l'emplacement des bosquets et autres lieux sacrés. Soulignons que l'inventaire « HTC-ATACORA », qui était en cours d'analyse au moment de la soumission, a été finalisé et mis à la disposition de l'État partie, qui l'exploite judicieusement dans la gestion du paysage.

En outre, concernant l'implication des communautés, je souhaite mentionner fortement que l'entièreté du dossier de soumission, la préparation et la rédaction de l'inscription ont été faites par l'État partie en liaison permanente avec les propriétaires de *sikien*, les organisations villageoises de préservation et de promotion des *sikien*, les responsables religieux traditionnels, des organisations des artisans, le collectif des masques endogènes, le collectif des femmes s'occupant de l'enduit des *sikien*, les tradithérapeutes, et j'en passe.

S'agissant de la gestion du bien, il a été réalisé avec les communautés qui ont participé à sa validation en 2020. Ce plan de gestion prévoit l'actualisation progressive de l'inventaire du système traditionnel de gestion des Koutammakou pour la période 2021 à 2025.

De même, sur la base de la cartographie récente, l'État partie du Bénin s'active avec les communautés à définir une stratégie de protection et de préservation en ce qui concerne les zones de forte concentration d'attributs. Soulignons qu'il s'engage à en faire un compte rendu au Centre du patrimoine mondial dans un délai raisonnable.

Enfin, pour ce qui concerne la gestion des risques, le ministre béninois de la Culture a déjà pris en compte cette recommandation en faisant inscrire au Plan de travail annuel - exercice 2024, l'élaboration du plan de gestion des

risques. C'est dire que l'aspect de l'impact du changement climatique sera rapidement ajouté aux termes de référence précédemment arrêtés.

Distingués Délégués,

C'est à la lumière de l'ensemble de ces éléments qui précèdent que le Mali a soumis des amendements au projet de décision sous examen. D'autres États membres se sont déjà portés coauteurs desdits amendements.

Aussi, appelons-nous le Comité à donner un avis favorable à ce projet d'extension et à décider de l'inscription du Koutammakou, le pays des Batammariba (Bénin) sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Je souhaite, M. le Président, vous demander de bien vouloir donner la parole à l'État partie du Bénin, dont les experts, ici présents, se feront le devoir de nous édifier davantage quant aux réponses apportées aux recommandations des Organes consultatifs.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for allowing South Africa to intervene on this matter.

Mr. Chair,

Let me start by commending the Advisory Body for the comprehensive report that has been compiled.

After assessing both the ICOMOS report and the responses by the State Party of Benin, South Africa would like to support the inscription of the extension of the property, Koutammakou, the Land of Batammariba, to Benin, as proposed by Mali.

Since the drafting of the ICOMOS evaluation report, the State Party of Benin has worked tirelessly to address most of the issues raised by the Advisory Body.

Specifically, the State Party of Benin has confirmed that better mapping has already been developed and included in the additional information submitted to ICOMOS in July 2023. This includes a georeferenced database, as suggested by the Advisory Body, developed under the umbrella of the research project « *Habitat en terre crue* HTC-ATACORA », also supported by the Catholic University of Louvain. The results of this research project were incorporated in the management of the cultural landscape since they allowed for their identification on the maps of zones of higher and lower concentration of attributes. These data will also inform areas of priorities for protection and conservation.

In terms of community participation in the management of the site, the State Party confirmed that the community has an active role in the Heritage Management Council since 2020.

A management plan for the renovation and maintenance of these traditionally built fortified structures is expected to be completed by the end of 2023, and the State Party is working closely with communities to develop a conservation policy.

Furthermore, the States Parties of Benin and Togo are already discussing a transnational management authority, which will ensure an integrated approach to the management of the property as one. In the meantime, the State Party of Benin has already established at national level an integrated management structure resourced with qualified personnel dedicated to the conservation of the site.

Regarding the recommendation on the municipal development master plans of Boukoumbé, Toucountouna and Natitingou, and the urban planning regulations for the urban centres of Boukoumbé, a new legislation on urbanism was passed in July 2023, aiming to make the cities more sustainable. Additionally, the implementation of a roadmap in accordance with the established order of priorities will be developed after a policy and strategy document are completed.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, we would like to reiterate South Africa's support for the inscription of the extension of the property, Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba, to Benin.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

M. le Président,

La Délégation du Rwanda remercie l'ICOMOS pour son évaluation scientifique menée au site de Koutammakou. Ce site, qui est une extension avec la partie togolaise inscrite sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en 2004, est un paysage culturel vivant, est occupé par les Batammariba, peuple dont les remarquables maisons à tourelle en terre nommées *takienta* sont devenues un symbole au Bénin. Le Koutammakou est un exemple éminent d'occupation du territoire par un peuple à la recherche constante de l'harmonie entre l'homme et la nature qui l'entoure.

M. le Président,

Le type d'habitat de Koutammakou particulier, dont l'esthétique repose sur des formes spectaculaires, est le résultat du génie créateur des Batammariba qui, par extension, signifie « le bon maçon ».

Ainsi, la Délégation du Rwanda soutient l'amendement présenté pour l'inscription de ce bien.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair, for having me the floor.

Japan commends the State Party of Benin for their efforts to extend protection for this important site. This is the case which we highly appreciate because it is also the transnational initiatives. It is needed in this kind of cultural landscape where the area is not limited in one State Party.

We also thank to the Secretariat and Advisory Bodies for their excellent report.

Chair,

Carefully reading the document provided, we understand one of the most important issues here is the map in order to evaluate the value of the proposed extended area mainly on its integrity. It is also quite essential for facilitating appropriate management and protection. But seeing the amendments proposed by Mali, if I understand correctly, necessary map has been already provided.

Since we believe this point is important, we would like to ask the State Party to clarify on this point, on this situation about the map, some more details.

We would also like to ask the Advisory Bodies for their comment on this point.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Japan.

Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Shukran, Said Rais.

Egypt wishes to express its support for the proposed boundary modification of the Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba.

We have carefully reviewed the file and commend the State Party for its commitment to preserving this unique cultural landscape and for presenting this modification.

Furthermore, we welcome the efforts made by the State Party in producing additional maps that enhance our understanding of the property's land use, terraced hills, water retention walls, groves and sacred places. These maps are essential tools for informed decision making and effective management.

We are pleased to note that measures have already been taken to utilize the results of the research project in the management of the Koutammakou landscape. This demonstrates a proactive approach to conservation and sustainable management.

We would like to be added to the list of co-sponsors of the amendment to this decision, as we believe that this modification will enhance the protection and management of this exceptional cultural landscape.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Belgica.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président,

Ce dossier des modifications du site de Koutammakou, tout comme le dossier que nous avons examiné hier concernant la candidature d'Odzala-Kokoua, nous montre les effets de l'absence d'une session annuelle de notre Comité.

Comme nous l'avons vu pour le Congo hier, le Bénin a, dans le cas présent, fait le choix de la proactivité et n'est pas resté les bras croisés, mais a mis à profit ces deux dernières années pour réaliser des progrès significatifs. Cela a déjà été dit, mais nous pensons que cela mérite d'être salué.

Nous apprécions également le travail mené par les États parties du Togo et du Bénin en faveur d'une structure de gestion transnationale du bien. Cette collaboration est un bon exemple de mise en œuvre de la Convention et de son esprit.

Le fait que le Bénin s'engage fortement en faveur des communautés locales, conformément aux « cinq C », est tout aussi exemplaire.

Pour ces raisons, la Belgique se joint donc volontiers à l'amendement qui est proposé par le Mali et le Nigéria, et se réjouit de voir ce site culturel africain élargi figurer sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Greece would like to congratulate the State Party on the preparation of the nomination dossier.

Having carefully examined the submitted documentation as well as the Advisory Body's evaluation, we support the amendments submitted by Mali concerning the inscription of Koutammakou as an extension to the already inscribed property of the Batammariba territory (Togo) and commend the State Party for its constant efforts for safeguarding the property.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like now to pass the floor to the State Party to respond to the questions addressed by Mali and Japan.

La Délégation du Bénin (Observateur) :

M. le Président,

L'État partie du Bénin voudrait vous remercier de tout cœur pour la manière dont vous dirigez nos travaux.

Faisant suite aux mots du Mali, nous voudrions effectivement confirmer que la plupart des recommandations des Organisations consultatives ont été prises en compte.

C'est ainsi que sont résolues, par exemple, les questions relatives à l'exploitation des résultats de l'inventaire de HTC, à l'implication des communautés et à la prise en compte des pratiques traditionnelles de gestion, à la définition des priorités en matière de conservation des zones de forte concentration d'attributs et au plan de gestion des risques.

Le mécanisme de gestion du bien par les deux pays est en cours et, depuis 2016, je puis vous assurer, M. le Président, que grâce à la volonté politique au sommet de l'État, la question des ressources financières ne se pose plus.

Quant à la conservation de nos biens culturels, y compris donc du Koutammakou, nous avons déjà produit les éléments cartographiques supplémentaires demandés, montrant ainsi l'emplacement des *sikién* sur le territoire, la nature de l'occupation du sol, les collines aménagées en terrasses, le réseau de murets de rétention d'eau ainsi que l'emplacement des bosquets et autres lieux sacrés. Très prochainement, nous allons lancer la réalisation d'un schéma directeur d'aménagement des trois communes concernées.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Advisory Bodies to respond to this comment.

ICOMOS :

M. le Président,

L'ICOMOS reconnaît que cette évaluation date de 2022 et que l'État partie a fait des efforts pour répondre aux recommandations de l'ICOMOS, mais l'ICOMOS n'est pas en position pour évaluer les informations complémentaires apportées par l'État partie et reste à la disposition du Comité pour évaluer les progrès faits par l'État partie.

Pour répondre à la question de l'Honorable Délégué du Japon, l'ICOMOS a considéré les limites du bien comme appropriées. La carte est recommandée comme un outil essentiel de la gestion et conservation du bien pour identifier les zones de concentration des attributs et définir les priorités de conservation.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'd like to see if there are any more interventions from the floor.

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

Thank you for the State Party and ICOMOS for their additional comments or information provided.

Based upon the information provided, we're happy to support the proposed amendment by Mali.

We understand the concern by ICOMOS about the management, but, in this specific case or in general for this kind of cultural landscape, management and protection is always challenged. And in this specific case, we believe at this point it's inscribed and make a support, international support, to the State Party and to the local authority and also, local people.

In this sense, we support the amendment by Mali.

Thank you very much.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you so much. So, I see Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Chairperson,

Zambia commends the State Party of Benin for their efforts in ongoing conservation works on the ground and the inclusion of communities in decision making with regards to the property.

We take note that the State Party was able to provide additional information requested, for providing information on the traditional management of the nominated property.

We are, therefore, in support of proposed boundary modification and would like to be added as co-authors to the proposed amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chairman,

We have listened to all the comments and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is in support of the amendment to extend the boundaries.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[interpretation from Spanish] We should like to thank ICOMOS for the presentation of the report and also for the draft decision.

We have just listened to ICOMOS's explanations concerning the question by Mali that most of the recommendations have been either partially or fully implemented, and we're pleased in this.

That means that we think that this, coupled with the information received by Benin, means that we're now in a position to support this.

Thank you. *[end of interpretation from Spanish]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, no more interventions.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.7**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Mali, which is co-authored by the Distinguished Delegations of Nigeria and Egypt and further supported from the floor by the Distinguished Delegations of India, Oman, South Africa, Rwanda, Egypt, Belgium, Greece, Japan, Zambia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Argentina.

The amendments, as you see on the screen, from Para 2: "Approves the significant boundary modification of Koutammakou, Land of Batammariba (Togo) to include Koutammakou, Land of the Batammariba (Benin), on the basis of criteria (v) and (vi);".

Para 3: "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:".

Para 4: "Invites the State Party to take into account, in a planned programme, the following recommendations:".

- Point a), there is just a slight change in the first line. Instead of "Draw up in the short term", it says "Submit a map indicating the location of the *sikien* in their territory", and the last line where there is a deletion of "proposed" in front of "extension". Rest of the point stays as is.
- Point b), there is just a small deletion in the first line, "in the short term" is deleted.
- Same for point c), the phrase "in the short term" is deleted.
- Point d): "Elaborate the municipal development master plans of Boukoumbé, Toucountouna and Natitingou,".
- Point e): "Diligently implement the current management plan and evaluate it as soon as it expires,".
- Point f) remains same except deletion of "in the short and medium terms".
- Point g) is deleted and the initial Para 4 gets merged in this revised Para 4, so point g), from that "Set up the transnational property management body, under the supervision of the two cultural heritage Directorates of Togo and Benin, and define its operating procedures and missions;".
- The next point is deleted and point c) is also deleted.

Revised Para 5: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and on the implementation of the recommendations mentioned above for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Apologies, Chairperson.

We thought that we had sent the communication that we are co-authoring this amendment. My country's name does not figure in the list.

We kindly request Secretariat to reflect that, please.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Salam Aleykum.

We would like to add our name as a supporter for this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeeelan. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thailand also would like to support the proposed amendment by Mali.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We would also like our name to be added to the list of countries co-authoring.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I see no more intervention.

So, I would like to invite you to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1, we don't have any amendments.

I will wait for the Secretariat to reflect all the amendments, first.

Thank you very much.

So, Paragraph 1, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to adopt this as it is? I see no objections. Adopted.
[gavel]

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 4, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 5, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to the proposed paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues, I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

If there are no objections, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B. 7 adopted** as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Benin on behalf of the entire Committee.

Benin, you may have the floor for two minutes.

La Délégation du Bénin (Observateur) :

M. le Président, Excellences, Mmes et MM. les Chefs de Délégation,

Je voudrais, au nom de la Délégation de l'État partie du Bénin, remercier le Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour son accueil chaleureux et l'organisation parfaite de ce Comité du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO.

Le Bénin entretient d'excellentes relations de coopération et de travail avec l'UNESCO et, particulièrement, avec le Centre du patrimoine mondial et ses Organes consultatifs.

Depuis 2016, le Bénin est gouverné sous le leadership du Président Patrice Talon, suivant une nouvelle vision qui fait de la culture le deuxième pilier de développement après l'agriculture, avec des investissements sans précédent dans le patrimoine national.

C'est dans ce sens que s'inscrit la présentation par le Gouvernement du dossier de demande d'inscription, ou plus précisément d'extension, du Koutammakou, le pays des Batammariba, sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. En approuvant ce jour l'extension, le Comité offre l'occasion au Togo et au Bénin de gérer conjointement et harmonieusement ce bien transfrontalier, qui retrouve ainsi son unité et l'ensemble de ses attributs dans un mécanisme de conservation cohérent et continu.

Je voudrais, à cet égard, exprimer, au nom du Gouvernement béninois, les vifs remerciements de notre Délégation à tous les membres du Comité pour leur soutien, au Groupe africain et, plus précisément et spécialement, à la Délégation du Mali, qui a accepté d'endosser ce dossier au nom de mon pays.

Je voudrais aussi étendre ces remerciements au Centre du patrimoine mondial, évidemment à l'ICOMOS et au Fonds pour le patrimoine mondial africain, pour leur soutien et accompagnement durant tout le processus qui a permis d'aboutir à cette belle conclusion.

Par cette extension, enfin, vous donnez un grand signe de reconnaissance et d'espérance à l'ensemble de la communauté Batammariba qui vous remercie par ma voix.

L'État partie du Bénin prend l'engagement de déployer sans délai les actions nécessaires pour la conservation et la valorisation optimale de ce nouveau bien transfrontalier du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

8B.8 Koh Ker: Archaeological Site of Ancient Lingapura or Chok Gargyar (Cambodia) // Koh Ker : site archéologique de l'ancienne Lingapura ou Chok Gargyar (Cambodge)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Koh Ker: Archaeological Site of Ancient Lingapura or Chok Gargyar (Cambodia), but before I give the floor to the Secretariat, Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Concerning the evaluation of this nomination, we received a factual error notification, which is on page 43 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B4.

In this notification, there is a very small correction that has also an impact on the text of the Statement of OUV, and this correction has been already integrated in the version that the Secretariat has.

Thank you.

ICOMOS: *[video]*

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Koh Ker: Archaeological Site of Ancient Lingapura or Chok Gargyar (Cambodia). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 44 of the English version and page 59 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide.]

Located between the Dangrek and Kulen mountain ranges, on a gently sloping hill, some 80 km northeast of Angkor, the nominated property is a sacred urban ensemble consisting of numerous temples and sanctuaries with associated sculptures, inscriptions, and wall paintings, archaeological remains, and hydraulic structures. Constructed in a single phase over a 23-year period, it was one of two rival Khmer Empire capitals – the other being Angkor – that co-existed between 921 and 928 CE, and was the sole capital until 944 CE, after which the Empire's capital moved back to Angkor. Believed to be laid out on the basis of ancient Indian religious concepts of the

universe, the city demonstrated unconventional city planning, architectural features, artistic expression known as Koh Ker Style, and construction technology, notably the use of very large monolithic blocks.

The comparative analysis successfully demonstrates that although Koh Ker was short-lived as a capital and thus acted only as an interlude in Khmer history, its innovations had a profound and lasting influence on urban construction and artistic expression in Southeast Asia.

The nominated property demonstrates criteria (ii) and (iv).

[Next slide.]

The nominated property comprises 30 temples and sanctuaries; 30 archaeological remains such as palace remains, platforms and pedestals, boundary stones, quarry sites and artefacts; and nine hydraulic structures, including artificial ponds and embankments. All the attributes are within the property area.

The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met.

The boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zones are adequate.

[Next slide.]

The legal protection and the management system of the property are satisfactory. The current visitor management and community involvement are adequate, although a Heritage Impact Assessment should be made for the proposed visitor centre complex before the project is commenced.

Capacity-building has been successful through extensive international collaborations. It is recommended strengthening the capacity of the staff for the long-term protection, conservation, and management to be kept as a top priority of the State Party.

[Next slide.]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide.]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Koh Ker: Archaeological Site of Ancient Lingapura or Chok Gargyar (Cambodia) be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide.]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'd like to know whether there are any interventions from the floor, or we proceed to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.8**, but before doing so, I'd like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposal.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendments for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.8**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Therefore, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.8** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to the State of Cambodia on behalf of the entire Committee.

Cambodia, you may have the floor.

La Délégation du Cambodge (Observateur) :

M. le Président du Comité, M. le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial, Honorables collègues,

D'abord, je voulais exprimer mes remerciements pour l'accueil remarquable du pays Arabie saoudite pour cette 45^e session du patrimoine mondial.

Chers collègues,

Notre satisfaction est grande, il va sans dire, de voir figurer désormais sur la Liste du patrimoine de l'humanité le site de Koh Ker.

Il est le plus vaste après Angkor, et dans sa longue et prestigieuse histoire, il a même supplanté, au X^e siècle, Angkor, comme la capitale de l'empire khmer. Aujourd'hui, grâce à votre décision, Koh Ker peut inscrire un moment historique de plus dans son histoire millénaire.

Nos vifs remerciements s'adressent d'abord à ICOMOS, qui a conduit, avec science et conscience, le processus d'évaluation. Notre irremplaçable conseil a également bien voulu nous faire profiter de ses conseils et orientations pour une bonne gestion de Koh Ker.

Au nom du Gouvernement royal du Cambodge et son peuple, je voudrais confirmer notre engagement à mettre en œuvre, dans les meilleures conditions, ces précieuses recommandations. La présence à mes côtés de son excellence Kim Rithy, gouverneur de la province de Preah Vihear, où se trouve le site de Koh Ker, se veut le signe de notre engagement essentiel. Les autorités régionales et locales veilleront de leur part à protéger les biens inscrits.

Enfin, je rappelle que nous avons une autre garantie pour la préservation de Koh Ker à l'avenir : le Comité international de coordination (CIC), qui a donné ses preuves pour le suivi du programme de protection et de valorisation du temple de Preah Vihear depuis une décennie. Ce CIC sera appelé à aider la gestion de Koh Ker dans leurs missions.

Il m'est agréable, pour conclure, d'exprimer notre reconnaissance au Comité du patrimoine mondial. Je tiens également à vous inviter tous à venir visiter les joyaux de ce patrimoine.

Encore une fois, merci à vous tous. *[applaudissements]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

8B.14 Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites of Bronze Age (Mongolia) // Monuments des pierres à cerfs et sites associés de l'âge du bronze (Mongolie)

The Chairperson:

Mic.

As we are advancing in our schedule and we are moving a little bit fast, before we move to the second proposed item, which is nomination proposed by Republic of Korea, they wanted to maintain the same schedule, which is afternoon, and Mongolia agreed to advance their examination of their file for now.

If there are no objections, we will proceed with examination of Deer Stone Monuments and Related Site of Bronze Age for Mongolia.

So, I seem...

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

I would be very grateful if the modified Agenda for today could be specified so that we can make a note of which Agenda item is going to appear where. Because from what we have from the Web World Heritage site, it says completely different from what you are saying.

So, we are in your hands, and we seek your help.

If someone could just enumerate the Agenda for today, what is remaining, then we can be aware when our sites are coming.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Absolutely, Your Excellency.

So, I will pass the floor to the Secretariat to demonstrate and explain the updates.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Actually, the Committee has been very efficient. So, the planning of this morning, which was to finish with the examination of the property located in Cambodia, is completed.

So, since you still have half an hour and that we were supposed to continue in the afternoon with the Republic...

The Delegation of India:

I am just asking, just an enumeration. I'll be very grateful without the explanation. I'm not seeking any explanation from the Secretariat. I appreciate the work of the Secretariat. I appreciate the efficiency and the super efficiency.

I am just seeking. Please tell me the Agenda, so I can make a note of it because the printout which I have mentioned something else, so I am in your hands.

Just enumerate the Agenda.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

It will be distributed to all the Committee members immediately so that you have the revised version.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, there are no objections, we will proceed with the next property. So, we see we are good with this.

I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites of Bronze Age (Mongolia).

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS: *[video]*

[This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites of Bronze Age (Mongolia). The ICOMOS report can be found in] Document INF.8B1 on page 112 of the English version and page 133 of the French version.

[Next slide.]

The Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites of Bronze Age is a serial property that includes examples of high-quality megalithic monumental art created by Eurasian nomadic peoples. These form key parts of larger complexes that include *khirgisüürs*, or burial mounds, and other site attributes. The Deer Stone Monuments exhibit an extraordinary variety of both highly stylized and representational engravings of stags.

Besides the Deer stones, the attributes include the *khirgisüürs* containing human remains, pavement areas, circular or square rock fences, satellite mounds containing horse remains, and satellite boulder ovals or rings/hearths, as well as a quarry, together with their landscape settings.

The comparative analysis justifies the nominated property as an outstanding example of a type of animal-style art, archaeological landscape, megalithic monumental art of the highest quality and artistic vitality. The nominated property is also an exceptional testimony to the ceremonial funeral practice and culture of Eurasian Bronze Age nomads.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (i) and (iii), but that criterion (iv) has not been demonstrated.

[Next slide.]

The nomination consists of four component parts comprises Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites located within the eastern and northern slopes of the Khangai Ridge, in central Mongolia.

The requirements of integrity and authenticity for the whole series and for each of the component parts have been met. ICOMOS considers that the nominated serial property includes all the elements necessary to express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and the selection of component sites has been justified.

The nominated property is affected by development in minor ways. There is some tourism development, which is located too close to the Uushigiin Övör component part and the residual impact of abandoned mining in the buffer zone of the Khoid Tamir component part.

ICOMOS recommends that the buffer zone to the south of the Uushigiin Övör component part be extended to include the area where there is currently a tent hotel. The hotel should be relocated outside the extended buffer zone, further away from the nominated property.

[Next slide.]

The primary mechanisms for protecting the nominated property are the traditional practices undertaken by local people, based on their respect for the old relics and spiritual objects while the legal protection is provided through the Mongolian Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage (2014) and the List of Immovable Historical and Cultural Heritage Properties under State, Provincial and Local Protection (2008).

The nominated component parts are all State-owned, and local people play a major role in managing the property. In addition, the Government of Mongolia has created the National Programme for the Protection of Stone Heritage Properties in Mongolia as a major protective measure. A concise management plan has recently been developed and includes a revised landscape approach and research objectives. The management plan now requires implementation.

The state of conservation is satisfactory and that factors affecting the nominated property are grazing animal impacts, tourism development, disused mining infrastructure in the buffer zone of one component part, and unsympathetic protective fencing. No further re-erection of Deer Stones should be undertaken without a robust conservation methodology. The monitoring arrangements are generally satisfactory, but greater emphasis should be placed on measuring the actual state of conservation of the identified attributes and it would be also advisable that the monitoring system is adapted for easy integration of its outcomes into the Periodic Reporting questionnaire.

[Next slide.]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide.]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Deer Stone Monuments and Related Sites of Bronze Age (Mongolia) be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i) and (iii), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide.]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to ask the Committee if they have any intervention concerning this nomination.

If none, then I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.14**, but before doing so, I'd like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendments to this Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.14**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments on this regard? I see none.

Therefore, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.14** adopted. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Congratulations to Mongolia on behalf of the entire Committee.

You may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Mongolia:

Esteemed Committee members, Distinguished Delegates,

As the Minister of Culture of Mongolia, I extend my profound gratitude to the World Heritage Committee for inscribing the Deer Stone Monument and Related Stone Age Sites on the World Heritage List, acknowledging their artistic vitality and confirming them as the masterpiece of human creative genius.

The Deer Stone Monuments are a testament to the ingenuity of our nomadic ancestors who inhabited the Central Asian highlands. These monuments offer striking illustrations that provide insight into the way of life, cultural sophistication and harmonious coexistence with the nature. The research surrounding these monuments indicates that their creators existed not in isolation but amongst diverse nomadic tribes, fostering vibrant cultural exchange.

The inscription reaffirms our collective commitment to diversity, intercultural understanding, and the protection of cultural heritage with Outstanding Universal Value.

Mongolia is a proud custodian of a rich cultural heritage. Our legal framework for safeguarding these precious monuments and assets in alignment with the conservation set by UNESCO. We collaborate actively with all relevant parties to ensure that our unique and precious cultural heritages is passed on to the future generations, even in the face of new challenges such as climate change. Our commitment in this regard is unwavering. We look forward to continuing our partnership with World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to ensure that the values embodied by Mongolia's cultural heritage can be enjoyed and appreciated for centuries to come.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS in making this inscription possible. I would like to also express my sincere gratitude to the researchers and scientists whose hard work has helped bring the historical and cultural significance of this newly inscribed World Heritage site to global audience.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

Dear colleagues,

I would like to ask the Secretariat to use the remaining time to update the Timetable and, also, I would like to pass the floor to the Director for some general announcements.

Mongolia, the mic.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

For lunchtime, we have five side events that are planned:

- The first will start at 1:30 in Rock Art Room on "World Heritage and Corporate Sustainability". It is organized by UNESCO and the Flanders.
- The second side event will take place, also starting from 1:30, at the Historic Jeddah Room, and it is organized by the Heritage Commission and Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and it is titled "Haji Routes: Darb Zubaydah".
- The third side event is also going to start at 1:30, and it will take place at At-Turaif District Room, and it is organized by the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspices of UNESCO (WHITRAP), and it is titled "The Next 50 years: World Heritage Education Towards the Future".
- And then, the fourth one will take place at the Celebration Room, next to the Plenary Hall here, and it is organized by Kazakhstan and is titled "Heritage in Harmony with Development for Sustainable Futures: Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Inscription of the Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi".
- And the last side event, which is also going to start at 1:30, will take place in Hegra Room, which is the Advisory Bodies space, organized by the three Advisory Bodies and is titled "Tooling Up for Effective World Heritage Management [Planning]".

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Director.

So, we will resume after lunch break. *[gavel]*

The meeting rose at 12:45 am. // La séance a été levée à 12h45.

SEVENTH DAY
Sunday, 17 September 2023
THIRTEENTH PLENARY MEETING
3:16 pm – 6:14 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

SEPTIÈME JOUR
Dimanche 17 septembre 2023
TREIZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h16 – 18h14
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Good afternoon.

Would you kindly take your seat, please? We are going to start.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Good afternoon, dear colleagues.

Dear Committee members,

In order to clarify the conduct of the examination of nomination dossiers, let me recall you that, as I had indicated previously regarding interventions by Committee members on nominations recommended for inscription, what I was suggesting is that, simply, the Committee members refrain from interventions aimed only at congratulating the concerned State Party.

In no way the intervention was to limit or to prevent Committee members from taking the floor whenever they wish to make an intervention relevant to the nomination. Consequently, Committee members are welcome to make their remarks, avoiding repetition, if it's possible.

And now, I would like to pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to list the nomination properties to be discussed and examined during this afternoon.

Mr. Director, you may have the floor.

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

2022 CYCLE (Ct'd) // CYCLE 2022 (suite)

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This afternoon, you will examine the following nominations, by order:

- Republic of Korea, Gaya tumuli;
- China, Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu'er;
- India, Santiniketan;
- Islamic Republic of Iran, The Persian Caravanserai;
- Canada, Tr'ondëk-Klondike,
- Denmark, Viking-Age Ring Fortresses,
- Germany, Jewish Medieval Heritage of Erfurt.

And if there is still time to continue your work, the State Party of Latvia and the State Party of Lithuania have agreed, if needs be, to see their nomination files and items be also examined this afternoon, namely for:

- Latvia, Kuldīga / Goldingen in Courland; and
- Lithuania, Modernist Kaunas.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Director.

CULTURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

8B.12 Gaya Tumuli (Republic of Korea) // Tumuli de Gaya (République de Corée)

The Chairperson:

And now, to begin with, I would like to invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Gaya Tumuli, Republic of Korea. But before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Concerning the evaluation of the Gaya Tumuli, we received a factual error notification, which is on page 86 of both the English and French version of the Document INF.8B4.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS: *[video]*

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Gaya Tumuli (Republic of Korea). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 83 of the English version and page 120 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide.]

Gaya Tumuli is a serial nomination that includes seven archaeological cemetery sites with burial mounds attributed to the Gaya Confederacy, which developed in the southern part of the Korean Peninsula from the 1st to the 6th century CE. Through their geographical distribution and landscape characteristics, types of burials, and grave goods, the nominated cemeteries attest to the distinctive Gaya political system, in which affiliated polities existed as autonomous political equals while sharing cultural commonalities.

The shared development of tumuli by Gaya polities benefited from the systematic trading network that closely linked the Gaya Confederacy through diverse ocean, land, and river routes. The introduction of new forms of tombs and the intensification of the spatial hierarchy evident in the seven tumuli sites clearly reflect the structural changes experienced by Gaya society during its history.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List on the basis that it demonstrates that the Gaya Tumuli bear exceptional testimony to Gaya, a unique ancient East Asian civilization that coexisted with its more strongly centralized neighbours but maintained a distinct confederated political system.

ICOMOS considers that criterion (iii) has been justified.

[Next slide.]

The seven nominated cemeteries are the burial grounds located on the elevated terrain at the centre of each polity across the southern Korean Peninsula.

The conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met. Some recommendations have been included in the draft decision in order to reduce the vulnerability of the integrity of some component parts.

[Next slide.]

All seven component parts are designated Heritage Areas with the title "Historic Site" under the Cultural Heritage Protection Act. As archaeological sites in the Republic of Korea, they fall under the Act on Protection and Inspection of Buried Cultural Heritage, which regulates when archaeological research has been taken while the Act on Cultural Heritage Maintenance regulates maintenance, repair, and restoration projects.

After being inscribed on the World Heritage List, it will also be protected by the Special Act on World Heritage Conservation, Management and Utilization (2021).

The management system effectively integrates the different levels of government, making coordinated action possible. While the management system is sufficient to ensure a common vision is shared by all actors, it allows

for local differences. The planning instruments are already being implemented successfully at different levels of government and have proven to be useful tools in the effort to protect the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide.]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide.]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Gaya Tumuli (Republic of Korea) be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iii) and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide.]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS.

I would like to know if there are any comments from the floor concerning this nomination. So, I see none.

Therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.12**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.12**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments?

I see none, and therefore, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.12** adopted. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Congratulations to the Republic of Korea on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property.

Korea, you may have the floor for a 2-minute statement

The Observer Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

[first speaker] Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Distinguished Committee members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Administrator of Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea, I am delighted that the Gaya Tumuli to be inscribed on the Heritage list today.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the World Heritage Committee for recognizing its value as an important evidence of the diversity within ancient East Asian civilizations. As a World Heritage site, the Gaya Tumuli, comprising cemeteries, shows the coexistence of Gaya with its neighbours.

The Cultural Heritage Administration is to dedicate to working closely with the local governments, making sure the heritage is taken care of carefully and recognized within the country and around the world.

Lastly, I deeply appreciate the Committee members, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the ICOMOS, the Secretariat as well as national and international experts for their valuable support throughout the nomination process.

Thank you so much.

[Second speaker] Good afternoon.

I am Park Wan-su, the Governor of Gyeongnam Province, South Korea.

First of all, I would like to thank the World Heritage Committee for selecting Gaya Tumuli as the World Heritage. We feel truly honoured for this selection. I assure you that we will do our best to preserve and manage the value of Gaia thermally.

Once again, I would like to thank the Committee. *[applause]*

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

The Observer Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

[Third speaker] As the Governor of the Province of Gyeongsangbuk-do, holding the most amount of the World Heritage Sites in Korea, I will make sure to bring out each historical site while carrying out UNESCO's objectives and share our sites with the world.

Thank you. *Gamsahamnida.*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

8B.9 Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu'er (China) // Paysage culturel des forêts anciennes de théiers de la montagne Jingmai à Pu'er (Chine)

The Chairperson:

So now, I would like to invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu'er, China.

ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu'er (China). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 330 of the English version and page 344 of the French version.

[Next slide, please]

Over a period of a thousand years, Blang and Dai peoples developed an innovative method to produce tea. Using the characteristics of the subtropical mountainous monsoon climate of Jingmai, the traditional understorey cultivation of old tea trees responds to the specific conditions of the mountain ecosystem, which, combined with a particular governance arrangement maintained by the indigenous communities residing in this area, have supported the continuity of a sustainable land use. The understorey tea cultivation consists of domesticating wild tea trees and planting them under tall trees. Three vertical layers are created, consisting of tall trees in the higher layer, tea trees and bushes in the middle layer, and herbaceous plants in the lower layer. This method protects the tea plants from heavy rains, enables the level of sunlight to be controlled, and promotes the production of large tea leaves. Traditional knowledge and belief systems in Jingmai Mountain have enabled the conservation of ancient tea forest, the sustainable use of natural resources and the development of an organically evolved cultural landscape that safeguards cultural and biological diversity.

The comparative analysis demonstrates the significance of this agricultural landscape in its geocultural region, and in the global context as a unique testimony of the understorey tea cultivation method that is continuing and largely traditional. The nominated property demonstrates criteria (iii) and (v).

[Next slide, please]

This nomination consists of a tea production area comprised of traditional villages within old tea groves surrounded by forests and tea plantations located on Jingmai Mountain in Huimin Town, Pu'er City, Yunnan Province, in southwestern China. The nominated property counts with an adequate buffer zone.

The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met. The integrity of the nominated property is vulnerable to negative impacts of tourism development and climate change, and limits of acceptable change need to be established to maintain its authenticity.

[Next slide.]

The legal protection of the tangible, intangible, natural, and cultural heritage, complemented by a comprehensive planning system, is adequate.

The management system is adequate, based on the establishment of a property-specific administration authority which operates in cooperation with five levels of administration and following a tripartite social governance system of tribe-government-religion with the support of local communities. ICOMOS considers that the integration of the traditional governance system and the participation of the local communities in the management of the nominated property will be positive for its long-term conservation.

[Next slide.]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide.]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of the Jingmai Mountain in Pu'er (China) be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (v), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide.]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'd like to see if there are any comments from the floor regarding this nomination. I see none.

Therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.9**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed?

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendments for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.9**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments on this?

I see none, and therefore, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.9** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to China. Congratulations, China, on behalf of the entire Committee.

You may have the floor for a two-minute statement.

The Observer Delegation of China:

[first speaker] *Salaam Aleykum.*

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, my Delegation would like to express our profound appreciation to the World Heritage Committee for its decision to inscribe the Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of Jingmai Mountain in Pu'er, Yunnan province of China, onto the World Heritage List.

We thank the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS for their professional and quality evaluation and report.

Now, Mr. Chair, I would like to pass the floor to Mr. Li Qun, Vice Minister of Culture and Tourism and concurrently Administrator of the National Cultural Heritage Administration of China, for making a statement.

Thank you. *[applause]*

[second speaker] Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Today, Cultural Landscape of Old Tea Forests of Jingmai Mountain in Pu'er is successfully inscribed on the World Heritage List, becoming a cultural heritage of outstanding interests of mankind.

All Chinese people are rejoiced and inspired.

On behalf of China, I would like to extend thanks to the World Heritage Committee, World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and all States Parties.

With the inscription, the Chinese people's principle of ecological ethics, their traditional farming-knowledge system and their multi-ethnic social governance model that advocates peace and friendship, happiness and inclusiveness, and cooperation and well merited results are shared with the world. We hope that these core values of traditional Chinese culture would be able to provide useful reference for other countries in their efforts to try to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

China has always endeavoured to work with all countries and international organizations to facilitate the conversation and transmission of heritage, of understanding interests of mankind. Pursuant to the World Heritage Committee's decision, China will continue to work intensively to improve planning and management, adapt to climate change, guide religious participation and regulate tourist development, with an aim to ensure the transmission of properties of Outstanding Universal Value of the future generation. We will also increase international exchange and cooperation and take more responsibility for World cultural Heritage conservation and integrity, and contribute to promoting exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations and to building a community with a shared future of mankind.

Thank you, thank you. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

8B.10 Santiniketan (India) // Santiniketan (Inde)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Santiniketan (India).

ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

Korea, the mic. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*, the mic. South Korea. China, sorry. China...

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

China, can you please...

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

Good afternoon.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Santiniketan (India). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 55 of the English version and page 70 of the French version.

[Next slide, please]

Santiniketan was established in rural West Bengal in 1901 by Rabindranath Tagore, an internationally recognized Nobel laureate, poet, writer and thinker, known for his humanist ideals.

Santiniketan was established as a residential school and centre for art based on ancient Indian traditions and on a vision of the unity of humanity transcending religious and cultural boundaries. It embodies ideals of internationalism and an emerging pan-Asian modernity. The built elements display eclectic influences from various Asian and international sources, and a revived attention to the local.

In 1921, Santiniketan became a "world university" (Visva-Bharati) which continues today, applying educational approaches based on an interpretation of Vedic traditions. These include the importance of pavilions and gardens, artworks, use of traditional materials, open air classrooms, and participation in cultural festivals. Set within the historical context of early 20th century India, Santiniketan reflected a push away from colonial templates and influenced the leaders of the Indian Freedom Movement.

The comparative analysis demonstrates the significance of Santiniketan as an early 20th century place of learning and in terms of its expression of local and internationalist philosophies. It also establishes that Santiniketan influenced other educational and cultural institutions in the south Asian region.

While the property was nominated on the basis of criteria (ii) and (vi), ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (iv) and (vi), based on the productive engagements with the State Party and the receipt of additional information.

[Next slide, please]

This slide shows the nominated portion of the campus, outlined in red. It includes the three areas that were established during Tagore's life. The extent of the present-day university campus defines the buffer zone, which is outlined in blue. The wider setting has also been defined by the State Party.

The continuing educational and cultural uses of the nominated area within the Visva-Bharati campus are attributes alongside the buildings and building interiors, and the eclectic character of the architecture, landscapes and artworks that illustrate experimentation based on Tagore's philosophies.

The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met. Some aspects of the property's authenticity are potentially vulnerable due to any future changes in materials or uses, or social and educational changes.

[Next slide, please]

The nominated property is protected by a national law that established Visva-Bharati as an institution of national importance, based on the ideals of Tagore. The management system is dependent on the effective operation of the Visva-Bharati Heritage Committee, supported by relevant national and local authorities. Some recommendations have been made to further strengthen the legal protection and management system.

The condition of the nominated property has been supported by conservation and restoration projects achieved through partnerships with Indian specialist agencies. Further recommendations about improving the documentation and monitoring have been provided.

[Next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide, please]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Santiniketan (India) be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iv) and (vi) and has included a number of further recommendations, as already outlined, to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide, please]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there are any comments regarding this nomination.

I see none, and I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.10**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.10**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments?

I see none and I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.10** adopted. [gavel] [applause]

Congratulation, India, on behalf of the entire Committee.

India, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Mr. Chair,

Namaste and Salam.

India rejoices and celebrates the inclusion of Santiniketan on the World Heritage List.

On behalf of my country, I offer my thanks to the World Heritage Committee, the Secretariat and ICOMOS, who supported this property and recognized the Outstanding Universal Value of Santiniketan under Agenda 45 COM 8B.10. I thank the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and India's Expert Body, the Archaeological Survey of India, for their tireless efforts.

Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi is the Chancellor of Santiniketan, and it is his birthday today. Hence, the inscription of Santiniketan on the World Heritage List is a welcome gift.

Santiniketan, situated in rural Bengal, is associated with the work and philosophies of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, world famous poet, artist, musician, philosopher and recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature 1913. Established initially as an ashram in 1863 by his father, Rabindranath Tagore began, in 1901, its transformation into a residential school and a centre for art, based on the ancient Indian teaching system of Gurukul. His vision was oriented at the unity of humanity or *Vishwa Bharati*. Santiniketan embraced a unique brand of internationalism

that drew upon ancient, medieval and folk traditions of India as well as Japanese, Chinese, Persian, Balinese, Burmese, and Art Deco forms. Many of these themes are seen in his *Gitanjali*, his collection of poems, which he wrote while living in Santiniketan.

I conclude, Mr. Chair, by quoting the motto of Santiniketan, taken from an ancient Sanskrit verse: "Yatra visvam bhavatieka nidam", "Where the whole world can meet in a nest". We invite everyone to visit this nest and explore the universalism of Santiniketan.

I will now say a line in the Bengali language, congratulating the people of India: "*Samasta baitadi abhinandan*".

Thank you and *Bharat mata kijai*. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulation again.

8B.11 The Persian Caravanserai (Iran (Islamic Republic of)) // Le caravansérail persan (Iran (République islamique d'))

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of The Persian Caravanserai, Islamic Republic of Iran, but before I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Concerning the evaluation of the nomination of The Persian Caravanserai, we received a factual error notification, which is on page 65 of both the English and French version of the Document INF.8B4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Persian Caravanserai (Islamic Republic of Iran). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 67 of the English version and page 83 of the French version.

On this evaluation, as already noted, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide, please]

Caravanserais were roadside inns that provided shelter, food and water for caravans, pilgrims and other travellers along networks of trade routes. Their locations were determined by the presence of water, trade networks, geographical concerns and security.

The caravanserais included in this serial nomination represent only a portion of the total number that were built along the ancient roads of Iran. According to the State Party, the nominated components are the most influential examples of the caravanserais of Iran and illustrate a wide range of architectural styles, adaptation to climatic conditions, and construction materials. They are spread across thousands of kilometres and were built over several centuries.

The property has been nominated according to criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv).

[Next slide, please]

This is a serial nomination of 56 component parts, and their locations throughout Iran can be seen in this map.

As will be explained, ICOMOS has concerns about the rationale for the selection of the component parts of this serial nomination, that have significant implications for the justification of criteria and the requirements for authenticity and integrity at this stage.

ICOMOS observes that the integrity for many of the individual components is good, especially for those that retain their original functions as temporary accommodation and resting places for travellers for business or religious purposes, or tourism. For others, the integrity is vulnerable due to the potentially adverse effects of infrastructure and other developments.

In relation to the proposed boundaries, ICOMOS notes that many are tightly delineated in relation to the area of the caravanserai only, excluding the immediate setting and important associated elements. In such cases, the boundaries should be expanded to better represent the operation of the caravanserais and the travelling routes they supported.

[Next slide, please]

The legal protection for the nominated serial property is adequate, and governance arrangements are in place for the property as a whole and at the provincial level. Each nominated caravanserai has a restoration plan, although the overarching management plan requires further elaboration, especially in relation to the management objectives and coordinated approaches to key topics.

The state of conservation is generally good. Sound conservation practices are in place, and traditional building materials and craftsmanship are typically used. However, some of the selected caravanserais have been heavily restored, reconstructed or adapted in the past. For example, the Yām caravanserai has been reconstructed on the basis of archaeological excavations and historical photographs; and the Mādar Shāh caravanserai has functioned as a five-star hotel since the 1960s.

[Next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

Despite the efforts of the State Party to respond to requests for additional Information, it shows that many of the parameters required by the Operational Guidelines have not yet been demonstrated or satisfied.

The comparative analysis does not yet clearly justify the selection of the component parts, and ICOMOS notes the requirements outlined in Paragraph 137 of the Operational Guidelines for the selection of component parts of serial properties should be on the basis of clearly defined links. It also requires each component part to contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property in a substantial and scientifically demonstrated way.

The history of routes in this region occurred across periods that span almost two millennia. ICOMOS considers that the connections between the fifty-six component parts have not been sufficiently justified for inclusion beyond their overall typology, namely the explanation that caravanserais were associated with historical routes. It has also not been sufficiently explained how each component part specifically contributes to the understanding of the evolution of the caravanserais of Iran as a distinct building typology.

ICOMOS considers that criteria (ii) and (iii) are not demonstrated, but that criterion (iv) could be justified if the selection of the component parts is revised to have a more specific historical focus. ICOMOS considers that including caravanserais from all different historical periods in an effort to demonstrate the evolution of the caravanserai over time has not been effective. However, a focus on the Safavid period – considered to be the golden age of caravanserai construction in Iran – provides a strong basis for the justification of Outstanding Universal Value according to criterion (iv).

31 of the 56 component parts reflect the Safavid period, but ICOMOS also considers that two of them should be omitted because of issues with authenticity, as I previously explained.

[Next slide, please]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of The Persian Caravanserai be referred back to the State Party to allow it to:

- Refocus the justification for inscription as outstanding examples of historic roadside inns during the Safavid dynasty according to criterion (iv);
- Reduce the series to 29 caravanserais illustrating the Safavid period, as I have explained;
- Revise the boundaries of the component parts to include the immediate surroundings of the caravanserais and important ancillary buildings related to each;

[Apologies, next slide, please]

- Strengthen the monitoring programme and the management plan for the nominated property as a whole to include clear management objectives, deepen the governance and coordination arrangements, and include disaster risk-preparedness, interpretation and tourism strategies.

ICOMOS further recommends that the name of the property could be changed to reflect the revised focus of the justification for inscription, and we have included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide, please]

An additional mission is not strictly necessary in this case because the recommended revisions do not involve consideration of criteria other than those already proposed, and the proposed boundary adjustments occur within the areas which were already visited by the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission.

[Next slide, please]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to know if there are any comments from the floor concerning this nomination.

Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Shukran, Said Rais.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to commend the comprehensive report provided by the ICOMOS experts on the nomination dossier of The Persian Caravanserai.

The State of Qatar has carefully read the dossier report, the set of additional information and other relevant reports sent by the State Party as well as the related to factual errors.

Our study shows that the ICOMOS report highlights the importance of caravanserai as a human innovation and providing comfort to travellers and pilgrims on long and difficult roads, in different geographical conditions. The development and evolution of this architectural structure from the achievements. *Shabar Kenaz*, 530 BC to the late 19th century of the Qajar period shows its viability and significance in the lives of the people of Iran. In addition, the multiplicity of the design and materials and the use of the context architecture, despite having a common concept, shows a human ingenuity and the advancement of this type of architecture over time.

Mr. Chair,

The nominated caravanserai represents the sequence of the gradual development and evolution of caravanserai through time from different historical periods. What distinguish this nomination dossier is the concept of The Persian Caravanserai, which was formed and evolved through the millennia.

According to the evidences, the oldest caravanserai are located in the central plateau of Iran, and none of the caravanserai outside this plateau in the region are older than the Islamic period. However, among the nominated 56 caravanserai, there exist examples from the ancient times such as the Gachin and Noushervān, which date back to the Sassanid period, which is before the 7th century. The ICOMOS report also specifically mentions the two caravanserai, Mādar Shāh in Isfahan and Yām caravanserai in Tabriz, which were proposed to be removed due to the renovations carried out.

In respect to the ICOMOS opinion, the serial selection of 56 caravanserai can be reduced to 54 through excluding the two caravanserais mentioned above, which is Mādar Shāh in Isfahan and Yām caravanserai in Tabriz.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar supports the inscription of The Persian Caravanserai considering the important and Universal Value of this serial property.

Also, we would like to request giving the floor the Distinguished Delegation of Islamic Republic of Iran.

Thanks, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Chairperson,

Zambia wishes to commend ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre for their support in assisting and guiding the Islamic Republic of Iran throughout the process towards the proposed inscription of The Persian Caravanserai on the World Heritage List.

We also wish to commend the Islamic Republic of Iran for the great amount of work put in, enabling them to successfully reach this point at which the site is being considered for inscription.

Chairperson,

The Persian Caravanserai is a valuable property of the tradition of travelling in the West Asia region, due to its location at the intersection of communication routes. It is a place where travellers coming from all directions were able to meet and interact. This geographical location has been key in facilitating the men from different backgrounds to create notable architecture, through the sharing of experiences and collaboration. Further, this location has provided an environment to create a unique example of architecture, which can be formed and transformed over periods of time and in every period, it has been more complete than the previous period.

As mentioned in The Persian Caravanserai nomination, from the early examples of the caravanserai in the Achaemenid period to the landmark buildings of the later periods, we see the diversity and evolution of architecture in The Persian Caravanserai in each period.

Chairperson,

As Zambia, we're in agreement with Qatar submitted proposal for inscription of the property on the World Heritage List while agreeing with ICOMOS to exclude two caravanserais.

As it has been stated, The Persian Caravanserai has been a place to promote cultural interactions and a bed for the development of human knowledge as well as dialogue between different ethnicities and cultures.

The inscription of the property will, therefore, be a valuable addition to the World Heritage List, a decision to which we, as a State Party of Zambia, is in full support.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We would like to thank ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre for all of their efforts when it comes to assessing the Caravanserai site and its proposed nomination for the World Heritage List.

We welcome the State Party's efforts in preparing this magnificent candidature, and we want to also commend the excellent cooperation between the various instances as well in the previous week.

When it comes to this particular candidature, we are confident that the OUV of the caravanserais is actually fully justified, and 54 sites actually bear witness to the various different dynasties that have held sway right from the 5th century prior to the common area right through to the Islamic era in Iran. These 54 are actually just a selection out of more than 1,000 caravanserai sites that reflect the various different dynasties and periods in Iran. The walls of these caravanserais have borne witness to the passage of historical figures, be they princes who might have spent the night there, those who have drafted outstanding Persian literary works. We think this is an outstanding example of a cultural inter exchange over the centuries and over the course of 3,000 years. This is a serial nomination, and we are quite confident that the Islamic Republic of Iran will prove its ability to manage these sites as is the case with these other sites in Iran.

We also know that there is a planned centre for the management of all of these sites in Iran. Near each of the properties, there is a local management office, and we think that this is a working method that has borne a fruit and proven to be very effective.

We think that criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv) are, therefore, satisfied and we can fully support its inscription on the List.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor.

Please allow me to acknowledge The Persian Caravanserai as an important form of Persian architecture, which created routes development according to the travel demands of the epoch.

We note in the nomination file a number of caravanserais from all over Iran, carefully selected from hundreds of them. It is an important property in the issue of humanity with a clear Outstanding Universal Value.

Nigeria appreciates the thorough work done by ICOMOS and the recommendations that include refocusing of the justification for inscription on the caravanserais, outstanding examples of historic roadside inns, during the Safavid dynasty when a great number of caravanserais were constructed between the main cities, in order to justify criterion (iv), and the need to reduce the series of the 29 caravanserais illustrating this Safavid period, considering to be the golden age of caravanserai construction in Iran, just to mention a few.

We recognize the exigency of strengthening the management plan for the nominated property as a whole, to include clear management of objective details, the governance arrangements and how the different actors coordinate their actions to define decision making process, including a disaster preparedness, a comprehensive interpretation and tourism strategies for all the component parts. To acknowledge, the State Party of Iran has taken appropriate actions to address most of the issues raised, while others are on the way.

Nigeria believes that the facts at hand are sufficient for an immediate inscription of the site and, therefore, call on the Committee to adopt the DR with the amendments submitted by the State of Qatar.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair, thank you, members of the Committee.

Members of the Committee,

I would like to thank the experts from ICOMOS of the World Heritage Centre for the work that they conducted on assessing the nomination, as complex as it is, in its entirety because, originally, the nomination contained 56 components across all of Iran.

We understand ICOMOS's concerns with respect to the integrity of the management and with respect to certain components, and we welcome the readiness of Iran to lower the number of properties to 54 as part of the nomination, removing the caravanserais Yām and Mādar Shāh according to ICOMOS recommendations, which were reconstructed based on historical descriptions.

It's important to note that Iran is also ready to provide all 54 properties, especially those specifically cited in ICOMOS's report, with greater attention at the level of the Government, and also provide a stronger protection for these.

As the Distinguished Representative of Qatar has already said, the nomination of The Persian Caravanserai reflects a unique and important historical event in the development of cultural ties and trade ties between different peoples and different ethnic groups. This process took place over many centuries, starting with the Achaemenid era until later eras. And this is why we believe that the broad proposal of components by Iran, which reflect the traditions of the caravanserai, is sufficient to reflect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The word "caravanserai" comes from Persian, and it is comprised of two parts: "caravan", travellers through the desert; and "serai", which means a home.

We believe that this wonderful cultural phenomenon deserves to be included on the List of World Heritage and Iran will be able to ensure all of the necessary conditions for the effective preservation, management and popularization of all components of the nomination.

Given all of what I have just said, we support the amendment proposed by Qatar.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for giving India the floor on the Agenda Item 45 COM 8B.11, The Persian Caravanserai (Iran), which has got a referral recommendation by the Expert Body for cultural sites, but amendments have been presented for inscription.

I thank the excellent work done by the World Heritage Secretariat and the Expert Body.

The nominated property is a serial nomination and has high OUV with criteria (iv) and deserves to be inscribed. ICOMOS considered a reduced number of sites belonging to the Safavid period. We understand the need for each component part to resonate with the requirements, and how each component part contributes to the evolution of the timelines, and to have specific historical focus. It is unfortunate that due to lack of specifics, the Advisory Body had no choice but to give a referral recommendation.

The caravanserais are roadside inns which provided shelter, food and water for caravans, pilgrims and travellers. The routes and the locations of the caravanserais were determined by the presence of water, geographical conditions and security concerns. The 56 caravanserais included in this serial nomination are only a small percentage of the numerous caravanserais built along the ancient roads of Iran. These structures became a place

for the exchange of ideas and social, religious and political thoughts of different ethnic groups. The Persian caravanserai is one of the most amazing architectural structures in the history of architecture, which acted as bridges between civilizations and societies.

The State Party of the Islamic Republic of Iran, along with its experts, met us and held detailed discussions with us. We raised various points regarding referral recommendation, and Iran provided clarifications. After having heard the State Party of Iran, we are now convinced that the issues raised by the Advisory Body are suitably covered and the property would enrich the World Heritage List.

Hence, India supports Iran and the inscription of The Persian Caravanserai on the World Heritage List.

India also congratulates the people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for its work in safeguarding this heritage for all of humanity.

We would request you to give the floor to the State Party of Iran to clarify before the Committee on the concerns raised by the Advisory Body.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Les caravansérails proposés pour inscription relient d'importants itinéraires historiques et culturels. La plupart d'entre eux est située le long de la Route de la soie. Tous les éléments constitutifs du bien sont inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine culturel national et sont, par conséquent, protégés par différents instruments juridiques iraniens.

L'ICOMOS considère que la protection juridique de tous les éléments constitutifs ainsi que de leurs zones tampons est appropriée.

Nous appuyons donc les amendements proposés en tenant compte des efforts effectués par l'État partie d'Iran pour la protection des sites en question. Cependant, nous demeurons d'avis, avec l'ICOMOS, qu'il y a lieu d'encourager l'État partie, notamment, à :

- s'assurer que toutes les lois et réglementations qui s'appliquent aux zones tampons soient strictement appliquées ;
- entreprendre des travaux d'entretien sur une base régulière de manière à réduire les interventions nécessaires au minimum ; et
- respecter les principes de conservation internationaux et les bonnes pratiques de conservation ;
- renforcer le plan de gestion du bien proposé pour inscription dans son ensemble afin d'inclure, afin d'inclure des objectifs de gestion clairs et détaillés, et des dispositions de gouvernance.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa has considered the proposed nomination dossier for The Persian Caravanserai, the recommendations by the Advisory Body, and the additional information provided by the State Party of the Islamic Republic of Iran after the report was produced by ICOMOS in March 2022.

We believe that the State Party has addressed the concerns regarding this nomination, and we commend the State Party for the clarification provided to the Advisory Body.

South Africa is, therefore, in full support for inscription as proposed by Qatar.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation would like to congratulate the State Party on the preparation of the nomination process for the inscription of The Persian Caravanserai in the World Heritage List, according to which the following principle values have been demonstrated:

- The Persian Caravanserai constitutes an exceptional network of historical routes fostering human interactions and exchange of cultures, knowledge and ideas over a long period of time. Nevertheless, the Persian caravanserai is considered to have played a major role in the network of ancient historical and pilgrimage routes, not only from the point of view of tangible heritage but also as a remarkable and integral intangible heritage.
- The development and evolution of this property in terms of building type, from the Achaemenid period to the late 19th century, shows the stability and importance of this architectural type in the lives of the people of Iran and Asia in general.
- On the other hand, it also demonstrates the adaptation of this building type to the social, economic, religious and political circumstances of each period.

We consider that the State Party has provided very thorough and convincing documentation for this nomination and, therefore, we support the inscription of The Persian Caravanserai on the World Heritage List as well as the amendments proposed by Qatar.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

First of all, we thank the State Party of Islamic Republic of Iran for this important nomination. It is remarkable sight, deeply connected to the caravan pilgrimage or journey and the people living there. This also important for more equal representation in regard to the region as well as the type of site.

We also thank the Advisory Body for their report because we can easily understand the difficulties of evaluating this kind of site situated in broad area.

After carefully hearing the discussion in this Committee, we support the amendment provided by the Distinguished Delegate of Qatar. We understand the fundamental value of this site is not questioned.

Having said this, we would have some clarifications. We feel, in this case, several technical aspects in the World Heritage context, including criteria, integrity, are discussed. It seems that there are different understandings between the State Party and ICOMOS concerning the link between caravanserais, including in the nomination.

In this regard, we would like to hear from the State Party of Iran about their views on inter-relationship between caravanserais, and also, about the selection of World Heritage criteria.

We would also like to ask ICOMOS on this point.

We would appreciate to have more clear views on this point because it would be useful to avoid misunderstandings for future conservation and management.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

My Delegation appreciates and commend the work done by ICOMOS on The Persian Caravanserai file. We understand the concern of ICOMOS, but also appreciate the State Party decision to lower the number of properties to 54.

My Delegation believes that the broad proposal is sufficient to reflect the Outstanding Universal Value of The Persian Caravanserai.

As such, we believe that the property should be inscribed in the World Heritage List while appreciating the action taken by the State Party of Iran and the effort carried out to safeguard the property.

My Delegation would like to support the amendment provided by Qatar and also kindly request the Chair to allow the State Party to provide clarifications on the queries posed.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Saudi Arabia, you have the floor. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

[interpretation from Arabic] Good afternoon. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

We appreciate the efforts done by the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre and the State Party, and we would like to support the amendments presented by the State of Qatar.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Belgica.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Obviously, the caravanserai is a phenomenon and a heritage remarkable testimony to human activity and history. There is no doubt that it deserves its place on the World Heritage List. But as we've heard today, on numerous occasions, caravanserais were not exclusive to Iran. So, to understand the story and history of the caravanserai, we feel the World Heritage List would be better off with a more complete geographical series.

We, therefore, subscribe to the opinion of the Advisory Body, who clearly invested greatly in the preparation of its report. But we understand that there is broad support for the amendments submitted by Qatar.

Still, Chair, we would like to encourage States Parties concerned to join forces and consider developing an extension to The Persian Caravanserai.

There are precedents in this regard. The Beech Forest series started in the Carpathians but now includes 18 European countries, including Belgium.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Delegation of Bulgaria congratulates both the State Party of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Advisory Bodies for the work accomplished so far, and we support the inscription of The Persian Caravanserai according to the amendments proposed by the Distinguished Qatari Delegation.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much.

We would also like to congratulate ICOMOS on its work, and after having listened carefully to this Committee's discussions, we feel that we are in a position to support the amendment proposed by Qatar.

We want to also commend the Islamic Republic of Iran for all of its efforts.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the State Party to respond to the questions addressed by the State of Qatar, India, Russian Federation, Japan and Ethiopia.

The Observer Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and dear members of the World Heritage Committee.

First of all, allow me to thank all the members who spoke about The Persian Caravanserai and support it.

For your information, we have almost about 1,000 caravanserais all around the country. 720 of them are on the National List, and 56 of them now proposed as the nomination for the World Heritage List.

Our investigation finds that the serial selection of 56 caravanserais from different historical periods shows the sequence of historical development and evolution of the caravanserais through time. The nominated 56 caravanserais are best and most complete representative of each period, from a tangible and intangible standpoint. Several criteria have been set for choosing these 56:

- First, environmental conditions and changes;
- Second, different historical periods;
- Third, typology of architecture, including urban and suburban areas.

However, we understand the concern of ICOMOS. We appreciate the concern of ICOMOS about the two caravanserais. We are prepared. If the Committee decides to remove these two caravanserais from the List and go for 54. And then later on, perhaps, if possible, we can extend the List with a few more caravanserais.

Let me finish with the poetry, which is the Iranian. No one can speak about the Iranian without the poetry. Molana has said about the caravanserais: "*Khadim manzel shab biyik caravanserais charco azul karbo mavora muntadar karvansara rusiyyah barhoum zay sormovo zibar*".

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

There is no time for me to translate it, but the question is about the people who stay in caravanserais night and day, and they leave the caravanserais when the snow and rain is finished.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I'd like to pass the floor to Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chair,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has listened to the report from ICOMOS and the comments made by various Committee members, and we are satisfied that The Persian Caravanserai meets the requirements, and therefore, we support the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to ICOMOS to respond to some of the comments who were addressed by the Committee members.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

I think we had only question from the Distinguished Delegation of Japan regarding issues of integrity in the use of criteria. So, I will just briefly respond to those questions.

ICOMOS does not disagree at all that the caravanserais have the potential to be inscribed in the World Heritage List. Indeed, our recommendation for a refer back clearly shows this. The question is how best to do it. The 56 components were indeed nominated on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv), and we understand that there is an amendment to that effect and considerable consensus in support.

As explained more fully in our report, ICOMOS considers that some arguments for these criteria are more promising than others. For example, criteria (iii) and (iv) invite quite different perspectives, and all of them must be supported by a clear rationale for the selection of component parts, as we've discussed.

Our difficulties in relation to the justification of the rationale for a selection of series comes from the work done, some more than ten years ago, to try and be more specific about the way in which serial properties should be presented, which clearly expressed the idea that series must not be just a catalogue of sites, but that the connections between them need to be justified in relation to the criteria that are being presented.

As is sometimes the case, ICOMOS could envisage a modified way forward for this nomination, and we've explained that in our presentation and in the report, and this was to focus on a "significant stage in human history", as required by criterion (iv), which would have required recognition of a smaller number of the 54 or 56 nominated sites, which were those associated with the Safavid period.

However, given consensus that we see emerging in the Committee, today, for 54 sites which show the evolution over time of the caravanserai, we would merely comment that criterion (iv) seems the least able to be understood, given that it requires that the sites illustrate "a significant stage in human history".

In fact, the rationale being now discussed is quite different than that because it is not focused on a particular stage in human history but many stages and showing an evolution over time. So, it would be our advice to the Committee that, in fact, criteria (ii) and (iii) might be justified with this particular selection of sites, but criterion (iv) is a little more difficult to appreciate given the definition of criterion (iv) in the Operational Guidelines. But of course, this is a matter of your emerging consensus.

I think that was the full extent of the questions asked to ICOMOS, but we, of course, remain at your disposal.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much ICOMOS. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Chair.

With your permission, Chair, we would like to have a view from the State Party on this point.

We are asking because, as I mentioned before, this kind of thing is important for conservation and management and for the future. We saw several times this kind of..., I would say not misunderstanding, but some different views can cause another misunderstanding for the management or conservation.

That's why we would appreciate to have some clarification or views from the State Party.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much indeed.

I would like now to pass the floor to the State Party to respond to the Distinguished Delegation of Japan.

The Observer Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

Thank you very much, from the Distinguished Member of Japan Delegation.

I can assure you that we will be in touch with ICOMOS not only for the next year, but the whole in future, in order to put the proper management plan in place and implement it.

It is difficult because there are 54 caravanserai all around the country, a large country of Iran, from the north to the south, from the centre to the west and east, it's not easy, not from the technical point of view but also the legal point of view. But I can assure the member of the Committee that the legal regulation and mechanism are there, and we will implement it. And we will not forget cooperating with ICOMOS as the technical Body of UNESCO.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any further comments or interventions?

Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to ask a question to the State Party.

Does Iran agree with the proposal by ICOMOS with respect to the criteria to be used for the inscription?

We're very interested in this, especially given the comment made by the Representative of Japan because this would give us a better idea of how good the property will be preserved according to the right criteria, I think.

We believe that the ICOMOS criteria are the correct ones.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Iran, I would like you to respond to the inquiry asked by the Delegation of Mexico.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, thank you.

I think you're asking me, as I said, we are quite agree with the with the ICOMOS proposal of removing criteria (iv) and stick to criteria (ii) and (iii). If that's the answer, that is sufficient.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more comments or interventions.

So, therefore, I would like to invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.11**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Qatar, which is co-authored by the Distinguished Delegation of Russian Federation. From the floor, we have received support for inscription as proposed in the amendment by the Distinguished Delegations of Zambia, Oman, Nigeria, India, Mali, South Africa, Greece, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Bulgaria, Argentina and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The proposed amendment, Para 2: "Inscribes The Persian Caravanserai, Islamic Republic of Iran, excluding the component parts Yām and Mādar Shā, on the List of World Heritage on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv);". ICOMOS has suggested to do away with criteria (iv).

Para 3: "Takes note of the following statement of Outstanding Universal Value:".

Moving to Para 4: "Recommends that the State Party give urgent consideration to the following:

- a) Revise the boundaries of the component parts to include the immediate surroundings of the caravanserais and important ancillary buildings related to each, and submit a minor boundary modification request,". This, we have added as per the regular procedure,
- "b) Strengthen the management plan for the property as a whole to include clear management objectives, detail the governance arrangements and how the different actors coordinate their actions, define decision-making processes, and include a disaster risk-preparedness, a comprehensive interpretation and tourism strategies for all component parts, especially for the caravanserais: Khoy, Titi, Sāeen and Chameshk,".
- Point c) remains as our original except deleting the term "nominated".

And moving to the revised Para 5, which stays as per the original Para 4.

And the new Para 6: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for review by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

End of amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Chair.

I would like kindly to ask you to add our name to the list of co-sponsors of this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

Given the adjustments made in terms of the criteria for inscription, yes, we are now in a position to add our name to the list of those supporting the proposed amendment.

The Chairperson:

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

We just ask to add our name, Japan, to the list.

Thank you very much.

And so, maybe, we would like to make it sure about the deletion of criterion (iv). On the screen, it is deleted but, maybe, in the Brief synthesis part...

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

Rwanda will also want to support the amendment presented by Qatar.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

With this last modification, Italy would like to join the other countries.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to ask the Secretariat to update the draft decision accordingly and also make sure the request of Japan is accommodated.

Thank you very much.

So, I'd like to invite you to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to accept it as it is?

Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also would like to support the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, Paragraph 1, we don't have any amendment. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted.
[gavel]

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 4, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to the proposed paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 5, the original paragraph has no amendment. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted.
[gavel]

Paragraph 6, we have a proposal. Do you agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Dear colleagues, I invite to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

And if there is no objection, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.11** adopted as amended. [gavel] [applause]

Congratulations to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

You may have the floor for a two-minute statement.

The Observer Delegation of the Islamic republic of Iran:

Distinguished Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished members of the World Heritage Committee,

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude for the excellent leadership and hospitality of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In addition, I would like to extend my thanks to the World Heritage Committee for its great administration of this extended session.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the inscription of The Persian Caravanserai on the World Heritage List.

The Persian Caravanserai is a unique and remarkable type of architecture, that has played a vital role in the social, cultural and economic development of our region for centuries. These caravanserais were not just places of rest and shelter for travellers, they were also centres of commerce and cultural exchange.

The inscription of The Persian Caravanserai on the World Heritage List is a testament to their Outstanding Universal Value. It is also a recognition of the importance of preserving and celebrating our shared cultural heritage.

I would like to extend my thanks to the World Heritage Committee, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS for their support throughout the nomination process.

I am confident that the inscription of The Persian Caravanserai on the World Heritage List will help to raise awareness of this important cultural heritage site and its cultural role in the history of humanity.

I look forward to welcoming visitors from all over the world to experience the beauty and wonder of The Persian Caravanserai.

Thank you. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

8B.15 Tr'ondëk-Klondike (Canada) // Tr'ondëk-Klondike (Canada)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Tr'ondëk-Klondike (Canada), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Concerning the evaluation of the Tr'ondëk-Klondike, we received a factual error notification, which is on page 44 of both the English and French version of the Document INF.8B4, and in this notification, some factual error corrections have an impact on the text of the Statement of OUV. These corrections are being already incorporated in the version of text that is with the Secretariat.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Tr'ondek – Klondike (Canada). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 122 of the English version and page 154 of the French version.

On this evaluation ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide, please]

Located in the sub-arctic region of Northwest Canada, along the Yukon River, Tr'ondëk-Klondike lies within the homeland of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. It comprises a series of eight component parts encompassing the archaeological and historic sources that reflect indigenous people's response and adaptation to unprecedented changes which were caused by the Klondike Gold Rush and affected both the landscape and the indigenous populations living there, at the end of the 19th century. The nominated series collectively illustrates different aspects and impacts of the colonization of this area and its indigenous inhabitants, sites of exchange and trade between the indigenous population and the colonists, sites revealing a segregation settlement pattern, and sites illustrating the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's adaptations in response to colonial presence and to continue their cultural practices.

The comparative analysis has demonstrated the relevance of Tr'ondëk-Klondike for the World Heritage List under criterion (iv): the nominated series stands out for its rarity as an illustration of a settlement pattern reflecting the dramatic encounter triggered by the feverish search for precious metals between the indigenous population and outsiders in a sub-arctic region, the colonial affirmation of the latter over the lands, resources and people, and the indigenous response and adaptation to these events, in a relatively narrow window of time in the late 19th century, during the "Klondike Gold Rush".

[Next slide, please]

Tr'ondëk-Klondike comprises a series of eight component parts located in the ancestral lands of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation, in the Yukon River watershed, in north-west Canada.

The State Party has fully harnessed the evaluation process and has accepted to considerably expand the buffer zones of five component parts, creating two expansive buffers encompassing two clusters of component parts which had historical and functional links and incorporating a good proportion of their immediate setting. The buffer zones now include landscape features, spatial relationships, and important views connecting component parts that represent "attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection". With the expansion of the buffer zone, both the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been demonstrated.

[Next slide, please]

Protection measures are comprehensive, the nominated component parts and respective buffer zones are protected also through complementary layers of legislation. Federal, provincial, and national designations are consistent with the proposed justification for inscription, therefore, existing protection policies ensure the safeguarding of its supporting attributes. Plans and mechanisms to further strengthen protection were about to be finalized at the time this evaluation was prepared.

An adequate and well-gearred management system is in place. A high-level commitment and coordination mechanism in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding between the relevant management actors was to be approved in July 2022.

The proposed additional measures will further strengthen coordination and an effective management response.

[Next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide, please]

With the nomination of Tr'ondëk-Klondike, the State Party has undertaken a challenging task, given the complexities of exploring such a broad and multifaceted theme as colonialism and particularly from the perspective of the impacts on and response by indigenous people. Choosing this perspective has been possible thanks to a long-lasting commitment and dedication of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in to raise awareness about their culture and their history and has been fully embraced by the whole local community.

All requirements have been met, therefore, ICOMOS recommends that Tr'ondek – Klondike (Canada) be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iv). ICOMOS has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide, please]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS.

I would like to see if there are any comments on this nomination.

So, I see none, and therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.15**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment on the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.15**.

Thanks.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.15** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Canada on behalf of the entire Committee.

Canada, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Canada:

Thank you, Mr. President.

It is with great pleasure that Canada shares this moment with all of you, the inscription of Tr'ondëk-Klondike on the World Heritage List.

This place was included on our Tentative List in 2004 as an invaluable and important reflection of an indigenous people's experience of, and adaption to, the global phenomenon of colonialism. Tr'ondëk-Klondike is in the subarctic region of what is now Canada's Yukon Territory and the homeland of the Tr'ondek Hwëch'in indigenous people, who have stewarded the lands and waters of this region since time immemorial and who have lived through the rapid and dramatic upheaval of North American colonization through the 19th century.

The inclusion of this property on the World Heritage List is an authentic testament to this experience. Development of this landmark nomination was led by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. The nomination was developed in close collaboration with the Government of Yukon, Parks Canada, and the City of Dawson. It could not have happened without unwavering support over more than a decade from various community members, organizations, heritage experts and most importantly, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in elders, some of whom have now passed on.

I would like to, therefore, thank the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in people and their leaders as well as all those who worked on this nomination for providing us with the opportunity to further deepen the world's understanding of indigenous heritage in the context of the World Heritage Convention.

I would also like to note our appreciation of ICOMOS and their willingness to work with us to rebuild this nomination in recent years, which I believe was a learning opportunity for us both. Canada withdrew Tr'ondëk-Klondike from consideration in 2018 after careful consideration of ICOMOS's recommendation at the time. We then worked with international experts to redevelop the nomination, taking into account upstream advice from ICOMOS.

Finally, thank you to the World Heritage Committee members for your recognition of our commitment to upholding the Outstanding Universal Value of Tr'ondëk-Klondike.

We wish to invite you to join us to celebrate Canadian World Heritage at a side event on Tuesday.

Thank you, merci, chu, and in the Han language, *marcy cho*. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

8B.16 Viking-Age Ring Fortresses (Denmark) // Forteresses circulaires de l'âge des Vikings (Danemark)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Viking-Age Ring Fortresses (Denmark), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Concerning the evaluation of the Viking-Age Ring Fortresses, we received a factual error notification, which is on page 48 of both the English and French version of the Document INF.8B4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS: *[video]*

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Viking-Age Ring Fortresses in Denmark. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 133 of the English version and page 166 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide.]

The Viking-Age Ring Fortresses in Denmark are nominated on the World Heritage List as a serial nomination. Built during the late 10th century CE under king Harald Gormsson, the five components are Aggersborg, Fyrkat, Nonnebakken, Trelleborg and Borgring. They bear exceptional evidence to a cultural tradition through a system of extensive circular fortresses that were a functional and symbolic expression of the new concept of state power in late 10th century in southern Scandinavia, during an important transition period in Northern Europe that included the conversion to Christianity. In addition, the monumental military works contribute to the interpretation of historic developments in the Viking Age Scandinavia and Northern Europe, including early state formation.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis, using the geocultural context of Scandinavia and Northern Europe, and Central/Eastern and Western Europe and broadly, within a timeframe of about 800 CE to 1100 CE, justifies the consideration of the property on the World Heritage List on the basis that there are no similar fortresses constructed on the basis of a precise, scalable design, and which could be said to demonstrate the process of power consolidation and early state formation in the Northern European context.

[Next slide.]

The five components were positioned strategically near important land and sea routes across the Jutland peninsula and on the islands of Funen and Zealand in present-day Denmark.

The requirements for both authenticity and integrity have been met. The authenticity of the Fortresses is demonstrated through forms, designs, materials and substance as established by archaeological evidence, as well as the locations and settings of the component parts. In terms of integrity, all component parts are intact, and boundaries were drawn to include the archaeological and landscape elements that contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

[Next slide.]

Even though the Fortress components fall in different land uses, they are all legally protected at national level. There are laws which regulate developments within the urban areas in which some of the components are located, and there are also municipal plans which control farming activities in the rural set ups in which some of the fortress are found. All the additional information received by ICOMOS in November 2021 and in February 2022 addressed the discrepancies that existed, and they sought to reinforce the existing legal protection of the Fortresses.

The management system is adequate and components are managed by the Danish Nature Agency and different museums and a Series Coordinator will be engaged to deliver a single integrated Property Management Plan across all the component parts. The Management Plan would provide a basis for the long-term sustainable management

of the Fortresses. ICOMOS recommended that the Fortresses should have a State budget to ensure sustainable management of the Fortresses and also that each component must have its own dedicated management plan that is compatible with the specific conditions of each Fortress.

[Next slide.]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide.]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Viking-Age Ring Fortresses in Denmark be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (iv) and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide.]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS, for the virtual and pre-recorded video.

So, I would like to see if there are any comments from the Committee members regarding this nomination.

So, I see none and, therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.16**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.16**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments? And I see none.

I, therefore, declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.16** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Let me congratulate Denmark on behalf of the entire Committee on the inscription of this property.

Denmark, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Denmark:

[first speaker] Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Let me first express how happy we are that the Committee has decided to inscribe the Viking-Age Ring Fortresses as World Heritage.

We thank you.

Additionally, we wish to acknowledge ICOMOS for their highly professional and thorough evaluation and the World Heritage Centre for their seamless cooperation throughout the entire nomination process.

Please, allow me also to thank our Saudi Arabian hosts for the warm welcome and a very well-planned session here in Riyadh.

The serial nomination of the Viking-Age Ring Fortresses is the outcome of a remarkably extensive collaboration among State actors, municipal authorities, the museums responsible for the archaeological heritage as well as other local stakeholders and local residents. It serves as a prime example of how the willingness to cooperate can transform and lift up individual interests into collective decisions, and we will proudly continue our efforts within this spirit.

With your permission, Mr. Chair, I will pass the floor to Mr. Lars Norbach, Chair for the Steering Group behind the nomination.

[second speaker] Mr. Chair,

On behalf of municipalities and museums behind the nomination, I will thank the World Heritage Committee for inscribing Viking-Age Ring Fortresses on the World Heritage List.

We will also sincerely thank ICOMOS for their positive recommendations, which we acknowledge and are looking forward to implementing in our future work.

The municipalities and museums behind the Viking-Age Ring Fortresses consider the inscription as a great honour, and we proudly accept the obligation to safeguard, conserve and present these important monuments for future generations and humanity.

Dear Mr. Chair and World Heritage Committee, thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

8B.17 Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt (Germany) // Patrimoine médiéval juif d'Erfurt (Allemagne)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt (Germany), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the Jewish Medieval Heritage of Erfurt. This is on page 50 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS: *[video]*

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt (Germany). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 145 of the English version and page 144 of the French version.

On this evaluation ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide.]

Located at the crossroads of important commercial routes, Erfurt offered ideal conditions for economic and cultural flourishing opportunities for the Jews as early as 1100 CE. Located in the medieval historic centre, the Jewish-Medieval Heritage comprises three monuments – the Old Synagogue, the Mikveh, and the Stone House, that are illustrative of the life of the local Jewish community and its coexistence with a Christian majority in Central Europe during the Middle Ages, between the end of the 11th and the mid-14th century.

The Old Synagogue, built in 1100, with changes until 1300, was built in neighbourhoods hosting both Jews and Christians as was customary at the time for Jewish religious buildings. It preserves wall sections and one wooden beam dating back to 1100.

The 13th century Mikveh, a structure designed for ritual bathing, and located on the banks of the River Gera, bears traces of the damage suffered during the 1349 pogrom and subsequent repairs.

The Stone House, a medieval stone residential building – called Kemenate – preserves the perimeter walls and other architectural features from the initial construction phase dating back to the 12th century. Historical documentation traces the building to Jewish ownership from before 1293 until the mid-14th century.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis, complemented by the additional information on the urban and historical context in which the emergence of the Jewish community in Erfurt took place, as well as the exceptional preserved condition of the monuments in their contemporary urban setting, justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. The nominated property demonstrates criterion (iv).

[Next slide.]

The area of the nominated three component parts and the buffer zone includes a part of the Historic Town of Erfurt, which preserves the medieval urban and street layout and numerous buildings and monuments dating back to the Middle Ages and later periods.

Integrity and authenticity of the whole series as well as of each of the component parts has been adequately demonstrated.

The initially proposed boundaries have been extended during the evaluation process, and the property, as revised, includes the key attributes of the series. The former Jewish Quarter, in the buffer zone, includes the immediate setting of the nominated monuments as well as important visual linkages, areas and features, such as the urban layout, the surviving medieval built fabric, and street network, that are functionally important to the property and its protection.

[Next slide]

The legal protection of the property is adequate to ensure that its attributes continue to convey the justification for inscription.

The management system relies on existing legal instruments at federal, State, and local levels and on established institutions, which have been collaborating in preparing the nomination. The establishment of the Steering Group and the appointment of the Site Coordinator office are useful to ensure an adequate level of inter-institutional coordination among the key management actors. A management plan has been developed as a binding action and planning instrument and will be periodically updated.

[Next slide]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Jewish-Medieval Heritage of Erfurt (Germany) be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iv) and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there are any comments regarding this nomination.

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much.

I would like to inquire about the status of the State Party that not using criteria (iii) for nomination. Are they in agreement?

The Chairperson:

Your Excellency,

Is your question directed to the Advisory Bodies or the State Party?

The Delegation of Oman:

To the State Party, because they submitted the file for category(iii) and (iv).

It is now recommended for category (iv) only.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Okay.

Germany, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Germany:

Thank you for the question.

We are fine with the submission under criterion (iv) only.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments? So, I see none.

And then, I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.17**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed?

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B 17**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

If there are no comments, then I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.17** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Germany on behalf of the entire Committee.

Germany, you may you have the floor for the 2-minute statement.

The Observer Delegation of Germany:

[first speaker] Thank you, Chair.

On behalf of Germany, I would, first of all, like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to you and to Saudi Arabia for hosting this conference and for the warm hospitality extended to us all.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank the World Heritage Committee for inscribing the Jewish Medieval Heritage of Erfurt on the World Heritage List as the second Jewish Heritage site in Germany.

This inscription entails great joy but also great responsibilities. We are fully committed to the preservation of this heritage, our Jewish Heritage, and its transmission to future generations.

With warm congratulations to the city of Erfurt, I would like to hand the microphone over to the Alderman for Culture and Development of the City of Erfurt, Dr. Tobias Knoblich, to briefly address this conference.

[second speaker] Mr. Chair, members of the World Heritage Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inscribing the Jewish Medieval Heritage of Erfurt, the Old Synagogue, the Mikveh and the Stone House on the World Heritage List.

I thank ICOMOS for the professional and constructive innovation and the positive recommendation.

I feel very honoured that our efforts to protect and preserve our heritage have been recognized throughout this whole nomination process, which has strongly contributed to the research of Jewish Heritage. The results led to a picture of the coexistence of Jews and Christians in medieval cities in Central Europe. Jewish communities have shaped life and culture in Central Europe for centuries, but their traces have been erased in most places. Erfurt is an exception. A unique testimony of the Jewish community from the Middle Ages has been preserved here, which today can stand as an example. We are proud of this heritage, and we look forward to further developing the sites and to raising awareness within the local population and beyond about this OUV and, more broadly, of Jewish Heritage in Erfurt and Central Europe for now and all the future as a heritage of the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again, thank you very much. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you and congratulations again.

The mic. You can close the mic and celebrate it again.

8B.18 Kuldīga / Goldingen in Courland (Latvia) // Kuldīga / Goldingue en Courlande (Lettonie)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Kuldīga / Goldingen in Courland (Latvia).

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS: *[video]*

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Kuldīga / Goldingen in Courland (Latvia). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 164 of the English version and page 225 of the French version.

[Next slide.]

The old town of Kuldīga is an outstanding example of a well-preserved urban settlement, representative of traditional Baltic architecture and urbanism and of multiple historical periods – from the 13th to the early 20th centuries.

A significant part of Kuldīga's history and development is linked to the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, which governed a significant part of the Baltics between 1561 and 1795. The town was the primary residence and administrative centre of the Duchy's first ruler and maintained an important role afterwards. As a result, the town developed into a prosperous international trading hub.

The urban settlement of the nominated property illustrates the integration of local craftsmanship with foreign influences from other Hanse towns and centres around the Baltic Sea as well as Russia. The craft skills are prominent in functional and ornamental building details throughout the town and continue to be employed by craftspeople today.

Unlike other towns in the Baltic region, Kuldīga survived the great wars of the 20th century largely unscathed and modern urban developments were largely implemented far outside its historic centre.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property demonstrates criterion (v), but criterion (iii) has not been justified.

[Next slide.]

The town of Kuldīga is located in the western part of Latvia at the confluence of the River Venta and the smaller Alekšupīte stream. The rivers' intersection is a defining element of the town's structure, contributing to its scenic character.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been demonstrated as the urban and architectural history of Kuldīga have been successfully preserved in terms of craftsmanship, materials and design.

During the course of the evaluation of this nomination, exchanges between ICOMOS and the State Party resulted in modifications of the boundaries with legal approval. The revision of the boundary of the nominated property in order to include all the archaeological remains of the ducal residence reinforced the integrity of the nominated property. The boundary of the buffer zone aligns exactly with the "individual protection zone".

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The nominated property was first nationally recognized in 1969 and received the highest level of national protection as a cultural monument under the national Law "On the Protection of Cultural Monuments". The buffer zone also has legal status as a monument of architecture of local importance in the list of State protected cultural monuments.

Strict legal mechanisms are defined to contribute to the protection of the historic urban settlement and further prevent development pressures that might affect the nominated property's significance. The management plan is adequate and apply both to the nominated property and its buffer zone. The governance arrangements in place are clear and there seems to be a good coordination between the different actors. ICOMOS considers that conservation measures are adequate, even though it is recommended that the monitoring programme should be revised and strengthened to focus on a set of indicators clearly connected to the main attributes of the nominated property and taking into account the main factors affecting the nominated property, ICOMOS recommends that a Heritage Impact Assessment be conducted, if the watch tower project were to go ahead, in line with the provisions included in the management plan.

[Next slide.]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide.]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Kuldīga / Goldingen in Courland (Latvia) be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (v), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide.]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS for the presentation.

I would like to know if there are any comments from the floor regarding this nomination. I see none.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.18**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.18**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there are no comments, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.18** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to the State of Latvia on behalf of the entire Committee.

You may have the floor for two minutes.

The Observer Delegation of Latvia:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, Committee members, Distinguished colleagues,

On behalf of Latvia, I extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the World Heritage Committee for the decision to inscribe the Old town of Kuldīga on the World Heritage List.

This inscription is an extraordinary opportunity to share with the world both the historic value and beauty of Kuldīga and the commitment of the local community and Latvian State to safeguard it responsibly for the benefit of all mankind.

This is a special moment for Latvia, who up to now had only one national entry on the World Heritage List, inscribed 30 years ago, and a huge recognition for the tireless work of the community of Kuldīga, particularly those who have worked on this nomination for more than 20 years.

We extend our greatest appreciation to ICOMOS for their expertise, advice and the hard work devoted to the report.

I would also thank our Saudi hosts for generosity and excellent organization of this event.

In times of uncertainty where we experience pandemics, violent wars, and climate crises, cultural heritage matters more than ever. We recognize that cultural heritage is a powerful resource and will continue to invest our efforts to build a world where heritage is a source of resilience, humanity and innovation. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

8B.19 Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939 (Lithuania) // Kaunas, ville moderniste : une architecture de l'optimisme, 1919-1939 (Lituanie)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939, (Lithuania), but now, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson,

Concerning the evaluation of the Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939, we received a factual error notification, which is on page 77 of both the English and French version of the Document INF.8B4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Balsamo. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939 (Lithuania). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 177 of the English version and page 202 of the French version.

On this evaluation ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide, please]

The nominated property testifies to the rapid urbanization and modernization that, in 20 years, transformed the town of Kaunas into a modern city that served as the provisional capital of an independent Lithuania in the interwar period. It represents an example of a community-driven transformation of an urban landscape that occurred through a planned adaptation of an earlier town layout. The spirit of post-war optimism and post-independence nation-building marked the incorporation of the new city structure into the surrounding natural environment and integration of parts of the city's 19th century military fortifications.

[Next slide, please]

The boundaries of the nominated property have been defined based on existing listed cultural heritage sites and the areas protected by national law. The buffer zone has been largely defined by the existing protection established for listed cultural areas, complexes, and their visual protection zones. ICOMOS observes that the logical association between the boundaries of the nominated property and the attributes of the proposed OUV is not explicit.

[Next slide, please]

Protection is ensured for buildings included in the National Register, but it is not clear what measures are envisaged to ensure the protection of buildings within the nominated property and not listed in the National Register. One example of this is the modernist wooden buildings. The management system does not cover the full range of attributes that express the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that at this stage the proposed Outstanding Universal Value has not been demonstrated, although there could be some potential if a number of issues can be satisfactorily resolved.

At this stage, the comparative analysis has not established in what way the nominated property might be considered outstanding in comparison to other properties. The analysis needs to be deepened to present more compelling evidence of the nominated property's potential to be seen as the best exemplar or representative of the Eastern and Central European model of modernization.

The nominated Property's has not demonstrated an important interchange of human values with a significant influence over space and time in terms of architecture or town planning. Neither has the nominated property, at this stage, shown to be an outstanding example of the process of urban transformation of Eastern and Central European post-war nation-states, but it has the potential to illustrate outstandingly a local experience of a significant stage in history within the global project of modernity.

Given that the criteria have not been demonstrated at this stage, the attributes cannot be confirmed. Part of the nominated property suffers from neglect, negatively affecting the integrity, and the lack of a comprehensive record of alterations and renovations in the Kaukas and Perkunas areas makes it difficult the assessment of authenticity. Hence, the condition of integrity and authenticity cannot be confirmed at this stage.

The state of conservation is variable but overall satisfactory. However, conservation is not comprehensive and measures to further bond the modernist wooden architecture are urgent.

Heritage Impact Assessment processes need to be integrated into the management system as a pre-requisite for any planned development activities. Long-term conservation programme will need to be prepared and integrated into the management plan.

[Next slide, please]

In conclusion, ICOMOS considers that further work would be needed to refocus the proposed justification for the Outstanding Universal Value and restructure the line of reasoning based on clearly identified attributes. A mission to the property will be necessary once the nomination has been through these significant revisions.

On this basis, ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the nomination of Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939 (Lithuania) be deferred in order to allow the State Party to address the following:

- Define the model of modernization developed within Eastern and Central Europe and establish key features in relation to Western modernity so as to situate the specific contribution of interwar Kaunas within this framework;

- Explore the possibility of proposing a new justification of Outstanding Universal Value under criterion (iv);
- Define the attributes of the nominated property that express the new proposed Outstanding Universal Value under criterion (iv);
- Deepen the comparative analysis to demonstrate the exceptionality of the nominated property within this conceptual framework;
- Revise the boundaries accordingly;
- Prepare a detailed inventory of all the buildings and structures from the 1919-1939 period within the nominated property;
- Prepare an integrated conservation plan for the whole of the property; and finally
- Propose a different name for the nominated property that would reflect the reconceptualization of the nomination.

ICOMOS has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide, please]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS.

I would like to open the floor for comments concerning this property and the inscription.

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, Oman would like to thank the Advisory Bodies for their comprehensive report and analysis.

We believe that this nomination has a potential and a solid ground to be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

The site presents one of the most inspiring narratives of rebuilding societies and States while, at the same time, constructing modern cities based on principles of efficiency, order and function, that express the global beliefs in a long-term peaceful future born after the First World War. The concept of architecture of optimism gives the substance to the property. Once, the provisional capital of Lithuania from 1919 to 1939 represents an outstanding example of urbanization and modernization processes that took place across Eastern and Central Europe in the interwar period.

The nomination expands the concept of the modernist heritage by presenting a variety of modernism, which is perfectly reflected by the featuring coexistence of new architecture and planning alongside the legacy of the 19th century construction. Nominated attributes that support the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are based on the form, design, material and substance use and function. ICOMOS recognizes that the property generally is in a good condition, variable but overall satisfactory.

According to the ICOMOS report, the nomination shows that high degree of authenticity and its settings.

However, I would agree with the point that the management and protection mechanisms should be strengthened in order to ensure better protection of the attributes in the future.

Our Delegation believes that this nomination is a unique testimony of the Modern movement in architecture, and concentration of well-preserved examples of Modern outspread in Eastern and Central Europe.

Mr. Chair,

Having considered all these points together, we propose a draft amendment to the original draft decision to inscribe the site, and to the State Party to dialogue with the Advisory Body for future develop the management plan.

We are convinced that this nomination will be successfully contributing to the World Heritage community, enriching it with its cultural and architectural significance of modern heritage.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Shukran, Said Rais.

I would like to thank ICOMOS and the State of Qatar, and support the Oman proposal for an amendment and have to admit that Lithuania nomination was prepared with high competence of national and international experts. State Party has shown exceptional work and express its willingness to continue collaboration with Advisory Body, to strengthen the justification of the OUV, as well as priority management and conservation measures in line with the ICOMOS recommendations.

This the reason why Qatar support Oman proposal.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much? India, you still want to take the floor?

The Delegation of India:

Yes, Excellency.

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor on the Agenda Item 45 COM 8B.19, Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919 to 1939, nominated under criteria (ii) (iii) and (iv), which has got a deferral recommendation by the Expert Body for culture sites. Now, I see that amendments have been presented for inscription.

I thank the excellent work done by the World Heritage Secretariat and the Expert Body. We respect the views of the Advisory Body. Hence, when the Advisory Body has given a deferral recommendation, then there are major considerations involved. If the amendment is from deferral to inscription, then this requires serious discussion and clarifications.

The nomination testifies to the rapid urbanization and modernization that, within two decades, transformed the provincial town of Kaunas into a modern city that served as the capital of an independent Lithuania between the First and Second World Wars. It represents the spirit of post-war optimism, and post-independence nation building marked a process that included cooperation of the new city structure into the surrounding natural environment and integration of parts of the city's 19th century military fortifications. The quality of modern Kaunas was manifested through the spatial organization of Naujamiestis, the New Town and Žaliakalnis Greenhill areas, and in public buildings, urban spaces and residences constructed during the interwar period that demonstrate a variety of styles in which the modern movement found architectural expression in the city.

The Expert Body, ICOMOS, considers that further work is needed to refocus the proposed justification of OUV and restructure the line of reasoning based on clearly identified attributes. A mission to the property is deemed necessary once the nomination has been through these significant revisions. ICOMOS also considers that problem concerning the protection and management of the nominated property has been identified.

The State Party met us and provided us some explanations on the issues raised by the Evaluation Body. Although we support this amendment because for Lithuania, however, we request that you give the floor to the State Party to respond to the serious issues raised by the Evaluation Body regarding:

- 1) Revised boundary definition.
- 2) Better protection and management system; and
- 3) The benefit to the nomination by making comparative analysis under justification for inscription, by adding photos and plans of the case studies selected.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Italy.

La Délégation de l'Italie :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le modernisme de Kaunas est une découverte de valeur majeure dans le contexte du patrimoine de l'Europe centrale et orientale.

La demande d'inscription reflète et démontre le caractère unique du modernisme de Kaunas et présente un récit conceptuel d'une architecture optimiste. On est convaincus de contribution à l'histoire globale du modernisme. En outre, à l'instar d'Ivrea, ville industrielle italienne du XX^e siècle, le modernisme de Kaunas nous aide à comprendre le concept de modernisme dans un champ plus large, sa nature, sa structure et son organisation sociale, culturelle

et économique. Kaunas a déjà reçu le Label du patrimoine européen et possède certainement le moyen d'être inscrite sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO.

Nous donc félicitons la Lettonie pour le travail accompli pour souligner la valeur universelle du modernisme de Kaunas et son impact sur la région et le monde, et soutenons l'amendement de la décision proposée par Oman.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation would like to thank the Advisory Body's very well structured and detailed report.

We also commend the State Party for elaborating this file on the Modernist Kaunas Architecture of Optimism, as well as for its continuous efforts undertaken for the conservation of the property over a considerable span of time.

We would also like to express our support to the proposed amendment by Oman, recommending the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List.

We consider that the overall documentation provided by the State Party demonstrates a very interesting example of a historic city which underwent a community-driven transformation based on the assimilation of modern urban planning and architecture. Within this framework, Kaunas bears significant testimony to an authentic, multifaceted modernism born out of the local political, economic and cultural exigencies.

In terms of providing an effective management and protection framework, we are confident that the inscription on the World Heritage List will contribute significantly towards this direction and that the various challenges that this property faces now will be efficiently addressed and put in place.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Belgica*.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président.

La Belgique soutient également le projet d'amendement en faveur de l'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial du site de Kaunas, car nous estimons que cela contribuera au renforcement de la crédibilité de la Liste, puisque nous allons ajouter un exemple d'architecture et d'une période de l'histoire qui sont encore peu présentes sur cette Liste.

Toutefois, nous partageons l'avis de l'Organisation consultative que l'existence d'une pluralité de styles qui ont coexisté et influencé la création d'une réponse architecturale locale au modernisme international ne suffit pas à justifier le critère de VUE.

Nous avons également compris que l'État partie a déjà pris en considération certaines des recommandations d'ICOMOS, et nous avons toute confiance en sa capacité à y apporter rapidement et rigoureusement une réponse satisfaisante et convaincante.

C'est pourquoi, je le répète, nous soutenons le projet d'amendement d'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial du site de Kaunas, mais limité au seul critère (iv).

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina:

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Argentina supports Oman's proposal for the amendment.

We are fully convinced with the arguments of Oman and other States Parties who express the support, and strongly believe Modernist Kaunas merits to be inscribed to the World Heritage List.

We are fully convinced that the nomination demonstrates excellent experts work representing a credible and inspiring narrative of Kaunas modernist and Outstanding Universal Value. We appreciate the contemporary concept of modernist heritage narrative.

It is important to mention that the civic engagement and bottom-up initiatives are evident in the nomination that shows society concerns of preserving cultural heritage.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

After listening to the previous speakers, Egypt supports the inscription of the Kaunas site on the World Heritage List.

This nomination holds profound cultural and historical significance, deserving of global recognition and protection, and we recognize the tireless efforts in preserving the rich heritage of the period. The attributes of the nominated property that express its Outstanding Universal Value have been meticulously identified and deserve the highest form of recognition.

The State Party's dedication to the revising the boundaries to accurately reflect this justification is commendable, and should be supported.

We, thus, support the draft amendment presented and to this discussion and the inscription of the site to the List in the current session of the Committee.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Japan thanks to the State Party of Lithuania for this nomination.

This nomination can be categorized as modern architecture or modern city, which is still underrepresented in the World Heritage List.

We also thank to ICOMOS and the Secretariat for the report.

From our experience in the nomination of Modern Heritage Le Corbusier site, we understand there are many challenges during the development stage of nomination dossier of this kind of heritage.

Thus, we will ask two questions to the State Party:

- First question is about the comparative analysis. ICOMOS pointed out that the wider perspective is needed, including other cities in Lithuania, but we believe that the State Party have detailed information on this point.
- Second question is: the area of nominated property, already raised by the Distinguished Delegate of India, We would appreciate to have some clarification on the rationale of the World Heritage property area because in many sites, the boundary must be determined considering complex many layers of factors including land use, ownership, character of the place. Etc.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to thank the Advisory Body for the in-depth conducted analysis.

Bulgaria believes that the complexity of Modernist Kaunas is a historical urban landscape, expands the concept of the heritage of modernism and, thus, does contribute to the better balance in the World Heritage List.

We are fully convinced of the arguments of Oman, which expressed their support and strongly believe that with the additional explanation and clarification of Kaunas modernism values and management, the property merits to be inscribed to the World Heritage List on the basis of the above.

We support the proposal of the Distinguished State Party of Oman for amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous tenons à remercier l'Organe d'évaluation pour ses appréciations concernant cette candidature.

La Lituanie mène d'importantes actions pour la protection et la promotion du patrimoine culturel. Sa candidature contribuera à l'équilibre géographique, Europe centrale et orientale, et temporel, patrimoine urbain et architectural du XX^e siècle.

Quant au concept d'héritage du modernisme, il se reflète parfaitement dans cette candidature en mettant en avant la coexistence d'une nouvelle architecture au côté du patrimoine issu des constructions du XX^e siècle.

La Lituanie a déjà pris des mesures pour remédier aux lacunes techniques de la proposition d'inscription et elle a préparé des documents de protection et de planification appropriés. Elle s'engage également à établir l'inventaire de tous les bâtiments et structures de la période 1919-1939 au sein du bien proposé, avec une brève description de leur authenticité et de leur état de conservation.

Bien que le système de gestion actuel ne soit pas intégral, il couvre tout de même toute la gamme des attributs qui expriment la VUE potentielle du bien proposé à travers les principales mesures de protection et les documents de planification stratégique. En outre, le plan de gestion du bien intègre sa gestion et assure la continuité des activités et de la faisabilité des chaînons manquants. Ces efforts méritent réellement d'être encouragés dans le seul but de mieux protéger et préserver ce bien.

C'est pourquoi nous soutenons les amendements proposés pour inscription lors de cette 45^e session élargie.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much Mr. Chairperson, for giving us the floor.

South Africa appreciates the comprehensive and positive elements indicated by ICOMOS in the report presented. South Africa believes that the outstanding issues raised by ICOMOS may be addressed with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body.

We, therefore, support the proposal by the State Party of Oman for inscription of the property in line with criteria (iv).

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Saudi Arabia. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

We would like to endorse the amendment according to which we inscribe this site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Mexique.

The Delegation of Mexico:

Gracias, Señor Presidente.

[interpretation from Spanish] As has already been mentioned by previous speakers, this particular modernist site is, I think, going to increase representativeness because it's an underrepresented category, and it's one of the periods that has been most vulnerable to destruction, as we know, in the 20th century, remember, they've had to work quite hard on the concept of OUV for this site. But we do think that the criteria have been justified. They also wanted to look at some of the changes made over time.

When it comes to the criteria applied, to look at authenticity and to look at the instrumental mechanisms so as to undertake a Heritage Impact Study, the documents that we receive does actually underscore some of the shortcomings in the expert analysis. It also showed that Lithuania is actively contributing to creating greater balance on the World Heritage List with the inclusion of sites from Central Europe.

That is why we would like to add our voice to the list of countries that are supporting the amendment put forward by Oman.

Thank you. *[end of interpretation from Spanish]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor now to the State Party to respond to the question addressed by the Distinguished Delegates of India and Japan.

The Observer Delegation of Lithuania:

Merci, thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to comment, first of all, on the boundaries.

The proposed boundaries include all the attributes necessary to justify the Outstanding Universal Value and the modernization model requested in the assessment. Integration and re-use of the 19th century heritage is evident and well preserved in Naujamiestis and Žaliakalnis areas. For example, integration of 19th century street grid, important city block building type of new town area, former Kaunas Fortress roads, and spaces in Greenhill area reuse and show the adoption of buildings of early periods in the 19th century, in the whole area of the nominated property. The part of the Kaunas Fortress defence line located in Freda area could be integrated in the buffer zone, as it serves as an additional setting for the attributes of the nominated property.

In comment for comparative analysis, I would like to assure that comparative analysis has been developed in relation to 20th century architectural heritage, representing modern cities that were developed in the interwar period. Current capitals, modern capitals, regional capitals, and primary cities are used as typological categories. In the nomination dossier, local cities as Klaipeda and Šiauliai are also discussed but only for showing that a detailed discussion was not productive because of the outstanding position of Kaunas as a contemporary capital and its rapid development.

Lithuania wants also to notice that it has already taken steps to remedy the technical issues, also the protection and management of documents that follow the nomination.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any more comments or questions?

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Mr. Chair,

With the indulgence, could we have any reactions from ICOMOS to those points?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Indeed. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

The Ambassador of Japan seems to have supernatural powers. He read my mind. This was precisely the question that was in my mind.

But in addition to this, I would also request you to give, regarding point number 2 of the question, which I had asked regarding better protection and management system, I would like the State Party to first clarify on that so that ICOMOS could hear their clarification on the three questions which we had raised:

- No. 1 was revised boundary definition, for which the State Party responded.
- The 2nd was better protection and management system, for which a response is pending as my understanding.
- Point no. 3, the benefit of the nomination by making comparative analysis under justification for inscription, by adding photos and plans of the case study selected for which the State has attempted to answer.

So, I draw your attention to the 2nd point, better protection and management system.

And if the State Party can be given the floor and, thereafter, ICOMOS be asked to respond.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chairman,

We prefer to listen to the State Party and ICOMOS.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So now, I would like to pass the floor back to the State Party to respond to the addressed questions.

The Observer Delegation of Lithuania:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to assure that we have already started to work on the conservation management plan as it was requested by the ICOMOS recommendations.

And also, we started to amend the management plan according to the recommendations.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor now to ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

With regard to the general reaction to the responses, ICOMOS would like to underline that when it has evaluated this nomination, it has identified a possible potential for developing further the nomination around criterion (iv), around, in fact, the development of the provisional capital in this interwar period in terms of both architecture and planning, rather than based on criterion (ii) for which ICOMOS didn't find it was demonstrated, and we couldn't find how it could be demonstrated. This interchange of human values in terms of both architecture and urban planning would be the absorption of influence but also the capacity to influence the property itself. So, this was not found.

On the other hand, ICOMOS recognized the potential for this specific and very peculiar period between the two wars for Kaunas, and this is the first point concerning the possible way forward that ICOMOS envisaged at the time of its evaluation.

With regard to protection, ICOMOS was particularly concerned about the status of the protection of the modernist wooden architecture, which, in ICOMOS view, represented a very peculiar and very specific attribute of this local response to the modernist agenda. And this is the crucial part of the concerns of ICOMOS in relation to the attributes.

The other point that ICOMOS raised in terms of boundaries concerned the fact, ICOMOS had the impression that some of the attributes, including fortresses and certain parts of the urban layout, that were important for determining the development of Kaunas as a provisional modernist capital were not included, and this basically is what ICOMOS can respond on the basis of the documentation that it has received at the time and within the framework of the evaluation.

We understand that the State Party might have, indeed, worked further and might have made available further documentation to the Committee members, which ICOMOS has not been in a position to evaluate.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

After hearing all these discussions, we do recognize the unique value of this particular property. In the peculiarities and in terms of the balance in the List, this could make a great contribution.

So, in a way, after hearing the second intervention from ICOMOS, I thought this could be a presentation problem rather than the lack of the OUV at all.

So, in that and also, we have no doubts about the State Party of Lithuania in terms of their commitment and in terms of their capacity to produce the right way forward.

Now, having said all that, our impression is that if this file was presented in a better way, with the advice from ICOMOS, this could have been a lot happier file, in a way.

So, I would prefer to suggest that, perhaps, State Party of Lithuania could come back with a better, more sophisticated request nomination on this particular file.

Therefore, we cannot support inscription at this moment in time, but as we see in the previous discussions, almost all the Member States of the Committee support the amendment.

Again, we do not make the consensus. We will go along with the consensus, but, nevertheless, we have to register our position. Our hope was that this nomination was inscribed in a more happy situation if the revision is made.

So, for that reason, we do not support the inscription at this moment in time. But, nevertheless, as I said, we are not going to break any consensus.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

After listening to the second intervention by the Expert Body, ICOMOS, and listening to the learned Distinguished Delegate from Japan, I feel there is a way forward regarding the revised boundary definition. The Advisory Body has said that they are not aware if, subsequently, the State Party of Lithuania has presented a revised boundary.

Now, if possible, Excellency, I don't also want to stand in the way of consensus, but if this decision could perhaps be deferred by a day, and give the State Party of Lithuania to have a meeting with ICOMOS so that revised boundary modification or definitions could be presented in a better manner.

I think it will serve the purpose of this Convention. Also, it would send a message that we respect the views of the Advisory Body, but we recognize that here appears to be a problem, not of the OUV of the property as such, but with the issue of presentation. That is my view about it.

Excellency,

We are not standing in the way of opposing any consensus. We are in favour, and we want to see this beautiful Modernist Kaunas to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. And we thought it. However, after listening to the, the Advisory Body, if on the issue of revised boundary definition, if the State Party can present a map or a plan to the Advisory Body and the members of the Committee, I think it will serve our purpose better.

Excellency, thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

When I presented this file, I have said that we respected the point of view of ICOMOS, and we said that they need to dialogue after the inscription with the State Party.

Therefore, listening to all the Member States of this Committee except Japan and India, I don't see any point to postpone the inscription of this site. Therefore, I will call for the inscription immediately.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Well with very, very due respect to the Ambassador of Oman, I respect him a lot, but in this particular case, the Ambassador of India, his imagination goes out more than mine, and I support him because we have been advocating for dialogue.

I do also believe that this is a question of presentation. So, further dialogue could perhaps produce a very more happier inscription.

So, for that reason I support what was proposed by the Ambassador of India.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

I also appreciate the views presented by the Ambassador of Oman and I respect him. He has a lot of experience in the multilateral forum, but we want to see the Committee to be united, and none of us are opposing this inscription.

All we are asking is that, if it is possible, to defer this decision by one day so that the revised boundary, if it all is available, be presented to the Member States. If the boundaries are not available, then the State Party can let us know if it's not available, and then we can take a call.

So, I will request, Excellency, you give the floor to the State Party so that they can make their views available and clear; whether the revised boundaries, as being asked by the Expert Body, is available or not. At least that information we could have.

Excellency, thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the State Party to respond to the Distinguished Delegation of India's request.

The Observer Delegation of Lithuania:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The State Party considers that the proposed boundaries include all the attributes, and it is not necessary to revise them. We can make more detailed explanation about how they include all the needed bound attributes.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, we've heard the views of the State Party that, it is the view of the State Party that the revised boundaries are not necessary.

Now, I will request you to give the floor again to the Advisory Bodies.

Are they satisfied with this response of the State Party? And we require guidance from the Advisory Body to, please, guide us through this process, if at all. Are you satisfied with this response or are you not?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, [Mr.] Chair.

With regard to the question posed to us by the Distinguished Delegate of India and Japan concerning the boundaries, ICOMOS has made considerable analysis of the boundaries proposed, and ICOMOS has found that the logic of the boundaries proposed in relation to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value was not explicit, and there were a number of points raised in our evaluation considering the Ring of the Fortification that have an effect on the direction of the city development. There were some other aspects concerning portions of the Green Belt included within the boundary of the nominated property, that some parts were not.

The key point that ICOMOS has raised concerned the clarity of the presentation of the potential Outstanding Universal Value. And that's why ICOMOS has ended up with a deferral recommendation, identifying that there was a potential for Kaunas to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value under criterion (iv), as we have been explained before.

So, there is a set of aspects that go together and the justification of the criteria and the rationale of the boundaries, on the basis of the documentation that we have received. On the basis of the discussion that the ICOMOS Panel had, the Panel found that the boundaries could have been adjusted to include and to be more clearly tied with the proposed justification of OUV, and to have a better explanation of the potential of OUV under criterion (iv). So, these things goes in tandem in ICOMOS view.

I hope I made the ICOMOS position clear.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I do respect the view of India and Japan. However, I am not closing the dialogue between the State Party and the Advisory Body. That's what I am saying in my intervention. But I don't see that a great reason or a major reason to delay the inscription of the site.

Therefore, that's why I am calling for the inscription and to continue the discussion between State Party and ICOMOS.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

I welcome the remarks of the Ambassador of Oman. I think they are very mature remarks right now, but we have given due respect to the Advisory Body and, as we had mentioned in the beginning, we are not opposed to this inscription of this beautiful Modernist Kaunas.

I think we will have to incorporate something in the amended document so as to continue this dialogue without impeding inscription, Excellency.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar*.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have listened to the various comments and questions and replies by the State Party.

What is certain is that the expansion of ICOMOS deserves every respect, and we do respect the interventions by Distinguished Ambassadors.

On the basis of the intervention of ICOMOS, there is criteria no. (iv), which is fulfilled in addition to the potential Outstanding Universal Value. Thus, that proposal to continue our dialogue between ICOMOS and the State Party is precisely what we are seeking. We do endorse every constructive and positive dialogue, and we believe that this is our position.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Mexique.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Forgive me.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Yes, I think here we have an issue that is absolutely crucial, and it's actually growing in importance, here, in the World Heritage Committee, that is the issue of buffer zones. Buffer zones, as you know, always need to be very, very clear. And it's when a particular case that comes to mind is Vienna. Remember whether they're broader, narrower... I think ICOMOS is actually quite right in focusing on the breadth of the buffer zone.

Our experience in Mexico, and I'm sure other countries share this as well, remember that once he delineated the buffer zone, you know, it's always in conformity with what governments are actually able to commit to protecting. There has to be a full guarantee that they can safeguard that buffer zone.

And so, that's what's really, I think, at issue here in Lithuania. Is Lithuania truly able to guarantee the safeguarding of the site? And so, this is actually a question that I want to put.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I would like to give the floor back to the State Party to respond to the recent question addressed by the Distinguished Delegates of Mexico.

The Observer Delegation of Lithuania:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The State Party wants to assure that all the nominated property in the buffer zones has protection by the legal documents of the State Party. That's why it also strengthens the chosen boundaries. And also, I would like to mention that minor boundaries clarification has been already amended after the recommendation of the first ICOMOS recommendation.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, giving the recent expressed... and also recent intentions to add some amendments to the draft decision, and due to the amount of time and allocated time for the interpreters, unfortunately, we will have to resume that examination of the draft decision tomorrow.

So, before we close the session today, I would like to pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre for several general announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This is just to inform you that, starting from 6:30, there are four side events organized:

- The first one, which will take place at the Historic Jeddah Room, organized by the African World Heritage Fund and UNESCO, and titled "Together [for] the Preservation of World Natural and Cultural Heritage in Africa".
- The second one, also starting at 6:30, it's organized by Nepal and will take place in Rock Art Room. It's titled "Tilaurakot, archaeological remains of ancient Shakyl Kingdom".

- The third side event, also starting at 6:30 in Al Ahsa Oasis Room, is organized by Kuwait and it's titled "Failaka Island: From the Depth of the Earth to the Verge of the Celestial Realm", and there is an exhibition which will be there until 25 September.
- And the fourth side event, it's organized by ICOMOS China and will also start at 6:30 in Hegra Room, which is the Advisory Bodies Room. It's titled "Digital Empowerment of Cultural Heritage".

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Director.

I would like to remind you that the Bureau will meet tomorrow at 9:30 at the Bureau Meeting Room, and see you tomorrow morning. *[gavel]*

The meeting rose at 6:14 pm. // La séance a été levée à 18h14.

EIGHTH DAY
Monday, 18 September 2023
FOURTEENTH PLENARY MEETING
10:07 am – 12:53 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

HUITIÈME JOUR
Lundi 18 septembre 2023
QUATORZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h07 – 12h53
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

The Chairperson:

Good morning, dear colleagues.

Dear colleagues,

I invite you to take a seat, please.

Dear colleagues,

As indicated during the eighth meeting of the Bureau this morning, today, we will have another 12 nomination files to be examined. The list can be found on the updated calendar posted by the Secretariat on the World Heritage Centre's web page for this session, and as is follow, in the morning session, we will examine:

- Lithuania, the Modernist Kaunas, a continuation of the examination;
- Russian Federation, Historic Centre of Gorokhovets;
- Türkiye, Gordion;
- Czechia, Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops;
- Spain, Menorca;
- Azerbaijan, Cultural landscape of Khilanig People;
- Guatemala, Archaeological Park Tal'alik Ab'aj.

And in the afternoon session,

- Ethiopia, Bale Mountains National Park;
- Tunisia, Djerba;
- India, Sacred and symbols of the Hawaai...

The Delegation of India:

Hoysalas.

The Chairperson:

- Hoysalas, apologies, I am pretty sure it sounds better in the native language;
- Indonesia, The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks;
- Russian Federation, Astronomical Observatories of Kazan.

Some files were brought forward in the agreement with the States Parties concerned, Guatemala and the Russian Federation for what concerns Kazan.

I hope you can all agree with this work plan for today. And also, please note that in case of speedy progress of work, we will propose to advance the examination of certain nomination files in consultation with all States Parties concerned and will keep the Bureau and Committee informed.

I would also like to remind you that the Working Group on budgets, which was established on last Monday, will start its work from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm as from today and for the next three days in the Bureau Meeting Room, chaired by Yara Al-Ghafri.

Thank you very much.

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

2022 CYCLE (Ct'd) // CYCLE 2022 (suite)

CULTURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

8B.19 Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939 (Lithuania) (Ct'd) // Kaunas, ville moderniste : une architecture de l'optimisme, 1919-1939 (Lituanie) (suite)

The Chairperson:

As you know, also from yesterday, we did not complete the examination of the nomination of the Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939 (Lithuania).

Therefore, I invite you now to resume the debate on this item.

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning to everyone.

Let's hope also we have a successful day as the previous days, and I'd like to thank you, Mr. Chair, for your leadership and to thank the Secretariat, the Advisory Body and the Member States for their cooperation.

Now, we are running this session.

For the Lithuanian subject, as you know, yesterday, we had both Japan and India, they have some comments. They start with the State Party and, I think, the Advisory Body, and there was an agreement that criteria (ii) to be deleted, taken out of the resolution. And I would like to hear from India and Japan to confirm this.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency,

And also thank you to the Committee members for their collaboration and cooperation on this matter, which makes it very successful.

India.

The Delegation of India:

[first speaker] Thank you, Excellency.

Good morning,

I concur with the statement of the Omani Ambassador. Indeed, an agreement has been reached, criteria (ii) is to be dropped, and we support the amendments being presented by Oman.

Excellency,

We are very happy that the site is being inscribed. As we had said yesterday also, we full heartedly support Lithuania, and I'll give the floor to my expert, with your permission, so that he could also make some points.

[second speaker] Thank you, Chair.

My team and I have examined the nomination proposal for the Modernist Kaunas, and we have also carefully heard the debate about the property and the concerns raised by various Committee members regarding the nomination. We've also heard the explanations given by the State Party.

Our examination of the nomination proposal makes us believe that the proposed nominated property certainly has the OUV.

This is a very interesting property that reflects optimism and assimilation of urbanism architectural ideas and demonstrates its implementation. This is one such instance where past and present coexist in harmony and do not oppose or challenge each other. This is, to us, a clear representation of evolved, if I may use the quote, "indigenous modernity", to borrow the quote from someone sitting on the dais. The nominated property has had evolutionary modernization of the urban plan, the optimistic construction of the capital city, and the plurality of the modern architecture as its primary attributes, which are sufficiently demonstrated in the property.

Listening to the debate yesterday and today, Mr. Chair, and after hearing ICOMOS's remarks yesterday, we realized that there are three critical issues that have been discussed. These relate to the criteria, to the rationale of the boundary, and the comparative analysis, and we have, time and again, asked the State Party for the clarification.

As regards the boundary of the property and its buffer is concerned, India believes that the boundaries of the property are sufficient, clearly representing the attributes therein. These boundaries are supported by a strong legislative and management framework. Perhaps, a minor concern is regarding the buffer, which towards especially towards the northeast side of the property, where it is almost non-existent. Hence, we would like to ask the State Party a question that is: Would Lithuania be open to expand the boundaries of its buffer to incorporate the second ring of defence, as it will help preserve the 19th century layer, that is the supporting attribute of the property?

As my Ambassador has pointed out, we also believe that the criterion (ii) is not sufficiently demonstrated and that, perhaps, we may consider dropping it. However, we are also convinced that the criterion (iv) works fine. This is the city's new urban layer, which is created between 1919 to 39, established Kaunas as one of the most outstanding examples of the processes of creating a modern capital, while appropriating its natural and urban heritage. India is satisfied with the property that has well articulated the OUV has a good state of conservation and a strong legislative framework.

We, therefore, have no hesitation in supporting the proposed nomination for inscription. Let us be optimistic as the title suggests, Mr. Chair.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Japan, do you have any comments on this?

The Delegation of Japan:

Well, I'll be very short.

I would also like to support the statement from the Ambassador Oman, and also I appreciate a very detailed explanations about this particular property and the discussions with the State Party of Lithuania, which was presented by the expert of India.

Now, all I would like to add is that we would like to hear from the State Party of Lithuania.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Lithuania, you may have the floor.

La Délégation de la Lituanie (Observateur) :

Merci, M. le Président, pour cette possibilité que vous avez nous accordée d'éclaircir la situation.

Hier soir, nos experts ont travaillé avec les experts du Comité et, ce matin, nous avons eu un entretien avec ICOMOS. Nous pensons que nous avons éclairci les questions problématiques : délimitation du site et zone tampon. Nous avons également présenté nos arguments concernant les critères et l'analyse comparative.

Nous sommes pour un dialogue constructif et nous tenons à ce principe depuis notre entrée à l'UNESCO. La Lituanie est un pays responsable. Nous avons d'excellents experts et un système juridique solide pour la protection du patrimoine et nous n'avons pas de doutes sur la valeur globale de notre nomination.

Nous faisons confiance à la haute compétence des membres du Comité du patrimoine mondial et nous pensons que notre nomination mérite d'être inscrite sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial dès maintenant, avec des amendements nécessaires.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments concerning this nomination?

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

In light of the developments, we would like to support this inscription.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

In light of the discussion, there is a proposal to revise Article 4 b) during the discussion, and I have the amendment when we reach there.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

I'll keep it short.

We also would like to support the inscription of this property of Lithuania, as we have said multiple times.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more comments and I, therefore, dear colleagues, I invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.19**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments concerning the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Oman, which was co-authored originally by the Distinguished Delegations of Qatar and Bulgaria, and we have received further support from the floor as we see in the morning by India and Japan. Yesterday, we received confirmation from Italy, Greece, Belgium, Argentina, Egypt, Mali, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The amendments starting from revised Para 2: "Inscribes Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939, Lithuania, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iv);".

Revised Para 3: "Takes note of the following provisional Outstanding Universal Value:". We need to delete criteria (ii).

Moving to Para 4: "Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Highlight the model of modernisation developed within Eastern and Central Europe, and stipulate its key features in relation to Western modernity, in order to emphasize the specific contribution of interwar Kaunas within this framework, and deepen the comparative analysis to demonstrate the exceptionality of the property and its attributes defining the Outstanding Universal Value,".

Point b) was deleted in the original amendment, but I think Distinguished Delegation of Oman wanted to suggest some changes here.

Point e) and c) and d) were also deleted.

- So, the revised point b) is: "Clearly demonstrate that all the necessary attributes that have a bearing on the integrity and authenticity of the property and contributing to the Outstanding Universal Value are included within the boundaries of the property,".
- Revised point c): "Expand the inventory of the buildings and structures from the 1919-1939 period within the property, with their state of conservation and brief restoration history, to reinforce the attributes of the property and effectively manage and protect the interwar modern heritage of Kaunas,".
- Revised point d): "Improve the Management Plan so that it includes management mechanisms that will ensure protection of the full range of attributes that express the Outstanding Universal Value, and set out the conditions for the Heritage Impact Assessment of new development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around the property,".

- Point e): "Prepare an integrated conservation plan that ensures the conservation of all attributes that support the Outstanding Universal Value, including modernist wooden architecture,".

The original points i), j), k) are deleted and the previous Para 4 is merged.

- So, revised point f) under Para 4: "Strengthening management instruments to protect privately owned buildings and structures within the property and support the owners in maintaining their properties,
- g) Continue raising awareness among the local community about the values of the property and creating procedures for public participation in the management of the property to ensure its long-term protection,
- h) Complete the monitoring system to include indicators related to all the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value and take into account the main factors affecting the property,".

Revised Para 5, "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2025, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

With your permission, Mr. Chair, I would like to insert the amendment for Para 4 b) if the Rapporteur can insert this amendment.

The Chairperson:

Yes, please, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Oman:

Okay.

"b) Revise the boundaries accordingly *comma*, so they reflect the proposed justification of Outstanding Universal Value and include all the necessary attributes that have a bearing on the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property by considering minor boundary modification".

I hope this is clear.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

Does what appear on the screen is the same thing you mentioned? Does it reflect your amendment, Your Excellency?

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Yes, Sir.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Rapporteur:

If you may allow, Chair.

I think we are repeating a line on the attributes and integrity, so we can delete it from one either above or below: "and contribute to the Outstanding Universal Value are included within the boundaries of the property"; "Revise the boundaries accordingly".

The Delegation of Oman:

You can adjust, please.

Thank you.

The Rapporteur:

"by considering minor boundary modifications". Because we've already mentioned the integrity and authenticity above.

So, we can remove from "so" till "the property", and probably "submit".

So, this is our suggestion that the revised para can read as: "Clearly demonstrate that all the necessary attributes that have a bearing on the integrity and authenticity of the property and contributing to the Outstanding Universal Value are included within the boundaries of the property, revise the boundaries accordingly, and submit a minor boundary modification request".

The Chairperson:

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

We are suggesting to delete "clearly demonstrate that". It should be deleted.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Delegation of Oman:

And start from "Revise".

"Revise the boundaries accordingly so they reflect the proposed justification". I think if you type it like this and you delete the remain, "of Outstanding Universal Value and include all the necessary attributes that have a bearing on the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property *comma*, by considering minor boundary modification", this is it. The remaining should be deleted.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

The Chairperson:

So, we'll ask the Secretariat to reflect on this latest amendment.

Alessandro, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

The submission of minor boundary modification is a process which is, as you know, according to Paragraph 164 of the Operational Guidelines. So, there is no need of specifying more about the procedure about that. However, while there may be a question of substance here because, normally, a minor boundary modification doesn't have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value.

Therefore, I think there is a bit of contradiction between revising the boundaries to reflect the justification of Outstanding Universal Value through a minor boundary modification.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

We see some repetition of words. My intervention is only if the first strike out para could be unstruck, "And revise the boundaries accordingly". So, the entire thing can be accepted.

And you could clean up the para to give us a better view.

And the views of Mr. Balsamo could be taken into consideration to help rephrase the para, then I think it would help.
Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Rapporteur, you may update us on the last version of this paragraph, and maybe you can show it us without track changes.

The Rapporteur:

So, the para as it stands now: "Revise the boundaries accordingly so they reflect the justification of Outstanding Universal Value and include all the necessary attributes that have a bearing on the integrity and authenticity of the property".

I think Mr. Balsamo has suggested that the minor boundary modification doesn't relate to this. So, it is for the Distinguished Delegation of Oman to review whether we can remove this or...

The Delegation of Oman:

If you don't see it necessary, you can remove it.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

Given what Oman is trying to say, and the point is extremely valid, and the explanation that we've heard from the Secretariat, maybe, keeping the spirit of this point alive, we could perhaps simplify it and rephrase it by saying: "Consider the minor boundary modification to include all attributes of the nominated property". And that sort of sums it all.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

The Delegation of India:

I'm so sorry.

And the rest of the para could be deleted because it conveys everything now.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Oman, does this reflect your amendment?

The Delegation of Oman:

Perfectly. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to ask the Secretariat to update the draft decision accordingly, and then, we'll examine it paragraph by paragraph.

Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Just a minor aspect, "une modification", en français, c'est correct.

"the minor boundary modification", I think it's "a minor boundary" or "minor boundary modifications", but the determinative, I don't think, corresponds. Yes.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So now, we can start examining the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

So, Paragraph 1, we do not have any amendments. Do we accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. [gavel]

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel]

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel]

Paragraph 4, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this amendment? I see no objection.

ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Since the property is being inscribed, perhaps the Committee members wish to reflect whether the recommendation on deepening the comparative analysis to demonstrate the exceptional character of the property proposed for inscription is still relevant in this context.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, Committee members, do you agree to this proposal by ICOMOS?

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

It is correct. I mean, the observation is correct.

Thank you. We need to delete that.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I see no comment. Do we agree to adopt the paragraph? Since there is no objections, adopted as amended. [gavel]

Paragraph. 5, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to the proposed paragraph?

The Rapporteur:

Mr. Chair,

If I may intervene for the Para 5, if we can add "reporting to the World Heritage Committee" as a standard.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, do we agree to the proposed text? Okay, so it seems that there are no objections on the proposed text. Then, the paragraph is adopted as amended. [gavel]

Dear colleagues,

I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole, and if there are no objections or comments, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.19** adopted as amended. [gavel] [applause]

Congratulations to Lithuania on behalf of the entire Committee.

You may have the floor.

La Délégation de la Lituanie (Observateur) :

Je dois dire quelque chose ?

The Chairperson:

Yes, please, for two minutes if you would like.

The Observer Delegation of Lithuania:

Yes, of course. Thank you.

Merci, M. le Président,

La Lituanie remercie l'Arabie saoudite, le pays hôte, pour l'organisation et l'hospitalité extraordinaire.

Nous remercions le Secrétariat, ICOMOS, le Centre du patrimoine mondial pour un important travail accompli.

Je tiens à remercier les membres du Comité pour leur infaillible fidélité aux valeurs de la Convention et je présente nos sincères remerciements à Oman et tous les pays qui nous ont soutenus.

L'ensemble de Kaunas va occuper sa place méritée. C'est un héritage culturel que la Lituanie va chérir, partager et protéger. Kaunas a un riche passé historique et culturel. Nous voulons la présenter à vous et à tous. Bienvenue en Lituanie.

Merci. *[applaudissements]*

The Chairperson:

Congratulations again.

8B.21 Historic Centre of Gorokhovets (Russian Federation) // Centre historique de Gorokhovets (Fédération de Russie)

The Chairperson:

So, I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Historic Centre of Gorokhovets (Russian Federation). ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Apologies and thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Historic Centre of Gorokhovets (Russian Federation). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 199 of the English version and page 180 of the French version.

[Next slide, please]

The Russian town of Gorokhovets was founded in the 12th century as a border outpost of the Vladimir-Suzdal principality and underwent a major socio-economic and cultural upheaval in the late 17th and early 18th centuries when it became a district trade and craft centre. The historic centre's religious and residential monuments and the town plan demonstrate Russian architectural traditions as well as the influence of contemporary European trends. Found here is evidence of the cultural transition from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern era amidst the turbulent transformation of the later period of the Russian State into the Russian Empire.

The State Party has nominated this property according to criteria (ii) and (iv) on the basis of its ability to illustrate transitions in Russian architecture and planning. The urban lay-out and 12 buildings/ensembles have been proposed by the State Party to represent the significance of the Historic Centre of Gorokhovets.

[Next slide, please]

Gorokhovets is located about 340 km east of Moscow and is sited on an elevated terrace on the right bank of the Klyazma River. The boundary incorporates major landmarks and visual connections within the historic centre.

ICOMOS has suggested some possible revisions to the boundary in order to consider potential attributes that are currently located within the buffer zone, and to the buffer zone itself so that it entirely protects the immediate setting of the nominated property. For example, one corner of the proposed property boundary is not covered by the buffer zone, as shown on this slide.

[Next slide, please]

No concerns have been identified regarding the legal protection provided for the nominated property, and the conservation and management system are also generally satisfactory. A comprehensive conservation programme is needed, and several additional recommendations have been proposed by ICOMOS regarding the legal status of the management plan and the inclusion of Heritage Impact Assessment processes.

[Next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

ICOMOS acknowledges the evident commitment of the State Party and the local community to the conservation of the Historic Centre of Gorokhovets. ICOMOS also appreciates the considerable efforts made by the State Party in elaborating the nomination dossier and in providing informative additional information during the evaluation process.

Despite these efforts, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis does not yet justify consideration of the nominated property for inscription on the World Heritage List. The analysis lacks arguments that demonstrate that the Historic Centre of Gorokhovets is the best exemplar or is representative in relation to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS considers that none of the cultural criteria have been demonstrated at this stage. The justification for inscription is based on general arguments which may be relevant to many other historic towns in the chosen geocultural region. Possibly, a more focused justification is possible.

As it is, more evidence and argumentation is needed about the cultural interchange described and/or how the architectural and urban elements stand out in illustrating a particular significant stage in human history, and/or how the nominated property illustrates, in an outstanding way, the history and historical development of the wider geocultural region. Since the proposed criteria have not yet been justified, the nominated property's integrity and authenticity are not yet confirmed. Accordingly, ICOMOS has concluded that, at this stage, the Outstanding Universal Value of the property has not been demonstrated.

As already noted, the conservation, protection and management are generally satisfactory.

[Next slide, please]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the nomination of the Historic Centre of Gorokhovets (Russian Federation) be deferred for the following main reasons:

- To develop further the justification for inscription of the nominated property, including reconsideration, possibly of its criteria and attributes.

[Next slide, please]

- As a related issue, there is a need to further develop the comparative analysis and there will be a need to revise the boundaries as needed in light of a revised justification to ensure the integrity and protection of the nominated property.

ICOMOS acknowledges that resolving these shortcomings will take time and effort but considers that doing so is in the best interests of the community and the conservation of the nominated property over the long term. ICOMOS is much available to offer advice on these issues, if requested by the State Party.

ICOMOS has included some further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property and considers that such a revised nomination would need to be considered by an expert mission to the site.

[Next slide, please]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments concerning this nomination?

South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good morning to you and Distinguished Delegates.

South Africa would like to just offer some apology to the State Party of Romania as our rugby team thrashed them last night, and we are confident that the Webb Ellis Trophy will return to South Africa.

On this particular item, we would like to request that the Chair allows the State Party of Russia to just clarify certain elements.

We do agree with the deferral on this item.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russia, you have the floor to respond.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to thank the Delegation from South Africa for this question, which will allow us very briefly to give our opinion on this nomination.

Gorokhovets is one of the most picturesque historical small towns in our country. It has an ancient history, and it has a harmonious mixture of buildings, monasteries and so on, from Slavic and other peoples. We would like to have yet to be, of course, worthy for the World Heritage List, given that it has a large number of attributes and values.

We would like to thank ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre for their dedication to the values expressed in the Convention, and for the professional and scientific approach. Thank you for your evaluation of our nomination. We know that it requires a great deal of effort and work from experts. ICOMOS has strictly respected ethical and scientific standards and it has avoided pressure from the outside. It has avoided being biased and it has tried truly to protect heritage. All of this really generates a great deal of respect on the Russian side. Thank you for your work on our nomination. We highly rate the constructive and transparent approach to discussions with the Advisory Bodies; discussions with the Advisory Bodies and Russia have been constructive. We thank you for your support throughout the nomination process; we've been able to have dialogue with ICOMOS experts and this has been very useful.

In conclusion, ICOMOS has recognized Russia and the local community's dedication to protecting this property. And it has been recommended that we change the nomination approach by looking at the criteria more closely.

We would like to say that we thank and recognize ICOMOS's approach. We would like to add that the work by Russian and international experts has taken place in very difficult conditions, that is the conditions of the pandemic, and this made it difficult for us to have access to certain sources of information. We do wish to objectively draw on and make the most of the time we have in order to continue to study this nomination and carry out future missions.

We will be submitting this nomination again in the future, and we hope that this will demonstrate to the international community that there is truly OUV within the Russian town of Gorokhovets.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

Are there any other comments? Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We wish to briefly acknowledge the availability of the Russian Delegation and its willingness to accept the recommendations set out by the Advisory Bodies. We believe that this demonstrates respect, and it also shows that the State Party has an interest in correctly implementing the World Heritage Convention.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Dear colleagues,

I invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.21**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment concerning this draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.21**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there are no comments, therefore, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.21** adopted. *[gavel]*

8B.22 Gordion (Türkiye) // Gordion (Türkiye)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Gordion (Türkiye), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr. Balsamo, you may.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Concerning the evaluation of the nomination of Gordion, we received a factual error notification, which is on page 89 of both the English and French version of Document INF8.B4.

This notification has also some impacts on the text of the related Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, and this correction has been already integrated in the version that we have in the Secretariat.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS.

ICOMOS: *[video]*

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the archaeological site of Gordion in Türkiye. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 210 of the English version and page 239 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide]

Gordion is an archaeological site located in Central Anatolia. It bears witness to multi-millennial human occupation, from 2500 BCE to 1400 CE, and the larger area demonstrates human occupation up until the present day with little interruption. However, the major *in situ* remains revealed by decades of archaeological investigations are associated with the emergence and flourishing of the Phrygian culture, between the 10th and the 6th centuries BCE.

Based on additional information provided by the State Party, ICOMOS considers that, despite the weaknesses in the comparative analysis, Gordion reflects in an exceptional manner, through its tangible attributes associated archaeological vestiges and *in situ* remains, and the preserved condition of its surrounding landscape, the Phrygians, an advanced Late Bronze and Iron Age civilization, which developed in Anatolia and excelled in timber construction, wood carving, and metalwork.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criterion (iii), but that criteria (iv) and (vi) have not been demonstrated.

[Next slide]

Gordion is a multi-layered site located in an open rural landscape. The nominated property includes Citadel Mound, the Lower and the Outer Town, fortifications, several burial mounds, tumuli and the cultural landscape itself.

The conditions for both authenticity and integrity have been met. The authenticity has been fully demonstrated through the form and design of the excavated structures, their original substance and material, and the location and setting, which has not changed much over time, except for the forested areas which have been progressively depleted since the Bronze Age. In terms of integrity, the physical material is in good condition and not experiencing neglect or uncontrolled processes of deterioration.

Some issues concerning the delineation of the boundaries have been resolved during the evaluation procedure. All key attributes that define the nominated property are now included within its boundaries as it is important for the appreciation and understanding of ancient Gordion.

[Next slide]

The archaeological site of Gordion is legally protected by an assortment of laws, regulations, provisions, regional and local plans. The classification of the nominated property into Archaeological Conservation Areas has guaranteed regulation of developments and effective safeguarding of the ancient capital of the Phrygia settlement. The wider setting of Gordion, is further regulated by the District Rural Settlement Development Plans, including provisions for farming.

The management system is adequate and is supported by existing legal and institutional framework. Municipalities are further responsible for regulating spatial development within conservation sites. A management plan has been approved, forming a good basis for the management of the property, although some actions may need to be given higher priority.

Although conservation measures are currently adequate, ICOMOS notes that in the event that international donor change, which are currently providing resources for conservation, the State Party needs to guarantee the provisions of the resources to ensure the effective conservation of the nominated property.

[Next slide]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Gordion in Türkiye be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iii) and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much ICOMOS.

I would like to see if there are any comments concerning this nomination. I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.22** adopted. *[gavel]*

Congratulations to the State Party of Türkiye.

You may have the floor for two minutes.

The Observer Delegation of Türkiye:

[first speaker] Mr. Chairperson, Esteemed members of the World Heritage Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I stand before you today with profound gratitude and immense pride as we celebrate the inscription of Gordion onto the World Heritage List.

Gordion, with its rich history dating back several millennia, has long been a testament to the remarkable ingenuity and resilience of our ancestors and a window into their lives and aspirations.

Today, as we witness Gordion's inclusion into the World Heritage List, we would also like to recognize the tireless efforts of countless individuals, organizations and communities, and thank them for their unwavering commitment to preserving and promoting the exceptional cultural treasure. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the dedicated archaeologists and historians and local authorities who have diligently uncovered Gordion's secrets, shedding light on its pivotal role in shaping human history.

Before giving the floor to Prof. Brian Rose, Head of the excavation, I would like to remind you that, today, we are hosting a side event at 18:30 in the At-Turaif District Room on Gordion.

Thank you.

[second speaker] As Director of excavations at Gordion, I want to repeat my thanks to the World Heritage Committee and, of course, to ICOMOS and, of course, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Türkiye for welcoming us into your community, and we look forward to seeing all of you at Gordion.

The Chairperson:

Congratulations again.

8B.23 Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops (Czechia) // Žatec et le paysage du houblon Saaz (Tchéquie)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops (Czechia). ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Je vous remercie M. le Président.

Cette présentation porte sur l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS du bien Žatec et le paysage du houblon [Saaz] (Tchéquie). L'évaluation de l'ICOMOS se trouve dans le Document INF.8B1, à la page 221 de la version anglaise et à la page 265 de la version française.

[Diapo suivante]

Le paysage du bassin de la Žatec, au sud de la chaîne des monts Métallifères, dans le nord-ouest de la Bohême offre des conditions climatiques et naturelles très favorables à la culture du houblon. Cette région est à l'origine de la variété de houblon la plus réputée au monde, qui porte le nom de la ville de Žatec. De la plus haute qualité aromatique, le houblon Saaz y a été produit de façon continue, transformé et exporté depuis la fin du Moyen Âge jusqu'à nos jours et est actuellement utilisé pour la production de bière dans le monde entier.

Ce bien en série comprend un élément urbain, la ville de Žatec, avec son extension industrielle des XIX^e et XX^e siècles, et un élément rural, le paysage du houblon Saaz, situé à environ cinq kilomètres. La rivière de l'Ohře, les routes et les voies ferrées qui servaient autrefois au transport du houblon constituent des liaisons historiques entre les éléments constitutifs au sein d'une zone tampon commune.

Ce paysage culturel représente une tradition vivante de culture et de transformation du houblon en Europe, concentrée sur une zone relativement petite avec des champs de houblon traditionnels, exigeant des conditions climatiques, de culture et de transformation assez spécifiques, et des bâtiments associés.

L'ICOMOS considère que l'analyse comparative justifie l'inscription du bien sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial au motif qu'il comprend les champs de houblon exploités depuis très longtemps dans la région de Saaz et les témoignages architecturaux et technologiques les plus remarquables et les mieux préservés des différentes périodes historiques de la production du houblon.

Le bien proposé pour inscription répond aux critères (iii), (iv) et (v).

[Diapo suivante]

Les attributs de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle comprennent des houblonnières traditionnelles et des bâtiments utilisés pour le séchage, le soufrage, le conditionnement, la certification et l'entreposage du houblon, des portions de réseaux de transport routier et ferroviaire historiques ainsi que la rivière Ohře et d'autres cours d'eau.

Les conditions d'authenticité et d'intégrité ont été remplies. Tout en reconnaissant l'existence d'effets négatifs spécifiques, l'intégrité de la série dans son ensemble ainsi que pour chacun de ses éléments constitutifs est satisfaisante. Dans le contexte du système agro-industriel de production et de commerce du houblon et de son évolution au cours de l'histoire, on peut dire que Žatec et le paysage du houblon de Saaz remplissent les conditions d'authenticité.

[Diapo suivante]

Les questions relatives à la protection juridique ont été traitées par l'État partie au cours du processus d'évaluation. L'État partie a entamé le développement d'un cadre de conservation cohérent, afin de guider les autorités chargées du patrimoine dans leurs décisions, au cas par cas, concernant les interventions, la conservation et la réutilisation des édifices historiques proposés pour inscription. Le renforcement des restrictions concernant la hauteur des constructions dans le bien proposé pour inscription est également noté.

Le système de gestion est globalement approprié et efficace, et il est basé sur des ressources humaines et financières adéquates. L'ICOMOS insiste sur l'importance d'effectuer des études d'impact sur le patrimoine pour les projets et les activités de développement qui sont prévus dans ou autour du bien.

[Diapo suivante]

Voici un résumé de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS sur la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien proposé pour inscription.

[Diapositive suivante]

Pour conclure, l'ICOMOS recommande que Žatec et le paysage du houblon Saaz (Tchéquie) soient inscrits en tant que paysage culturel sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sur la base des critères (iii) ; (iv) et (v) et a inclus davantage de recommandations dans le projet de décision afin de renforcer la conservation du bien à long terme.

[Diapo suivante]

Merci pour votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments concerning this nomination?

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président.

Il y a quelques années, la Belgique a inscrit, sur la Liste du patrimoine culturel immatériel, la culture de la bière, et c'est donc avec plaisir que nous accueillons la proposition de la République tchèque sur ce paysage culturel du houblon, qui est la matière première essentielle aux activités brassicoles.

Les qualités de ce dossier viennent de nous être présentées et sont reconnues par ICOMOS, et cette inscription est pour nous un témoin exceptionnel des liens étroits qui unissent le patrimoine immatériel et le patrimoine immobilier.

Ce dossier avait déjà été présenté au Comité en 2018 et avait été différé, et l'État partie avait eu la sagesse d'accepter cette décision et repris les travaux pour aboutir au succès que nous connaissons aujourd'hui.

C'est pourquoi, pour terminer, nous voudrions saluer les efforts tant des autorités tchèques que des communautés locales et, en général, de tous les acteurs locaux pour répondre aux attentes de l'Organisation consultative et du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any other comments?

So, I see none, and I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.23**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments regarding the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.23**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And if there are no comments, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.23** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Czechia on behalf of the entire Committee.

Czechia, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Czechia:

[first speaker] Thank you, Chair.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished members of the World Heritage Committee, Representatives of Advisory Bodies, dear colleagues,

First of all, our Delegation would like to express our gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its warm hospitality and excellent organization of this event.

The Czech Republic is extremely happy with your decision to inscribe Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops on the World Heritage List, as it is linked to the very heart of Czech culture.

We accepted the previous decision of the Committee to defer the examination of the nomination and with the help of ICOMOS and based on its recommendations, we have revised the nomination dossier over the last few years to better capture the values of this unique cultural landscape. We are pleased that our work towards better presentation and protection of this cultural heritage has been successful. Hop is known in our culture as "green gold", and we are delighted that this property has become part of the World Heritage, telling the story of its cultivation, processing and trade in the Czech Republic.

And now I pass the floor to the representative of the town of Žatec.

[second speaker] Thank you.

It has been a long and often uncertain journey.

We would like to express our gratitude to all participating partners and experts from Czechia and abroad.

Many thanks to ICOMOS for their valuable advice and guidance.

On behalf of the town of Žatec and the Landscape of Saaz Hops, we declare that we will do everything in our power to continue to promote the main principles of the Convention, especially in the field of the management, protection, scientific understanding of architectural values and education.

Since the future of our heritage lies in the hands of the next generation, our goal is to educate proud guardians of these values.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you and congratulations again.

8B.24 Talayotic Menorca – A cyclopean island odyssey (Spain) // Minorque talayotique – l’odyssée d’une île cyclopéenne (Espagne)

The Chairperson:

Now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Talayotic Menorca – A cyclopean island odyssey (Spain), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the Talayotic Menorca – A cyclopean island odyssey nomination. This is to be found on page 88 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B4.

This notification has also some factual corrections that have an impact on the related Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, and these corrections are already reflected in our version in the Secretariat.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Balsamo. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS–evaluation of Talayotic Menorca – A cyclopean island odyssey (Spain). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 232 of the English version and page 251 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged clarifications and editorial changes.

[Next slide, please]

The nominated serial property includes nine component parts, which encompass a high density of archaeological sites situated in agropastoral landscapes. A testimony to the occupation of the island by prehistoric communities, these sites display a diversity of prehistoric settlements and burial places. The materials, forms and locations of structures dating from the Bronze Age (1600 BCE) to the Late Iron Age (123 BCE), during the period known as Talayotic, show the evolution of a “cyclopean” architecture built with very large blocks of stone, and of a spatial organization that suggests the emergence of a hierarchical society. Distinct visual interconnections between archaeological sites indicate the existence of social networks, and astronomical orientations imply possible cosmological meanings.

The comparative analysis, developed around qualitative assessments of four main parameters, demonstrates the exceptionality of the serial property within its geocultural region, based on the proposed Outstanding Universal Value and the related features and attributes being compared.

The nominated property meets criteria (iii) and (iv), and the serial approach is justified.

[Next slide, please]

The boundaries of the component parts have been defined based on archaeological evidence, visibility analyses, topography, and ecological environments as well as a delimitation of plots with dry stone walls. In eight of the nine

component parts, the settings of the archaeological sites are included within their boundaries. Two buffer zones totalling 19 ha are proposed to reinforce protection of the nominated property's landscape.

The component parts are of adequate size and present a diversity of environments in which the prehistoric settlements are located, and the boundaries adequately ensure the complete representation of the features and processes that convey the property's significance. The property does not suffer unduly from adverse effects of development and/or neglect. The authenticity of the nominated property is based on the ability of the series as a whole to truthfully and credibly express its cultural values through its attributes, which include the prehistoric cyclopean structures that illustrate the evolution of dry-stone buildings on the island from the Bronze to the Iron ages. The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met. Some recommendations have been included in the draft decision in order to reduce the vulnerability of the integrity of some components.

[Next slide, please]

The nominated serial property is protected by an integrated system of environmental, cultural, landscape and territorial protection regimes overseen by the Island Council of Menorca. 231 of the 280 prehistoric archaeological sites within the component parts, are protected under a Heritage of Cultural Interest designation or BIC, which is the highest level of protection for cultural assets under Spanish legislation. The Menorca Island Land-Use Plan (2020) further protects all nine component parts of the serial property as Areas of Landscape Interest.

The Island Council of Menorca is responsible for managing the nominated serial property, enforcing all laws for the protection of heritage and implementing planning instruments. It has created the Talayotic Menorca Agency, a specific entity dedicated to coordinating and implementing the programmes established in the management plan, approved in July 2021, which includes conservation, restoration, monitoring, visitor management, communication and research. ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated serial property is adequate and that the proposed management system seems well conceived. However, its effectiveness needs to be evaluated as further experience is gathered and be adapted as required.

[Next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide, please]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends—that Talayotic Menorca – A cyclopean island odyssey (Spain) be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (iv) and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

Mr. Chair,

ICOMOS would like to present one of the additional recommendations related to the name of the property.

ICOMOS recommends that the State Party consider changing the name of the property to become "Prehistoric Sites of Talayotic Menorca".

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Thank you very much for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there are any comments from the floor concerning this nomination. So, I see none.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.24**, but before doing so, I'd like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.24**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And there are no comments, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.24** adopted. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Congratulations to Spain on behalf of the entire Committee.

Spain, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Spain:

[first speaker] Thank you very much, *Señor Presidente*. Merci beaucoup à tous.

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you all. Thank you.

As the Ambassador of Spain to UNESCO, on behalf of the Government of Spain, on behalf of my country, the Kingdom of Spain, I wish to express the immense pleasure and pride we have at the inscription of this property.

Menorca is a biosphere reserve and it's a true treasure of our country, and as of now it also is World Heritage.

Now, I'll give the floor to the Chair of the Government of the Balearic Islands.

Thank you once again for your support.

[second speaker] Thank you very much, Ambassador.

On behalf of the Government of the Balearic Islands, I wish to thank UNESCO for the inscription of this property, and I would like to thank the Ambassador for his dedication on this file.

Today is a historic day for the Balearic Islands, for Menorca and for Spain, and I wish to demonstrate the commitment of the Government of the Balearic Islands to protect this site and to explain it for current and future generations so that it may be handed down as a full and intact example of heritage.

Now, I'll give the floor to Adolfo Vilafranca.

[third speaker] Thank you very much, members of the Committee. I wish to thank the World Heritage Committee for approving the inscription of Talayotic Menorca.

It's an honour for me as the Chair of the Island Council of Menorca to accept this inscription. On behalf of all of those working on this in the island. It is the result of a tremendous effort. With this inscription, all of the people of Menorca reiterate our commitment to preserve this heritage, which is important not just for us but, as of now, for the entire humankind.

Thank you very much. *[end of interpretation from Spanish]*

The Chairperson:

Congratulations again.

2023 CYCLE // CYCLE 2023

CULTURAL HERITAGE // PATRIMOINE CULTUREL

8B.42 Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and "Köç Yolu" Transhumance Route (Azerbaijan) // Le paysage culturel du peuple Khinalig et la route de transhumance « Köç Yolu » (Azerbaïdjan)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and "Köç Yolu" Transhumance Route (Azerbaijan), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

Spain, if you may close the mic. Spain...

Mr. Balsamo.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of this nomination, which is on page 103 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B4.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and "Köç Yolu" Transhumance Route (Azerbaijan). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 384 of the English version and page 441 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

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The nominated property is a continuing cultural landscape associated with the semi-nomadic Khinalig people, who practice a long-distance vertical transhumance cultural tradition in the Caucasus region. The traditional model of Khinalig transhumance involves four to six families forming a small production unit and together herding their flocks within the defined borders of ancestral pasture plots. Animal husbandry remains the dominant economy, though a highly vulnerable one. The range of physical features across a great diversity of landscapes illustrates an adaptation to extreme environmental conditions and the resilience of semi-nomadic socio-economic structures based on the sustainable use of natural resources.

The comparative analysis demonstrates the exceptionality of this vertical transhumant system in its geocultural context as one that has survived conserving communal management, the role of shepherd families and the subsistence character of transhumance, as well as a high degree of preservation of predominantly pastoral land use. The nominated property demonstrates criteria (iii) and (v).

[Next slide]

This property encompasses three key areas: the mountain village of Khinalig and high-altitude summer pastures (*yaylaqs*) in the Greater Caucasus Mountains; winter pastures (*qishlaqs*) in the lowland plains of central Azerbaijan; and the connecting transhumance route, called Köç Yolu (Migration Route). The nominated property counts with a buffer zone.

The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met though they are highly vulnerable.

During the course of the evaluation of this nomination, exchanges between ICOMOS and the State Party resulted in an adjustment to the boundaries of the proposed buffer zone, which was extended to include a number of diverse mountain communities.

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A protective designation for the entire property through a single protected Reserve is being achieved by means of a Presidential Order. In addition to the legal protection instruments, there are traditional mechanisms for protecting and safeguarding the tangible and intangible aspects of the property.

The management system involves the Ministry of Culture, the State Tourism Agency, and its subordinate Reserves Management Center, and the Khinalig Reserve. A new management entity for the property and its buffer zone will incorporate relevant sectoral Government agencies, local Governments, and local communities within a single participatory, cross-sectoral management framework.

[Next slide]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and "Köç Yolu" Transhumance Route (Azerbaijan) be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (v), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

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Thank you very much for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there are any comments concerning this nomination.

I see none, and I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.42**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.42**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Are there any comments? I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.42** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations, Azerbaijan, on behalf of the entire Committee.

You may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Azerbaijan:

[first speaker] Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I would like to sincerely thank the Distinguished Committee members for adopting this historic decision, as well as we would like to thank the Secretariat and ICOMOS for their continuing support and openness for dialogue with Member States, which helped us achieve this extraordinary result.

The Cultural Landscape of Khinalig People and the "Köç Yolu" Transhumance Route is a unique and well preserved, and now a World Heritage, site.

Dear friends,

Without any further delay, I would like to pass the floor, and with the permission of Mr. Chair, I would like to pass the floor to Mr. Fuad Naghiyev, Chairman of the State Tourism Agency, whose agency is in charge of the inscribed World Heritage site.

Thank you again for your support.

[second speaker] Dear Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Host Country, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for the excellent organization of the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee and their generous hospitality extended to our Delegation.

It is a honour for me to celebrate, with great occasion, with you, the successful inscription of the Khinalig and "Köç Yolu" Transhumance Route into the World Heritage List.

On behalf of the Government and people of Azerbaijan, I want to thank the Esteemed members of the World Heritage Committee for their diligence in recognition of World Heritage.

I would like to congratulate and thank the Government of Azerbaijan, in particular the President and the First Vice-President of Republic of Azerbaijan for their ceaseless attention, care and support in preserving and protecting the tangible and intangible heritage of our country. This is a remarkable achievement of which we are all very proud. And of course, I humbly thank Secretariat and ICOMOS for their professionalism and for supporting the national team with valuable guidance over the last few years.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, thank you for your exemplary leadership during this session. We are honoured to be part of this remarkable event and wish you all the best with the rest of the session.

Thank you, *Çox sağ*.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

2022 CYCLE (Ct'd) // CYCLE 2022 (suite)

CULTURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

8B.25 National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj (Guatemala) // Parc archéologique national Tak'alik Ab'aj (Guatemala)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj (Guatemala), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification for the nomination of the National Archaeological Park of Tak'alik Ab'aj (Guatemala), and this notification is on page 51 of Document INF.8B4 in both English and French version.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj (Guatemala). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 245 of the English version and page 45 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors, as already noted, and acknowledges some of these errors.

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The archaeological site of Tak'alik Ab'aj has a 1,700-year history from 800 BCE to 900 CE, a period that saw the transition from the Olmec civilization to the emergence of Early Mayan culture. Tak'alik Ab'aj functioned as a catalyst in this transition, in part because of its role in long-distance trade routes. Ideas and customs were shared extensively along this route, as indicated by the diversity of sculptural styles and artefacts that are found at the nominated property.

The nominated property also shows manifestations of urban planning that include water management, cosmological precepts and astronomical orientations. Today, indigenous groups still consider the site a sacred place and visit to perform rituals.

While improvements have been suggested, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis demonstrates that the nominated property is distinctive and significant within its geocultural context. ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (iii), but that criteria (i), (iv) and (vi) have not been demonstrated.

[Next slide, please]

The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met, as discussed in the evaluation report.

The nominated property is located within sub-tropical forest on the Pacific coast of Guatemala. The nominated area represents only a small portion of the entire 650 hectare nationally-designated archaeological site. Accordingly, a buffer zone is proposed as an "initial protection zone", to be augmented by a number of proposed "protection islands" for important sites located in the wider area.

While ICOMOS considers that the property boundary is appropriate, the lack of an effective buffer zone with clear and effective land-use zoning and protection is of significant concern.

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Associated with the issues identified regarding the establishment of an effective buffer zone, ICOMOS has also proposed recommendations to resolve some issues with the legal regulations for the protection of archaeological sites surrounding the nominated property.

There is a good state of conservation of the archaeological features, sculptures and buildings within the nominated property. The management system is generally adequate, although it requires further elaboration as we've outlined in the additional recommendations provided in our report.

[Next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

As I already mentioned, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property demonstrates criteria (ii) and (iii), but that additional work is required to address several significant concerns.

In particular, the lack of an effective buffer zone with clear and effective land-use zoning around the nominated property needs to be addressed, along with the missing regulations that make application of existing legislation to protect the archaeological site surrounding the nominated property difficult. While management of the site seems generally adequate, several important management tools and the monitoring indicators are not sufficiently developed to ensure the effective long-term protection and management.

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To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj (Guatemala) be referred back to the State Party to enable these matters to be addressed. These are shown in full on the slide, and include:

- Analysing the limitations of the legal protection of the nominated property and the surrounding archaeological site;

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- Establishment of an effective buffer zone, as already discussed;
- Resolution of limitations to the legal protection and precise delineation and protection for the proposed "protection islands";

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- Updating of the management system to include effective risk management and visitor management;
- More detailed plans for research and conservation; and
- Use of Heritage Impact Assessments for planned developments;

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- And finally, involvement of local and indigenous communities in decision making processes.

ICOMOS has also recommended that the name of the nominated property could be revised in order to differentiate it between the larger archaeological site that surrounds it.

Finally, ICOMOS has included several further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide, please]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there are any comments concerning this nomination.

Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

I have the honour of presenting this nomination to the members of the Committee.

There are very few sites that have the transitional features between two civilizations, the Olmec civilization and the early Mayan culture. In Guatemala, Tak'alik Ab'aj and El Baúl share some of the characteristics that contribute to a better understanding of the development of Mesoamerica in pre-Columbian times. The site has been greatly influenced by the Olmec civilization and, later on, the early Mayan culture. Tak'alik Ab'aj also stands out for its water management systems, including underground drainage and preclassical tombs.

Mexico supported Guatemala in preparing the technical nomination file and has been doing so since 2017. This is the result of an exchange of opinions on the site, and we have been discussing the OUV as well as the attributes associated with the property.

We acknowledge the commitment of Guatemala to fulfil the recommendations set out by ICOMOS as regards the inscription criteria, as well as more comprehensive protection measures to ensure the future protection of the site.

The State Party has updated the management plan, which covers visitors carrying capacity, internal regulation as well as the risk management plan with a focus on the protection of the OUV and the associated attributes of the property, which are so unique. It has taken into account the recommendations set out by ICOMOS. An agreement was signed for the cooperation as regards the buffer zone, which protects the core area of the Archaeological Park.

Lastly, we note the considerable efforts undertaken by the Government of Guatemala in the field of protection of cultural heritage. First of all, in its participation as a member of the Committee until 2021, and secondly, when it comes to the Cultural Heritage Plan, which has set out several years after it joined the World Heritage Convention. This is why we have put forward an amendment to propose the inscription of the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj, on the World Heritage List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Omani experts' Delegation with me, here, noted and welcomed the progress and positive achievement of the State Party to technical protection of the property's OUV through the implementation of various measures.

The State Party has 37 years worked on the documents, recording, conserving almost all elements of the nomination property, providing detailed information about the chronology of the site, its living tradition as well as its social and religious practices, including the ritual protocol and concerned concept. Such documentation has created a very comprehensive archaeological records that demonstrated the integrity of the site, as the excavation have revealed intact contexts that have been represented over the two millennia.

Oman also acknowledged the effort of the State Party in protecting the OUV of the site, in which a Management Plan and Risk Management Plan was approved and put into place. The State Party also created Special Ecological Conservation Programme and two specific measures to create the buffer zone, that increases the protection and conservation of the property.

Mr. Chair,

At the moment, the nominated National Archaeological Park Tak'alik have the potential to meet the requirement for the OUV.

Therefore, we support and co-author the amendment draft decision made by Mexico, which states to inscribe the National Archaeological Park of Guatemala in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (vi).

Although there are some concerns and recommendations raised by the Consultative Body that still need to be considered and addressed by the State Party, the Omani Delegation acknowledges and support the continuation of the continuous efforts made and to be made by the State Party. It is the Omani Delegation believes that the State Party is in a position to achieve these recommendations.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could submit to the World Heritage Centre by the 1 December 2024 an update report on the implementation of the provided recommendation listed in the amended draft decision made by Mexico. This includes the analysis of the limitation of the legal protection of the nominated draft decision. Sorry, this includes the analysis of the limitation of the legal protection of the nominated property that will fully protect its OUV, the establishment of the Non-Governmental Organization in order to support the involvement of the local community and enhance the monitoring system to encompass all the attributes of OUV.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. [interpretation from Arabic] Argentina. [end of interpretation from Arabic]

The Delegation of Argentina: [interpretation from Spanish]

Thank you, Chair.

We thank the Advisory Bodies for the presentation of its report on the nomination of the Archaeological Park, Tak'alik Ab'aj of Guatemala. We also thank the Secretariat for the draft decision.

We agree with Guatemala in that this is an archaeological site of utmost importance and that it has played a major role in Mesoamerica, including in the Preclassic period.

It is a region underrepresented on the World Heritage List.

The site offers a number of attributes that convey the OUV, and it is a sacred site for indigenous groups and local communities. The site also is a testimony to exchange of human values in the field of architecture as well as arts, urban planning and landscapes. The National Archaeological Park presents the urban planning of the first rulers with monumental buildings and water management examples. It conveys OUV according to traditions based on arts, cosmology and science, among others, including astronomy and ceramics.

Guatemala has also shown its commitment to the preservation of the site and has come up with functional and technically valid solutions for the buffer zone, as has been expressed. We are aware of the institutional work which has been undertaken to strengthen monitoring and management systems. We also acknowledge the commitment to dialogue with local communities and to implement action over time. This enables dialogue with indigenous groups.

Therefore, we support the amendment put forward to inscribe the property on the World Heritage List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. [interpretation from Arabic] Egypt. [end of interpretation from Arabic]

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you.

Egypt welcomes and supports the inscription of the archaeological site Tak'alik Ab'aj in Guatemala on the World Heritage List, based on criteria (ii) and (iii).

The site holds extraordinary significance, and indigenous communities, representing 22 different Mayan language affiliations, consider it a sacred place. Based on the nomination dossier, the key attributes of a nominated property are the archaeological remains, such as the urban layout, buildings, features, sculptures, and artefacts as well as the modern use and reinterpretation.

The integrity of the site is well preserved, and we commend the State Party for their dedication to preserving it.

For all these reasons, Egypt believes that the site should be inscribed in this session and pleads for the adoption of the amended draft decision, which we are co-sponsoring.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Belgica*.

The Delegation of Belgium: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

Belgium wishes to make this statement in Spanish.

WI wish to highlight that Tak'alik Ab'aj is truly an exceptional archaeological site in a wonderful natural setting. It bears witness to previous civilizations and interchanges between peoples and cultures.

The Advisory Body, once again, has undertaken tremendous work, and we share its recommendations and its view that the site meets criteria (ii) and (iii). Integrity and authenticity are also justified. The Advisory Body has set out valid comments as regards the boundaries, management, and protection. However, we note that these recommendations have been sufficiently addressed.

This is why Belgium, as a co-author, wishes to support the amendment aimed at inscribing National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj at this session. We also wish to congratulate Guatemala on this nomination.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]* Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I would like to express our appreciation to ICOMOS for the excellent work and good advice on this file.

In this particular case, Japan supports the inscription of this file and, therefore, support the amendments by Mexico for the following reasons:

- First of all, this is a site of unique historical value regarding showing the transition between two civilizations.
- Secondly, OUV has been recognized by ICOMOS in terms of criteria (ii) and (iii). And
- Thirdly, in terms of comparative analysis, integrity and authenticity, ICOMOS agrees with those points.
- Fourthly, regarding conservation, ICOMOS came up with a series of recommendations and the State Party of Guatemala had started taking measures in this regard in accordance with those recommendations, including concluding Cooperation Agreements with land owners.

Another point on conservation, the State Party of Guatemala has already put a Management Plan as well as Risk Management Plan in place. There are, of course, other issues to be tackled in the future, but the State Party of Guatemala has shown its commitment and willingness to deal with those issues.

I believe this is a very typical example, this is a very good example of good work done by ICOMOS and the State Party of Guatemala, and, therefore, we wholeheartedly support the inscription of this particular file.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor on the Agenda Item 45 COM 8B.25, National Archaeological Park, Tak'alik Ab'aj (Guatemala), which has got a referral recommendation by the Expert Body, but we have amendments presented for inscription.

I thank the excellent work done by the World Heritage Secretariat and the Expert Body. The nomination dossier was presented under criteria (I), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi).

Tak'alik. Ab'aj is an archaeological site located at the piedmont of the Pacific coast of Guatemala. Its 1,700 years history spans from the year 800 BC to 900 Current Era, a period that saw the transition from the Olmec civilization to the emergence of the great early Mayan culture. It is the land of the Great Balam. The Mayan culture covered almost one third of Mesoamerica. There was a strong and dynamic Mayan influence on the neighbouring culture of the great Aztec city of Teotihuacan also, where men experienced the evolution of consciousness, as is the belief. Tak'alik Ab'aj functioned as a primary player and catalyst in this transition, in part, because of the vital role it played in the long-distance trade route that connected the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in today's Mexico to present day El Salvador. Ideas and customs were shared extensively along this route. Today, the indigenous people of different affiliations still consider the site a sacred place to visit and to perform rituals.

The entire ancient archaeological area extends to 650 ha and should ideally be declared as the buffer zone, but there are also private ownership issues which may take time to resolve.

The State Party of Guatemala met us and provided information and clarification. After going through the clarifications, we took a call to co-author the amendments for inscriptions presented by Mexico.

I salute the great Mayan culture. India congratulates the people and Government of Guatemala for having presented the site for inscription to the World Heritage List, and would request you to give the floor to Guatemala to clarify on the points raised by the Advisory Body.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Bulgarian State Party would like to support the nomination of the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj for the inscription on the World Heritage List as well as the amendments proposed to the draft decision.

We consider as extremely valuable the recommendations of ICOMOS and the inscription of the property under the criteria (ii) and (iii).

The Bulgarian State Party supports the inclusion of the local and indigenous communities in the decision-making processes through continuous programme and project activities. We encourage the State Party to continue using Heritage Impact Assessment as a tool for sustainable management of the Archaeological Park.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and good morning.

My Delegation has taken time to study the nomination file on the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj, which has been on the Tentative List since 2002, with commitment from the State Party to continue with the significant advances both in the field of archaeological and scientific research as well as in strengthening of its comprehensive management. The result of this prioritization was the submission of the nomination file in 2021 and the additional information presented in 2022.

We note that ICOMOS has identified gaps that focus on priority issues, including those relating to the protection of the park and equitable land use. The long history of the nominated property, and the accumulation of the large number of sculptures of different styles, was considered by ICOMOS to be an expression of a very interesting and possibly unique evolutionary development, but it has not been shown to be a masterpiece of human creative genius per se. However, in response, Guatemala has been proactive in addressing the recommendation by ICOMOS. It has resolved the issue of the buffer zone. It has gotten the governing institution to validate and update planning instrument such a Management Plan, and integrated the detailed conservation impact component and the Comprehensive Risk Management Plan, all aimed at maintaining the OUV of the property. Inter-ministerial agreements in binding areas of competence has also been concluded. Progress is ongoing to strengthen

community participation, compliance with heritage and Environmental Impact Assessment prior to development projects and economic activities which focus on the immediate surrounding of the National Archaeological Park.

As co-sponsor, Nigeria believes that the result of this effort, as presented in the amendment by Mexico, sufficient for an immediate inscription of the property on the World Heritage List rather than referral.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

Rwanda would like to thank the State Party of Guatemala for the nomination dossier of the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj. We also thank the Advisory Body for their report and recommendations.

According to the information provided by the State Party, as well as what is included in the report of the Evaluation Body, the indigenous groups of different ethnic affiliation consider the site as a sacred place.

Chair,

Their participation and involvement in decision making can be reflected in the existence of programmes that seek to safeguard the original monuments hand in hand with the spiritual guide of the site. We understand that the State Party has created space for participation in local and regional sectoral roundtables, promoting cultural and linguistic integration in various projects, with the participation of representatives of the native communities, the public sector, and the private sector. This demonstrates the State Party's commitment to address the recommendations of the Evaluating Body.

Therefore, Rwandan Delegation support the draft amendment presented by Mexico.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We would like to extend our appreciation to ICOMOS for the great work that they are doing in terms of coming up with the various recommendations.

The State Party of Zambia would like to highlight the remarkable commitment of the State Party of Guatemala to the conservation of the Archaeological Park of Tak'alik Ab'aj and its intended inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage site. This commitment is firmly rooted in the principles of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, specifically in Articles 4 and 5, which stress the significance of identifying, protecting, conserving and passing on the cultural and natural heritage of exceptional universal value to future generations.

Mr. Chairman,

To illustrate this commitment, the State Party has developed a comprehensive framework that includes a Risk Plan and a Management Plan. These plans enable the site's periodic evaluation, aligning with Article 11 of the Convention, which emphasizes the need for the States Parties to provide information on the conservation status of their World Heritage properties and the measures taken to protect them.

Mr. Chairman,

What is particularly commendable is the proactive approach taken by the State Party, consistent with Article 4 of the Convention. They have integrated quantifiable indicators into their monitoring processes to track the site's conservation status. Article 5 of the Convention underscores the necessity of safeguarding the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage sites, and these indicators help identify specific preventive actions as articulated in Article 6.

Mr. Chairman,

Furthermore, the State Party's dedication to addressing recommendations from the Evaluating Bodies aligns with Article 8 of the Convention. This article encourages States Parties to support the protection of World Heritage properties through financial and technical assistance for conservation efforts.

In essence, the State Party's unwavering commitment to the principles and objectives of the World Heritage Convention is evident in their diligent planning and implementation of these measures, is a testament to their responsible stewardship to this invaluable cultural heritage.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we urge all Delegates to support the draft amendment presented by the State Party of Guatemala. This amendment not only reflects their commitment, but also their effective use of the Convention's guidance. It ensures the continued conservation and protection of the Guatemala Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj, preserving its Outstanding Universal Value for generations to come, in accordance with the Articles 4 and 5 of the Convention.

Therefore, the State Party of Zambia supports the nomination of this property.

I submit, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Tak'alik Ab'aj is an extraordinary archaeological site whose Outstanding Universal Value has been fully recognized by the Advisory Body. Furthermore, ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation is very good and that factors affecting the nominated property are generally well identified and, at present, under control.

The proposal has been recommended for referral. The main reason seems to be the lack of an appropriate buffer zone, but on this specific issue, we have received very encouraging information from the State Party stating that the Government of Guatemala signed a Cooperation Agreement with the owner of the areas around the nominated property.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I request to give the floor to the Delegation of Guatemala to explain more on the content of this Cooperation Agreement. After the clarifications offered by the State Party on these specific points, I am sure Italy will be in a more stronger condition to assure full support to the amendments proposed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

First of all, I would like to thank ICOMOS as well as the State Party and the Secretariat for the efforts undertaken in presenting this nomination.

We have considered the file, and we have been able to confirm the criteria which attest to the transfer of values and civilizations. We believe that they are satisfactory. We believe that the report is clear. As for criteria (ii) and (iii), we take note of ICOMOS's report, and we also feel that the State Party has undertaken significant efforts, which are in line with ICOMOS's report, in order to enhance the management of the property and protect the cultural features of the indigenous communities. There is also an effective Management Plan.

We support the amendment.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

After discussing with the Esteemed Delegation of Guatemala, we understand that this site, the National Archaeological Park of Tak'alik Ab'aj, has been on the Tentative List of Guatemala since 2012.

Mr. Chair,

As we heard from ICOMOS, the Advisory Body, originally referred this nomination back to the State Party of Guatemala.

After assessing the Advisory Body's report, the additional information provided by the State Party, and after discussion with the Guatemalan Delegation, South Africa is confident that the main issues highlighted by the Advisory Body were satisfactorily addressed to justify the inscription of the property. In this regard, the State Party agrees with the inscription under criteria (ii) and (iii), should the Committee decide to exclude (i) and (iv).

Additionally, a buffer zone was identified and established 10 meters around the boundary of the property. This requested the signing of an agreement with the private owner of the land in which the buffer is located. The relationship between the Government of Guatemala and the private landowner is, so far, amicable.

Furthermore, in terms of the management tools and monitoring indicators, the State Party confirmed that the current Management Plan integrates the detailed conservation impact component and the Risk Management Plan. Particularly significant for this site is the participation of surrounding communities of Mayan descendants, who greatly support this project and who are involved in the management and beneficiation of the site. We commend the State Party for this example of close collaboration.

We acknowledge that the State Party prefers not to change the name of the property suggested by ICOMOS, and we believe that the State Party's wish in this regard should be respected.

We trust that the State Party of Guatemala will actively work towards satisfying all further recommendations included in the ICOMOS report and in the draft decision.

The State Party of Guatemala will be very pleased if this archaeological property can be inscribed in the World Heritage List, and South Africa, therefore, supports the amendment draft decision as proposed by Mexico.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation would like to commend the Advisory Body for its very informative presentation and to congratulate the State Party for elaborating the nomination file on this property.

We would also like to express our support to the proposed amendment by Mexico.

Moreover, as demonstrated by the submitted information, this property played a vital role in the transition from the Olmec civilization to the emergence of the early Mayan culture, due to its contribution in the long-distance trade route connecting the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, in present day Mexico, with present day El Salvador. Ideas and different cultural traditions were widely shared along this route, as indicated by the exceptional diversity of sculptural styles attested at the property as well as by related artefacts found in many other sites located at a long distance.

In view of the above, we support its inscription on the World Heritage List, and we trust that the State Party will undertake all necessary measures to protect its OUV as well as all legal measures to effectively address factors affecting the property and to strengthen the involvement of the local communities in the management of the property.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We thank ICOMOS for their assessment of this site.

The National Archaeological Park of Tak'alik Ab'aj in Guatemala was nominated under criteria (i), (ii) (iii), (iv) and (vi).

A close examination of the dossier and the report from ICOMOS reveals the following facts about this nominated property:

- One, it supports a variety of stone monuments, ceramic artefacts, sacred spaces and buildings constructed from clay. These were found to span the period of the Olmec civilization through to the emergence of the early Mayan culture, that is, the mid to Late Preclassic period.

- Secondly, early engineering and physical planning through the water management systems and calculated cosmological and astronomical relationships.
- Thirdly, it served as a major route for trade and commerce as well as for human habitation and the continued use by indigenous communities for sacred rituals.
- Fourthly, in 2002, the nominated property was declared National Cultural Heritage and is protected accordingly.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines note the concerns of ICOMOS regarding environmental challenges, the developmental pressures, and shortcomings in aspects of site management, which needs to be addressed by the State Party. These challenges are not insurmountable, and they do not significantly diminish the fact that ICOMOS has awarded passing grades to the state of conservation and the comparative analysis, that authenticity and integrity are demonstrated, and that the property has the potential to justify OUV on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iii).

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is satisfied that information provided by the State Party, analysis made by ICOMOS, and the information contained in the amendment, together justifies inscription of the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj in Guatemala as a World Heritage site on the basis of having met the conditions of criteria (ii) and (iii).

Our support of the amendment of the draft decision to inscribe this site on the World Heritage List is, therefore, registered, and we look forward to the reports from the State Party on the progress of the recommendations.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Saudi Arabia. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Saudi Arabia wishes to thank Guatemala, as well as the Advisory Bodies, and the Secretariat for the efforts undertaken in the preparation of this nomination.

With regard to ICOMOS's report and Guatemala's commitment to fulfilling ICOMOS recommendations, we wholeheartedly support the amendment.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Conformément aux informations fournies par l'État partie, nous notons que les monuments sont totalement ou partiellement exposés, avec leur revêtement en pierre consolidé et les surfaces d'argile restantes recouvertes d'herbe. D'autres sont enterrées et recouvertes de végétation. Toutes les composantes culturelles et naturelles ont été inventoriées et font l'objet d'un programme de suivi et de conservation préventive de la part de l'État du Guatemala.

En outre, l'administration du Parc archéologique national Tak'alik Ab'aj s'efforce, depuis sa création, de protéger la biodiversité d'origine en collectant des espèces indigènes qui ont survécu dans les ravins profonds des rivières et en propageant des plantes qui ont survécu dans la zone.

Cela démontre clairement l'engagement de l'État partie à donner suite aux recommandations de l'Organe d'évaluation.

C'est pourquoi ma Délégation soutient le projet d'amendement.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We would like to appreciate the Advisory Bodies for their presentation and recommendation.

My Delegation has carefully studied the Tak'alik Ab'aj nomination file and listened to various interventions of Distinguished members of the Committee. We also acknowledge the considerable work carried out and, also, the progress achieved by the State Party.

Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation would like to highlight the goodwill of the State Party for accepting the recommendations issued by the Evaluating Body and for deciding to inscribe the site under criteria (ii) and (iii), values that are undoubtedly reflected in the nominated property with the necessary characteristics to be recognized as a World Heritage. The State Party has also provided detailed documentation demonstrating the integrity of the site of Tak'alik Ab'aj and expressed, as well, its commitment to continue protecting and promoting the site.

Therefore, my Delegation supports the draft amendment presented by Mexico for immediate inscription.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for giving me the floor.

With the overwhelming support by the Committee members to the inscription of the nominated property, we will keep our intervention concise.

We would like to join other Committee members to express our appreciation for the excellent work done by the Advisory Body. We also like to commend the State Party of Guatemala of its commitment to continue implementing recommendation provided by the Advisory Body and making all necessary conservation efforts to protect such an exceptional archaeological site.

The National Archaeological Park of Tak'alik Ab'aj has unique characteristics that make it worthy of being part of the List of the World Heritage sites. The inscription of the nominated property would enrich a set of cultural assets that are little represented at the regional level.

Therefore, Mr. Chairperson, we'd also like to congratulate the State Party of Guatemala and, also, confirm our co-authorships to the draft amendment proposed by Mexico.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more interventions, so I'd like to pass the floor to Guatemala as requested by the Distinguished Delegates of India and Italy.

The Observer Delegation of Guatemala: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

It's the first time my Delegation has taken the floor, therefore, I wish to congratulate you on your leadership and thank Saudi Arabia for the excellent hospitality and organization.

In response to the questions put to us by the Honourable Delegations, in 2023, we signed a Cooperation Agreement for the creation of a buffer zone to protect the National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj with the Ministry of Culture and the owners around the Park. We established a zone which protects the site and delimitates a specific area around the zone as a vegetal area. This strengthens the protection previously provided to archaeological areas, and it also protects the delimitations in order to protect the OUV. The Park is, as a whole, national cultural heritage of the country and, therefore, it's protected under national legislation. The Ministry has updated legislation monitoring and protection mechanisms through administrative resolutions in order to protect the site. The Management Plan and the Risk Management Plan have been approved by a technical group and have been updated. We've also integrated the Visitor Management Plan, a study on carrying capacity, among other aspects.

The State Party is committed to ensuring the authenticity and integrity of the site. Tak'alik Ab'aj is one of the most important sites expressing living traditions in Guatemala, and indigenous groups consider it to be a sacred site. They are able to take part in the management of the site through various dialogue mechanisms.

The museum of El Caracol del Tiempo allows us to showcase specific artefacts, but it also allows local communities to participate in the protection of the site.

We hope that this clarifies certain aspects, and we hope that the property can be inscribed on criteria (ii) and (iii).

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to ICOMOS for some clarifications about the questions addressed by the Committee members.

ICOMOS:

Many thanks and thank you for the rich discussion by the Committee today.

For the most part, as you know, ICOMOS had a very positive evaluation of this property according to criteria (ii) and (iii), and, of course, noted with great welcome the State Party's commitment to seeing the recommendations that we provided implemented as soon as possible.

We welcome the news provided here regarding progress made by the State Party, since our evaluation, was finalized on various issues, and we note, of course, that the growing consensus by the Committee to inscribe the site today.

I just want to make a few brief comments about the issue of buffer zone before you move to the draft decision and possible amendments.

We, of course, understand that the State Party has made progress on this very critical issue since our 2022 evaluation, but we have not been in a position to assess formally this progress.

The State Party, in fact, made quite a lot of improvements to the buffer zone arrangements. During the evaluation process, initially, the preliminary protection strip was very narrow, and, in conversation and dialogue with ICOMOS, increased it to a larger initial protection zone, which was still insufficiently provided with legal protection and uncertain in terms of the protection it provided, which is why our recommendation reads the way it does.

Given that the State Party acknowledges that negotiations and legal protection are a work in progress, which, of course, we all welcome, and there has been no formal receipt of a buffer zone mapping, I believe, or the text or content of the Cooperation Agreement, which has been referred to and which the State Party mentioned in its factual errors process, ICOMOS questions whether it would be useful if this could be formally provided following the Committee's decision today, possibly through the minor boundary modification process, so that these can be assessed and included in the formal documentation of the property as we move forward.

The same could be said with other aspects that have been mentioned here today, where the State Party has continued to work and made many improvements in relation to such items as the Risk Management Plan and so on.

Yes, that's probably enough for me. The main issue, I think, is to ensure that following today's decision, there is a correct and formal record of what buffer zone is being put in place and the means of legal protection.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico, the floor is yours.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

Yes, we would agree with the proposal of ICOMOS.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I see no more comments.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.25**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Mexico, which was co-authored by the Distinguished Delegations of Argentina, India, Nigeria, Zambia, Qatar, Egypt, Thailand, Bulgaria, Oman and Belgium. Furthermore, we have received support from the floor, from Committee members, Japan, Rwanda, Italy, South Africa, Greece, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia.

The proposed amendment:

Para 2: "Inscribes The National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj, Guatemala, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria '(ii) and (iii)';".

Para 3: "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:"

Moving to Para 4: "Recommends that the State Party gives consideration to the following:"

- a) is retained as is, only the term "nominated" is deleted.
- "b) further explore the creation of a non-governmental organization to strengthen the involvement of the population,
- c) established an independent accounting competency to minimize exposure to budget fragility and limited capacity for implementation;"

Other points are deleted.

And we move to the Para 5: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024 a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

There was a proposal by the Advisory Body to include a point to submit a minor boundary modification and relevant plans such as risk assessment plans. If the Committee would want, we can add the point, add a separate para for that.

The Chairperson:

I would like to pass the floor to ICOMOS to clarify this.

ICOMOS:

Thank you and apologies to you all for the need to take the floor once again.

I fear that, perhaps, I was confusing a little in my previous intervention.

What we are suggesting is that the State Party could be asked to provide the Cooperation Agreement that ensures the legal protection of the buffer zone, the map of the buffer zone and the finalized Management Plan and Risk Management Plan that were referred to in the discussion.

The reason I mentioned the possibility of a minor boundary modification is in case the map that is now in place differs from the ones we've seen previously.

So, that is really in the hands of the State Party, and need probably not be added to the draft decision. It's more a matter of these key elements that assure the protection and delimitation of the buffer zone be provided, as well as the finalized Management Plan and Risk Management Plan since the State Party has developed these since our evaluation was completed.

Thank you. I hope that's better.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Rapporteur:

The amendment is as shown on the screen, ready for adoption.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Nous souhaitons juste souligner le fait que nous avons été omis de la liste des pays ayant exprimé leur soutien.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[Interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We wish to specify, and we would ask you if you would agree to give the floor to the State Party to clarify this.

We understand that there is a documentation that was handed over to ICOMOS subsequently, and therefore, it cannot be mentioned in the final draft decision, including, if I am not mistaken, the Cooperation Agreement for the protection of this area.

We would ask the State Party to provide clarification on this.

The Chairperson:

Guatemala, like you to reply to the question addressed by the Distinguished Delegate of Mexico?

The Observer Delegation of Guatemala: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

This information was handed over as well as additional information, and we would be delighted to provide it, if necessary, to the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies, now.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Okay. So, I invite you, dear colleagues, to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

And for Paragraph 1, there are no amendments. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted.
[gavel]

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 3, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to the proposed paragraph? So, I see no objections. Paragraph 3, adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text. I see no objections.

Mr. Balsamo, you have something to clarify?

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Just to say that as it appears that the buffer zone delimitation has been modified, I think, for the record, it will be very important to have the new map reflecting this modification.

Normally, what happens in this case is that there is the request to the State Party to submit a revised map showing the modified boundaries of the buffer zone, and then the Committee can decide about a date, but it should be a very close date because it is actually something that has already happened. And so, as we are inscribing the site, it will be good to have this map as soon as possible.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Balsamo.

So, do we have any objections on the proposed text? I see none. The proposed paragraph adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 5, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this proposed paragraph? I see none. Then the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues,

I invite you to examine the draft decision as a whole, and if there are no objections, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.25** adopted as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Guatemala. Congratulations on behalf of the entire Committee.

You may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Guatemala: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

Honourable members of the Committee of World Heritage, Distinguished Delegates,

It's a privilege to address you on behalf of the President of the Republic of Guatemala, Alejandro Giammattei, as well as all of the people of Guatemala.

This is a historic day with the inscription on the World Heritage List of The National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj, recognizing Its Outstanding Universal Value. Tak'alik Ab'aj will today become the fourth property on the World Heritage List in Guatemala. This inscription will allow us to further enhance our commitment to protect it, and, as of now, this property belongs to humankind.

Tak'alik Ab'aj is a testament to the transition from the Olmec civilization to the early Mayan culture in the Preclassic period, with advances in astronomy, arts, and architecture. It leaves a legacy for the world, and this inscription will ensure the effective participation of indigenous groups, the protection of the environment, and the appropriate use of natural resources.

This achievement would not have been possible without the leadership of President Alejandro Giammattei as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Sports. They have been spearheading this initiative.

We also highlight the efforts undertaken by the lead architects of this site.

We thank UNESCO, the Advisory Bodies and the members of the World Heritage Committee, in particular the Distinguished Delegation of Mexico and the other States Parties who supported the inscription of the site, recognizing its Outstanding Universal Value.

We are convinced that all of us, including the people of Guatemala, are very proud to be recognized as a country with over 3,000 years of cultural wealth.

Lastly, in closing, I'd like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the warm hospitality and excellent organization of this session, in this beautiful city. We've been made to feel very welcome at all times.

Today, Tak'alik Ab'aj, a city which bears witness to the emergence of the Mayan culture is now part of the World Heritage List.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Congratulations again.

Dear colleagues,

It seems that we are advancing quite well, and we have now completed the examination of the planned nominations for this morning.

By this nomination, we close the cycle of 2022, and we will start examining the following nomination properties for the cycle 2023. And as announced this morning, at the Bureau meeting, I propose to advance the examination of certain nominations in close consultation with the States Parties concerned.

2023 CYCLE (Ct'd) // CYCLE 2023 (suite)

NATURAL HERITAGE // PATRIMOINE NATUREL

8B.27 Bale Mountains National Park (Ethiopia) // Parc national des monts Balé (Éthiopie)

The Chairperson:

Therefore, we will examine, before lunch break, nomination property proposed by Ethiopia.

I now invite [IUCN] to present the nomination of Bale Mountains National Park (Ethiopia).

IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair.

This is a natural site, so it's IUCN presenting, and if we could have the first slide, please.

So, thank you, Chair.

[Please move to the next slide with the map. Next slide, please]

Bale Mountains National Park was nominated for the first time in 1979, and it was deferred by the Committee at its fourth session in 1980.

The present nomination was also postponed since it was proposed for nomination in 2021.

So, this is a long story we have in front of us, and the present nomination of Bale Mountains National Park has been proposed under criteria (vii) and (x).

The nominated property covers an area of 215,000 ha, with a surrounding buffer zone of 235,000 ha, just slightly more.

[Next slide, please]

Regarding criterion (vii), the nominated property is characterized by its rugged terrain, extensive altitudinal gradients, contrasted with the flat Sanetti Plateau, and they contribute to its remarkable landscape diversity. This landscape mosaic was shaped by past glaciation, ancient lava flows, and the Great Rift Valley, offering a breathtaking visual spectacle. The property encompasses intact ecosystems, including forests, grasslands, moorlands, wetlands, and glacial lakes, which all add to its scenic beauty.

[Next slide, please]

Under criterion (x), the nominated property stands out with one of the highest incidences of terrestrial animal endemism globally, harbouring numerous species that are found nowhere else. The Sanetti Plateau, within the nominated property, houses the largest area of afro-alpine vegetation, with over 80% of species being endemic. This significance is further enhanced by the presence of a range of unique species, such as the Haremma Shrew or the Bale Mountains Tree Frog.

Notably, it hosts an estimated two-thirds of the global population of the endemic and endangered Mountain Nyala. The property also ranks highly on the irreplaceability index for all species, especially threatened ones. It overlaps with two terrestrial ecoregions, the Ethiopian montane moorlands and the Ethiopian montane forests, the latter of which is not yet represented on the World Heritage List.

[Next slide, please]

In summary, Bale Mountains National Park is clearly significant at the global level under criterion (vii) and also criterion (x).

The protected status of the nominated property aligns with the requirements of the Operational Guidelines. To support the protection of the nominated property, a buffer zone was established in 2020.

The Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority manages the nominated property, and it's guided by the General Management Plan up to 2027, in its present edition.

This plan recognizes and addresses the threats the nominated property is facing, which include overgrazing, expansion of agriculture, and subsequent habitat loss. But despite these threats, the property has so far retained a high degree of integrity, an intact assemblage of species, and intact ecosystems.

According to nomination dossier, the reconciling of local needs and conservation objectives is a major and ongoing challenge and dilemma. However, the establishment of the buffer zone in 2020 through agreements between the various stakeholders, including communities, appears to have contributed to the mutual understanding to safeguard the nominated property through community-based natural resource management schemes, including Participatory Forest Management, Rangeland Managements, and Community Hunting Areas.

There's a Livelihood Improvement Strategy, which includes measures to reduce livestock to sustainable levels and gradually expand no-grazing zones through a participatory process with relevant communities. A possible relocation scheme is under consideration. In this respect, strict adherence to a rights-based approach and to the principle of free, prior and informed consent of the affected communities are key requirements for the management of the property.

According to supplementary information and also considerable dialogue that we have been able to undertake with the State Party, the Federal Government and the National Regional Government are committed to ensuring social safeguards, and human rights are protected in line with international best practices and applicable standards, even if these go beyond the Ethiopian Law. The development of a possible Relocation Plan is including community consultation from the outset, with particular attention paid to under-represented groups.

The draft decision that is before you, notes the importance of the commitments that have been made in relation to communities and rights-based approaches following the potential inscription of this property.

[Next slide, please. I'm sorry it's there]

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, IUCN recommends the Committee to inscribe Bale Mountains National Park on the World Heritage List under criterion (vii) and criterion (x), noting the additional recommendations that are provided for its future conservation and management.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there are any comments from the floor regarding this nomination.

So, I see none and, therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to move to the adoption of the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.27**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.27**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

There are no comments.

I, therefore, declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.27** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Ethiopia on behalf of the entire Committee.

Ethiopia, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

I am humbled to take the floor once again to address this gathering on Ethiopia's inscription of yet another World Heritage.

I would like to express my gratitude to the World Heritage Centre, the IUCN Advisory Bodies, the Esteemed members of this Committee, and the dedicated partners who have been instrumental in the nomination process of this exceptional natural wonder.

A special recognition also goes to the African World Heritage Fund for their steadfast technical support.

Bale Mountains National Park stands as a precious natural gem renowned for its unparalleled biodiversity. With its expansive 2,150 km², this park shelters an extraordinary array of plant and animal species, some of which are endemic to Ethiopia. Its diverse ecosystems provide a sanctuary for various wildlife, including the iconic Ethiopian wolf, Mountain Nyala, and a rich variety of bird species. The forests of the Bale mountains are important for genetic stocks of wild force coffee. Moreover, the park serves as the source of vital rivers that sustain the livelihoods of approximately 30 million people in south east Ethiopia, northern Kenya and Somalia.

In our commitment to effectively preserve and manage these worlds of biological diversity and safeguard the Park's delicate ecosystems, we have implemented a series of conservation strategies and actions.

In addition to putting in place robust policies and strategies and ratifying international agreements on biodiversity conservation, we have launched educational programmes aimed at raising awareness of preservation. The engagement of local communities in Park management, particularly in the decision-making process, and encouraging preservation of their indigenous knowledge and traditional practices of environmental protection has been a cornerstone of our conservation efforts. The Green Legacy Initiative, initiated in 2019 to combat the impacts of climate change, has also been a resounding success, encouraging citizens to plant indigenous seedlings throughout the property.

As we celebrate the inscription of Bale Mountains National Park, often referred to as "One park, many worlds", as a World Heritage property, we are acutely aware of the profound responsibility this entails. While the preservation of this natural wonder is a collaborative effort involving several stakeholders, the Ethiopian Government remains unwavering in its commitment to ensure the sustainable protection, conservation, and management of the unique biodiversity, natural beauty, and hydrological systems of Bale Mountain National Park for the enjoyment of future generations.

I thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

Dear colleagues,

We will now break for lunch, but before that, please note that we will resume our session this afternoon with the following nominations submitted by the States Parties, starting and beginning with Tunisia, then India, then Russian Federation, and...

Tunisia, India, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Portugal, France and finally Mongolia.

Also, I would like to pass the floor for the Director of the World Heritage Centre for some general announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This is just to remind you that we will have two side events today, starting both of them at 1:30:

- The first one will take place at At-Turaif District Room, and it is organized by UNESCO. It's titled "Creating Livelihood Opportunities in Yemen through Heritage and Creativity".
- And the second one will take place at Rock Art Room. It's organized by the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage. It's a Forum of UNESCO Chairs.

So, please also note that the Budget Group will be meeting from 2:00 to 3:00 pm in the Bureau Meeting Room, as announced.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and see you after lunch. *[gavel]*

The meeting rose at 12:53 am. // La séance a été levée à 12h53.

EIGHTH DAY
Monday, 18 September 2023
FIFTEENTH PLENARY MEETING
3:17 pm – 6:22 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

HUITIÈME JOUR
Lundi 18 septembre 2023
QUINZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h17 – 18h22
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

The Chairperson:

Good afternoon, dear colleagues.

Dear colleagues,

We will resume the examination of nomination properties.

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

2023 CYCLE (Ct'd) // CYCLE 2023 (suite)

CULTURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

8B.37 Djerba: cultural landscape, testimony to a settlement pattern in an island territory (Tunisia) // Djerba : paysage culturel, témoignage d'un mode d'occupation d'un territoire insulaire (Tunisie)

The Chairperson:

And now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Djerba: cultural landscape, testimony to a settlement pattern in an island territory ([Tunisia]).

ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Merci, M. le Président.

Cette présentation porte sur l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS du bien Djerba : paysage culturel, témoignage d'un mode d'occupation d'un territoire insulaire (Tunisie). L'évaluation de l'ICOMOS se trouve dans le Document INF.8B1 à la page 319 de la version anglaise et à la page 413 de la version française.

[Diapo suivante, s'il vous plaît]

Ce bien en série est le témoignage d'un schéma de peuplement qui se développa sur l'île de Djerba autour du IX^e siècle dans un environnement semi-aride et déficitaire en eau. Sa principale caractéristique était une densité faible : elle impliquait le découpage de l'île, à l'exception des zones côtières inhabitées, en un type de quartiers que l'on appelle *houma* composé de propriétés dénommées *menzel*. Ces regroupements de quartiers étaient économiquement autonomes, reliés les uns aux autres ainsi qu'aux lieux de culte et de commerce de l'île, par un réseau de routes élaboré.

Des quartiers de type médina, habités par des communautés juives complétaient ce schéma d'organisation spatiale de l'île, mis au service d'une économie mixte basée sur la complémentarité entre les ressources agricoles, artisanales et commerciales. Le schéma distinctif de peuplement et d'occupation des sols de Djerba résulte d'une combinaison de facteurs environnementaux, socioculturels et économiques, y compris la relation symbiotique entre les populations ibadite et juive. Cela illustre la manière dont les populations locales ont adapté leur mode de vie aux conditions et aux restrictions de leur environnement naturel pauvre en eau.

L'analyse comparative justifie d'envisager l'inscription de ce bien sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. De plus, le critère (v) proposé est justifié tout comme l'approche en série pour le bien. D'autre part, les attributs subsistants et la fragmentation importante de ce qui survit du model traditionnel d'établissement rural-urbain ne justifient pas que le bien proposé pour inscription soit présenté comme un paysage culturel.

[Diapo suivante, s'il vous plaît]

Ce bien en série comprend 31 éléments constitutifs, 24 d'entre eux sont des monuments, cinq correspondent à des regroupements ruraux et deux sont des établissements urbains. Ils recouvrent les éléments structurels du schéma

d'organisation spatiale de Djerba, qui existent toujours aujourd'hui. L'ICOMOS a noté qu'une partie des attributs ne sont pas inclus au sein de la série proposée pour inscription et que les délimitations sont étroites.

[Diapo suivante, s'il vous plaît]

Seul un nombre restreint des éléments constitutifs sont protégés par le Code du patrimoine archéologique, historique et des arts traditionnels. La réglementation du Code de l'aménagement du territoire et de l'urbanisme soit ne s'applique pas aux éléments constitutifs, soit n'offre pas la protection requise, soit n'est pas encore entrée en vigueur.

Actuellement, il n'existe pas de système de gestion intégré pour la série proposée pour inscription et pour ses différents éléments constitutifs. À court terme, l'organisme, la Conservation de l'île de Djerba, sous l'égide de l'Institut national du patrimoine, supervisera la gestion du bien proposé pour inscription. Une amélioration du système de gestion du bien est prévue pour 2026 ainsi que la création pour 2031 d'une nouvelle structure de gestion dédiée.

Une documentation de référence détaillée de tous les attributs de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle proposée, relative à la conservation, aux rénovations ou reconstructions passées est essentielle pour toutes les activités à venir en ce qui concerne la gestion, les mesures de conservation et le suivi. Des mesures de conservation urgentes sont nécessaires pour préserver le bien proposé pour inscription.

[Diapo suivante, s'il vous plaît]

Voici un résumé de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS de la valeur universelle exceptionnel proposée pour le bien.

L'ICOMOS considère que le bien proposé pour inscription représente un exemple intéressant de schéma de peuplement sur une île d'un système socio-économique associé au sein de la région géoculturelle concernée. Djerba n'a jamais été entièrement urbaine ou rural, et ce schéma de peuplement reflétait une symbiose culturelle entre les communautés musulmanes et juives habitant l'île. Le défi consiste aujourd'hui à transmettre le caractère exceptionnel de ce modèle par le biais de la sélection des éléments constitutifs.

Les changements structurels et socio-économiques subis par Djerba depuis les années 1960 rendent l'approche basée sur le paysage culturel, initialement proposée par l'État partie, difficile à soutenir. Le schéma d'occupation des sols et de peuplement traditionnel n'a été préservé que sous la forme de fragments dispersés sur l'île, qui, combinés, ne peuvent pas être considérés comme illustrant un paysage culturel.

Une approche en série semble être une stratégie de proposition d'inscription plus appropriée. Toutefois, pour poursuivre cette approche, la combinaison des éléments constitutifs et leurs délimitations, et l'étendue de leurs zones tampons doivent être ajustées. À ce stade, tous les attributs de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle proposée ne sont pas inclus dans les limites du bien proposé pour inscription, et les liens culturels et fonctionnels entre les éléments constitutifs ne sont pas suffisamment bien reflétés par les limites et les zones tampons pour que le bien en série proposé pour inscription soit représentatif d'un système intégré.

De plus, on ne voit pas clairement comment chaque élément constitutif contribue de manière substantielle à la valeur universelle exceptionnelle proposée.

L'ICOMOS considère également que des instruments juridiques, administratifs, financiers et techniques doivent être mis en place pour assurer la protection, la gestion et la conservation du bien proposé pour inscription, dont de nombreux attributs sont dans un état d'abandon.

[Diapositive suivante]

En conclusion, l'ICOMOS considère qu'un travail supplémentaire est nécessaire pour s'assurer que le bien proposé pour inscription reflète pleinement la valeur universelle exceptionnelle présentée. Par conséquent, l'ICOMOS recommande que la proposition d'inscription de Djerba : paysage culturel, témoignage d'un monde d'occupation d'un territoire insulaire (Tunisie) soit renvoyée à l'État partie pour les raisons principales suivantes :

- préciser davantage la manière dont chaque élément constitutif contribue à la valeur universelle exceptionnelle proposée ;

[Diapo suivante, s'il vous plaît]

- ajuster la combinaison et/ou les délimitations des éléments constitutifs et/ou de leurs zones tampons ;
- assurer une protection juridique appropriée pour tous les éléments constitutifs du bien proposé pour inscription ;
- améliorer le système de gouvernance du bien proposé pour inscription et créer des structures de gestion appropriées qui prendront en compte les différents détenteurs de droits et parties prenantes.

L'ICOMOS a inclus davantage de recommandations dans le projet de décision afin d'aider à la conservation à long terme du bien.

[Diapo suivante, s'il vous plaît]

Merci pour votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS, for this presentation.

I would like to know if there are any comments concerning this nomination.

Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman,

At the beginning, our Delegation would like to thank ICOMOS for this presentation, which puts before us a fascinating property as well as a number of challenges that we have to address in relation to important aspects of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

We also would like to congratulate Tunisia for its initiative to submit a nomination file that presents an exceptional, highly complex and no less fragile property.

The ICOMOS evaluation confirms that we are dealing with an exceptional site, and that there are few points that should be of concern to all of us.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, we are going to highlight three points that, we feel, are essential to our analysis and to the decision that we will be called upon to take at the end of this debate:

- The first is that the dossier brings before us an exceptional site, because it appears, according to the level of knowledge that we have today, that no island territory in the Mediterranean, and probably in the world, presents such a mode of human occupation, past or present, similar to that of the island of Djerba, which is underpinned by the comparative analysis.
- My second point is that ICOMOS evaluation led to another finding, which is that there is no similar property on the World Heritage List to date.
- Third point is the relevance, confirmed by ICOMOS and with which we fully agree, of the choice of criterion (v) for the nomination of this property. As we all know, dear colleagues, this criterion is the only one among ten criteria defined in the Operational Guidelines to include in its title the issue of vulnerability of a property at the time of its inscription under the impact of major or even irreversible change.

Mr. Chairman,

It seems to us that the inclusion of this property on the World Heritage List would be a major safeguarding measure because we should not forget that the essence of this convention is to safeguarding of heritage, and that the World Heritage List is one of the key tools we have to our disposal for this purpose.

We, therefore, recommend, Mr. Chairman, that this property be inscribed on the World Heritage List at the present session, and we have prepared, in collaboration with other members of this Committee, an amendment to this effect, which we have submitted to the Secretariat. The purpose of this amendment is not only to inscribe the property but also, at the same time, to agree with the State Party on a plan by which we can support it in the setup of a sustainable process of protection and the management of the property.

The State Party has demonstrated its full awareness and engagement by undertaking, as soon as the ICOMOS evaluation was published, several measures aimed at responding to the recommendations.

As a member of the Committee, we have been briefed in detail on these measures over the past few weeks, and we have to say that what the Tunisian authorities have achieved is remarkable. We are, therefore, confident that the State Party will be able to respond to the recommendations made in the amendment to the draft decision that we have submitted.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. L'Inde.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency, for giving me the floor on the Agenda Item 45 COM 8B.[37], Djerba: cultural landscape, testimony to a settlement pattern in an island territory (Tunisia), which has got a referral recommendation by the Advisory Body, but we have amendments presented for inscription.

I thank the excellent work done by the World Heritage Secretariat and the Advisory Body.

The cultural landscape approach of the State Party may be continued, as it provides a better context and buffer to the nominated property. This will further allow the State Party to protect and manage any other heritage resources of regional and or local value within the cultural landscape.

The commitment of Tunisia is evident by the presence of its Minister for Cultural Affairs, Her Excellency Ms. Hayet Guettat Guermazi. I appreciate her hard work and efforts in meeting with various Delegations, provide explanations and information on the nomination.

The State Party of Tunisia met us and had detailed discussions on the issues concerned. Based on the discussion and the clarifications provided by the State Party, India supports Tunisia and the amendment for inscription, and would like the Chair to give the floor to the State Party of Tunisia to respond to the concerns raised by the Advisory Body and to the question: Can the State Party give details about the legal protection of the property, particularly with regard to taking into account the number and diversity of the elements that compose it?

Further, the Advisory Body said in its statement that the boundaries are tight. Could the Advisory Body explain what does it mean by "tight"?

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We would like, first of all, to acknowledge the efforts made by the State Party to prepare this nominated serial property.

Having examined the submitted document, we believe that the nominated Djerba: testimony to a settlement pattern in an island territory meet the conditions of authenticity and integrity.

The authenticity of the key attributes of the OUV of the property and its integrity, protection and management plan are satisfactory.

The Oman Delegation also noted and welcomed the positive response and readiness of the State Party to collaborate with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in order to protect and preserve the attributes that convey the proposed OUV.

The State Party has submitted supplementary information that address the recommendations made by ICOMOS in its draft decision, where clarification and answers are provided. For example, it has given detailed information that respond to the ICOMOS request to further clarify how each component part contribute to the proposed OUV, and the adjustment of the boundaries of the component parts and their buffer zones in order to ensure that all attributes that convey the proposed OUV are included in the nominated serial property. It has also provided details on the request To improve the governance system, conservation measures, completion of the inventory of the attributes, the assessment of the carrying capacity, and tourism activities.

Having acknowledged the State Party efforts in protecting the OUV of the property, Oman also encouraged the State Party to continue such efforts and to work side by side with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to mitigate any possible future negative impacts on the serial nominated property.

Therefore, Mr. Chairperson, we strongly support the amended draft decision proposed by Egypt, which states to inscribe Djerba: the testimony to a settlement pattern in an island territory in the World Heritage List, based on criterion (v).

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. [interpretation from Arabic] Saudi Arabia, you have the floor. [end of interpretation from Arabic]

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

[interpretation from Arabic] Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen. [end of interpretation from Arabic]

Mr. Chair,

Saudi Arabia would like to join Egypt in congratulating Tunisia on the presentation of this nomination file for an exceptional site that has no equivalent on the World Heritage List to date.

Saudi Arabia would also like to acknowledge the quality of the assessment carried out by ICOMOS, which confirmed the Outstanding Universal Value of the site.

It is these important aspects that is the obvious exceptional value that lead us to vote in full responsibility for the registration in today's meeting of our Committee.

Like Egypt, and certainly other members of the Committee, we have observed the remarkable efforts of the State Party to consider the comments and recommendations of ICOMOS and to work towards their immediate implementation.

We are convinced that the inscription of the site is the key needed by the State Party as an expression of the recognition and support of the international community for its efforts to protect this exceptional testimony of human adaptation to the living conditions in this urban environment.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you. *Dawlat Qatar.*

La Délégation du Qatar :

Shukran, Said Rais.

M. le Président,

En réaction au rapport d'évaluation de l'ICOMOS et afin d'assurer, dès à présent, une meilleure gouvernance du bien, une série d'actions et de mesures ont été prises au plus haut niveau de l'État partie en un temps record :

- une commission interministérielle a été constituée et a préparé la réponse aux recommandations formulées dans le rapport d'évaluation de l'ICOMOS, notamment la protection juridique, le système de gouvernance et de gestion ainsi que la conservation du bien ;
- au niveau national, l'adhésion des différents ministères concernés à l'action visant à sauvegarder le bien a été illustrée par des engagements écrits ;
- a un autre niveau régional et local, une réunion s'est tenue à Djerba pour traiter la recommandation en rapport avec la protection des biens. Cette réunion a été présidée par le Gouverneur de Médenine en présence des représentants des ministères concernés et de la société civile ;
- en date du 1^{er} septembre 2023, la ministre des Affaires culturelles a signé deux arrêtés ministériels relatifs à la création d'un comité de pilotage et d'une unité de gestion du bien. Le comité de pilotage du bien a été créé en tant qu'organe décisionnel, et une union de gestion, qui s'appuie sur les compétences des services locaux et régionaux, lui tient lieu d'organisme opérationnel exécutif.

C'est les raisons lesquelles l'État du Qatar soutient la proposition de l'Égypte.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you. Italy.

La Délégation de l'Italie :

M. le Président,

Nous considérons que l'île de Djerba représente un site exceptionnel à plusieurs égards, comme d'ailleurs l'a confirmé ICOMOS dans son rapport d'évaluation.

Notamment, les sites offrent un témoignage d'un schéma de peuplement spatial qui constitue une illustration parfaite de l'interaction ingénieuse et rationnelle entre les communautés locales et les milieux naturels.

À cet égard, le site offre également un témoignage de la capacité d'adaptation exceptionnelle aux contraintes de l'insularité et aux défis qu'elle présente, notamment en matière de défense, face aux menaces qui viennent de la mer.

M. le Président,

Permettez-moi de saluer l'engagement important de l'État tunisien en faveur de la conservation de ces biens, comme il a été expressément souligné par ICOMOS, et les efforts considérables déployés, tant sur le plan national que régional, pour répondre au mieux et très rapidement aux recommandations de ICOMOS, également, considérant l'approche à la proposition d'inscription.

C'est aussi la raison pour laquelle, aujourd'hui, nous sommes fiers d'apporter notre soutien à l'inscription de ces biens dans la Liste du patrimoine mondial cette année. Nous soutenons donc les amendements présentés.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much, Your Excellency. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Distinguished Chair.

Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee,

As we can see from the ICOMOS conclusion, the unique value of the architectural, urban planning, and archaeological heritage of the island of Djerba was unequivocally confirmed during the assessment of the nomination by Advisory Bodies.

The property has a unique cultural history which distinguishes it from the adjacent mainland. The island is an interesting model of a land use planning and is essentially an embodiment of a separate social system in this geocultural region.

In its report, ICOMOS noted the justification for the use of criteria no. (v) and a serial approach to the nomination.

The main questions that the experts had to do with were the boundaries of the property and, as we can see, these were fully acknowledged by the State Party and reflected in the proposed amendments to the draft amendment in Paragraph no. 5. In this manner, all of the necessary attributes and values will be included in the updated boundaries of the property through the minor boundary modification mechanism.

As for the issues of the comprehensive protection, management and legal protections of the property, which were also reflected in the ICOMOS report, we received quite detailed explanations from Tunisia, and we note its firm commitment to preserving the nominated property and promoting its long-term development.

The updated name of the nomination focuses not on the cultural landscape aspect but, rather, the unique territorial structure of the island, and this is in line with ICOMOS recommendations.

We would like to thank Tunisia for the work done in coordination with the Advisory Bodies, and we believe that inscribing the property in the World Heritage List will allow for the conservation of the unique and fragile territorial organization and cultural heritage of the island of Djerba for future generations.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président.

La Belgique remercie l'État partie pour sa proposition et l'ICOMOS pour son analyse.

Le site de Djerba est un site insulaire sur le continent africain et à la croisée des cultures, qui témoigne d'une organisation spatiale traditionnelle bien particulière et toujours vivace.

D'une part, nous relevons le degré d'implication des communautés locales, qui entretiennent et conservent les éléments du site, et, d'autre part, nous soulignons la dimension multiculturelle exprimée à travers les attributs du dossier.

Donc, sur cette base, la Belgique estime que cette proposition contribue aux cinq objectifs stratégiques de la Convention du patrimoine mondial.

Si nous soutenons l'amendement proposé par l'Égypte, nous voudrions cependant que l'État partie puisse s'exprimer sur sa capacité à répondre à la recommandation b) de l'Organisation consultative, à savoir d'ajuster la combinaison et les limites des éléments constitutifs ou leurs zones tampons pour que tous les attributs exprimant la valeur universelle exceptionnelle proposée soient inclus dans le bien proposé et que les principaux liens structurels, fonctionnels et visuels entre ces éléments soient reflétés dans les limites proposées.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Je voudrais féliciter l'État partie de la Tunisie pour cette proposition d'inscription.

Le site sous examen répond clairement au critère (v) de notre Convention. Il s'agit d'un exemple éminent d'établissement humain traditionnel, de l'utilisation traditionnelle du territoire, représentatif de cultures traditionnelles et d'interaction humaine avec l'environnement. Cela est certifié par l'ICOMOS dans son évaluation, que nous saluons du reste.

Pour ce qui concerne les quelques insuffisances soulevées par les évaluateurs, nous avons reçu de solides réponses et engagements de la Tunisie, afférents notamment aux questions de délimitation et aux attributs du bien, témoignant des origines locales et tournés vers l'intérieur plutôt que vers l'extérieur.

Pour ce qui concerne les mesures de conservation, il y a un engagement ferme et volontaire que, d'ici 2027, l'État partie de Tunisie préparera une étude détaillée sur les besoins de conservation et de développement du patrimoine bâti du bien proposé pour inscription afin d'élaborer un programme d'intervention. La restauration des bâtiments et espaces publics est également planifiée. Cela pourrait être reflété dans le projet de décision amendé.

Une stratégie à court et moyen terme est prévue et permettra à la partie tunisienne de créer un organisme spécifique, qui sera responsable de la gestion du bien et aidera à coordonner la coopération entre les divers acteurs.

À la lumière de l'ensemble de ces éléments, nous appuyons fortement les amendements proposés et sommes favorables à l'inscription du site de Djerba sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Rwanda.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

M. le Président,

L'île de Djerba conserve encore, en de nombreux endroits, un cadre naturel qui semble n'avoir pas connu de changements depuis beaucoup de temps. Les travaux de restauration menés sur les vestiges archéologiques et les monuments historiques n'ont pas changé ou déformé les structures architecturales ou les matériaux.

Le type d'occupation du sol à Djerba constitue un exemple éminent d'une utilisation traditionnelle d'un territoire et d'une interaction de l'homme avec son environnement.

L'île de Djerba constitue l'exemple même d'un paysage culturel tel que défini par la Convention du patrimoine mondial culturel et naturel.

Ainsi, la Délégation du Rwanda soutient l'amendement proposé par l'Égypte pour l'inscription de ce bien.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We thank ICOMOS for presenting its report and the Secretariat for preparing the draft Decision.

In this regard, we have learned that the State Party has established an Interministerial Committee, which has taken a number of immediate measures to bring the draft Decision in line with the ten recommendations made by ICOMOS. These include changing the name of the site from "Cultural landscape" to "Testimony of a way of occupying an insular space", adjusting the boundaries of the protected area, and providing emergency funding for the conservation of certain endangered structures. The State Party has thus informed us of a series of meetings at various levels aimed at adjusting the management of the heritage to be protected, in accordance with another of the recommendations of the ICOMOS report.

We would, therefore, like to support the amendment proposed by Egypt to inscribe the site on the World Heritage List in recognition of Tunisia's efforts to comply with the above recommendations, as well as its high level of commitment to the conservation of the nominated site.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation would like to commend the State Party for elaborating this nomination file on the island of Djerba and to thank the Advisory Body for its detailed reports.

Our Delegation would also like to express its support to the proposed amendments by Egypt, recommending the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List.

As demonstrated in the nomination file, Djerba is an exceptional example of a distinctive island settlement pattern, both urban and rural, that testifies the human interaction with environment and the ways that coexisting communities from different social, cultural and religious backgrounds adapted their lifestyle to the conditions and restrictions of their natural environment. Among the components of the serial nomination, exist 22 mosques of different types and rites, the widely known synagogue Al-Ghriba, and the unique Orthodox Saint Nicholas Church, all attesting the diverse spiritual, cultural and social traditions that were developed within the region.

Therefore, we support the inscription of Djerba under criterion (v), and we are confident that with appropriate management and legal tools as well as the guidance and support of the Advisory Body, most of the challenges that the property faces will be addressed and put in place in order to ensure its protection and conservation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa has considered the evaluation report, and we noted that ICOMOS has found the property to justify inscription on the basis of criteria (v). The evaluation report also confirms that the conditions of authenticity and integrity are met. ICOMOS, at this stage, seems to be concerned about the cultural-landscape approach to the nomination.

South Africa, having looked carefully at this nomination, is comfortable that all the nominated component parts have a close relationship and connections such that the nomination qualifies to be treated as a cultural landscape. We believe that as the proposal by the State Party of Tunisia to consider this landscape approach, it will make the management of the property more streamlined and efficient.

South Africa, therefore, supports the proposal by Egypt for the Committee to proceed with the inscription of this property at this 45th extended session.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

La Délégation de la Bulgarie :

Merci, M. le Président.

La Bulgarie aussi soutient la candidature de l'île de Djerba, avec les amendements proposés par l'Égypte.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Zambia would like to commend ICOMOS for, firstly, confirming that this landscape has met the criteria (iv), that is a comparative analysis, and also has fulfilled criteria (v).

In addition, the State Party of Zambia, I would like to appreciate the position taken by the State Party of Oman, that has argued very well on the issues of the authenticity and the integrity of the site.

And further, the State Party of Tunisia has been able to establish the issues of the legal protection of the site and, arising from the fact that we have present here the Minister responsible for Heritage in Tunisia, that is already testimony to the fact that Tunisia is committed to the protection of this important site.

And when you look at all this, you can see that all the criteria for establishing the Outstanding Universal Value of this particular site has been met by the State Party of Tunisia and, arising from the same, the State Party of Zambia would like to outrightly recommend the inscription of this site, in this case, I'm talking of Djerba, to the World Heritage List.

I submit. Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Nigeria would like to be added in the list of those in support of the proposed amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece, do you have anything to add?

The Delegation of Greece:

I'm sorry, Mr. President. We have forgotten our plaque.

The Chairperson:

That's okay. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines support the amendments presented by Egypt.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more interventions. So now, I would like to pass the floor to Tunisia to respond to the question addressed by...

Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also would like to co-sponsor the amendment put forward.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to pass the floor to Tunisia to respond to the questions addressed by India and Belgium.

Tunisia, you may have the floor.

La Délégation de la Tunisie (Observateur) :

[Premier orateur] Merci, M. le Président,

Je tiens d'abord à admettre l'argumentaire de l'ICOMOS relatif à la difficulté de l'adoption de l'approche culturelle.

Effectivement, nous reconnaissons que certains biens ne portent plus la valeur universelle exceptionnelle, en l'occurrence les *menzel* et les *houch*, qui ne sont, aujourd'hui, que des vestiges plutôt que des éléments opérationnels.

Cependant, d'autres éléments continuent à porter d'une manière substantielle cette valeur universelle exceptionnelle, et je citerai à cet effet les mosquées, les lieux de culte en général, aussi bien mosquées que

synagogues, qu'églises catholique et orthodoxe. Je citerai aussi les zones ruraux, les centres plutôt urbains qui continuent à fonctionner comme d'antan. Je citerai également le réseau viaire qui permettait autrefois l'acheminement entre les différents... Tous ces éléments sont encore là pour témoigner d'une manière substantielle le fonctionnement de ce mode de ^[inaudible].

Voilà, donc ICOMOS reconnaît ou admet que le critère (v) est justifié, d'où notre conviction que l'inscription de l'île constituerait une étape décisive de ce long processus enclenché depuis des décennies pour préserver ce legs reconnu comme étant universel pour les générations futures.

Merci.

[Second speaker] To respond to the question asked by India concerning the legal protection of our property, I would like to say that of 24 monuments included in the property boundaries, seven benefit already from legal protection as National Historic Monuments. The legal process is also underway to provide the remaining 19 monuments with adequate legal protection. Their files are currently being drawn up and will be submitted before the end of this year to the National Commission, which will take place and which will be chaired by our Minister, sitting at my right.

As for the seven zones, the low-density settlements and scattered, they will be subject to a decree creating protected areas, in accordance with the Heritage Code.

The Urbanism Code brings also high level of protection to the two dense urban ensemble, that means Houmt-Soukt and Hara Sghira, based on the protection of legal relevant planning documents and special zoning restrictions.

In the event of a threat of risk that may affect historic monuments, the Minister responsible for Heritage may, under the terms of the Heritage Code, issue a decree ordering the execution of works of the buildings concerned.

Scattered and low-density settlements are also under restrictions stemming from the Law on the Protection of Agricultural Land.

The coastal zones are protected by law, and the maritime public domain, and by the easement of the maritime public.

And now, in some seconds, just to respond to the questions asked by Belgium, I would briefly like to point out that all the key attributes are included within the property boundaries. And in addition, I would focus on the fact that, following the constructive discussions we have had with ICOMOS, we have revised the map to meet the Advisory Body's requirements. The new map was already handed over to the Committee members.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor now to ICOMOS to respond to the inquiry addressed by India.

ICOMOS :

Merci M. le Président.

En fait, la question, c'était ce que veut dire que les délimitations sont étroites.

L'ICOMOS a considéré que pas tous les attributs, et particulièrement certains éléments de l'environnement naturel et particulièrement les zones côtières, qui sont des éléments qui contribuent à faire comprendre ce système d'occupation des sols, ainsi que les routes n'étaient pas complètement comprises dans les délimitations de bien. Alors, ce type des attributs, c'était important, vraiment pour comprendre le système d'occupation des sols. Et ça, c'est un élément.

Et du côté zone tampon, l'ICOMOS a considéré qu'ils sont aussi des autres attributs qui ne sont pas directement liés à la VUE, mais qui, néanmoins, soutient la protection et la conservation des attributs qui forment la valeur universelle exceptionnelle. C'est-à-dire que les zones tampons contribuent d'une manière étroite à soutenir et protéger la valeur universelle exceptionnelle, et qu'il y avait une nécessité, du point de vue de l'ICOMOS, d'élargir ces zones tampons pour assurer que la logique du système d'occupation des sols soit claire et soit vraiment bien exprimée par ce qui est présenté comme site pour l'inscription.

J'espère que j'ai clarifié la position de L'ICOMOS sur la question des délimitations étroites.

The Chairperson:

Are there any more interventions?

I see none and I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.37**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Egypt, co-authored by the Distinguished Delegations of Ethiopia, Mali, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, we have received support from the floor from the Distinguished Delegations of India, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Russian Federation, Belgium, Rwanda, Argentina, Greece, South Africa, Bulgaria, Zambia, Nigeria, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Thailand.

The proposed amendment from Para 2 revised, "Inscribes Djerba: Testimony to a settlement pattern in an island territory, Tunisia, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (v);". Other points are deleted.

Revised Para 3: "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:".

Revised Para 4: "Recommends the State Party to give consideration to the following:

- a) Putting in place urgent conservation measures to preserve the property,"
- b) is deleted.
- The remaining points as b), c), d) are retained as per original text.

Revised Para 5: "Requests the State Party to submit a minor boundary modification request so that complementary attributes *in bracket* (including an uninhabited coastal zones and olive groves lands) are included within the property's boundaries;".

Revised Para 6: "Also requests the State Party to pursue its efforts to ensure relevant legal protection for all the component parts of the property and improve the latter's governance system and create relevant management structures that will take into consideration different rights-holders and stakeholders;".

Revised Para 7: "Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, I would like you to adopt the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

The first Paragraph, we don't have any amendment. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted.
[gavel]

Paragraph 2, we have amendment. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 3, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 4, we have an amendment. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 5, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this proposed paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 6, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 7, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this proposal?

So, I'll pass the floor to Alessandro for some clarifications.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

It's just that we have heard that, and we understand that the boundaries of the maps that are included in the nomination are being changed. And therefore, as it was the case for our main discussion, we will need to request the State Party to submit the map with the revised boundaries of the nominated area and the buffer zone accordingly.

So, if you want, I can also, if the Rapporteur is agreeing, we can put up a text for this.

The Rapporteur:

Sure, Mr. Chair.

If I may suggest, we can add Para 5, "Requests the State Party to submit the required maps".

Would we need to specify any map, Mr. Balsamo?

The Secretariat:

I think we can say: "the map showing the revised boundaries of the nominated area and buffer zone".

The Rapporteur:

Thank you.

So, "Requests the State Party to submit the map showing the revised boundaries of the property...".

The Secretariat:

"as inscribed".

The Rapporteur:

"property as inscribed and the buffer zone".

The Secretariat:

And we should add the date. And as we are in the case of an inscription, maybe, and I understand that this map are ready, the date could be also "1 December 2023".

The Chairperson:

Point of order, Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't know. Now, this insertion is coming from the Secretariat. Before we take it, we need to ask the Member State about this.

The Chairperson:

Yes, indeed, Your Excellency.

So, we will put it at the end of the draft decision. Just let the Secretariat type it out, and then we'll get back to you on it.

So, since we adopted draft decision Paragraph no. 5, we should move it down. Yes, exactly.

So, we adopted draft Paragraph no. 6 or 7?

6, so now, we move to Paragraph 7. So, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Then we have a new paragraph, Paragraph 8. Do we agree to this proposal by the Secretariat?

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

We need to ask the Member State whether they have changed this map and whether they have this map or not, before we put that article there, please.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Tunis, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Tunisia:

Thank you.

We have already provided the members of the Committee with the revised map.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Your Excellency, so now, shall we leave it?

The Delegation of Oman:

No.

If it is submitted, why we ask them to resubmit? This is my question. If they have submitted the map, why should we ask them to resubmit?

That's what I want to confirmation from them, whether they have submitted this to the Secretariat or not. If not, that article has to remain there. If they have submitted, we don't need it.

That's my point of view.

The Chairperson:

Based on the clarification from the State Member, they submit it to the Committee members, not to the Secretariat.

Correct, Mr. Balsamo?

The Secretariat:

Correct, we didn't receive the map.

The Chairperson:

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, thank you, Chair.

I think it's indeed common practice that it is then also transmitted to the Secretariat. So, we are in favour just to leave this Paragraph 8 as it stands right now.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Oman, is it okay now? Good.

So, do we all agree with this new proposed paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

So let me, dear colleagues, invite you to adopt the whole draft decision.

And if there are no objections, I declare that Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.37** adopted as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to *Tunis*.

You may have the floor now for a brief two-minute.

The Observer Delegation of Tunisia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

Distinguished Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Committee, Distinguished participants,

I am honoured and proud, on behalf of the Tunisian people, to thank Saudi Arabia, our brothers and sisters, for hosting this 45th extended session of the World Heritage Committee. We would also like to thank you for your hospitality and for your Chairmanship.

We would also like to thank the Committee, ICOMOS, the Advisory Body IUCN, for displaying so much interest in our dossier and for reviewing it.

We would also like to thank Egypt and all of the countries which supported our nomination, the World Heritage Fund and other bodies for the financial support in preparing our nomination dossier.

The island of Djerba testifies to universal World Heritage. This is a historic moment for us. Our property is helping to send a strong signal of brotherhood and universality. We believe that diversity is a source of wealth, and we believe in the human genius which allows us to overcome the challenges, for example, the difficult climate conditions

on this island did not prevent a diverse population from settling it, to create settlements, to populate it, to create an environment that should be a model to be followed.

We believe that we bear responsibility for preserving this community. We need to preserve this heritage for future generations.

My presence here, as the Minister for Culture and Heritage in Tunisia, is a reflection of our firm commitment to preserving our heritage.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

No words can describe my joy at our property being inscribed, and I would like to share it with each and every one of you. On behalf of my Delegation, in my own personal name and on behalf of Tunisia, the men and women of Tunisia, I would like to thank you and congratulate the island of Djerba, Tunisia, and all of humanity on this inscription.

Thank you, ICOMOS, for recognizing the Outstanding Universal Value of our island of Djerba, which is facing challenges of the Mediterranean.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Excellency, and congratulations once again.

8B.38 Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas (India) // Ensembles sacrés des Hoysala (Inde)

The Chairperson:

So now, I'd like to invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas (India). But before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received the factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the nomination of the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas, and this is to be found on page 108 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B4.

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas (India). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 342 of the English version and page 357 of the French version.

As noted, on this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide, please]

The Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas is a serial nomination of the three most representative Hoysala style temple complexes in southern India dating from the 12th to 13th centuries. The Hoysalas ruled of large parts of the present-day State of Karnataka from the 11th to the 14th centuries.

The Hoysala style is a distinctive combination of features selected from contemporary neighbouring kingdoms and earlier examples. It contributes significantly to the diversity of the temple styles of India and has exerted a lasting influence on temples of later periods. The excellence of the sculptural art of the temple complexes, as well their architecture, siting, planning, and use are the focus of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

The comparative analysis justifies the consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

The nominated property was nominated according to criteria (i) and (ii).

ICOMOS considers that the property demonstrates these criteria on the basis of the artistic achievements and influence of the Hoysala style.

Although it was not initially proposed by the State Party, ICOMOS considers that the property also demonstrates criterion (iv) because of its ability to demonstrate an important aspect of the development of Hindu temple architecture and its contribution to the diversity of religious architecture in India.

[Next slide, please]

The three components are shown on this slide.

ICOMOS considers that the serial approach and the selection of the serial components are justified. More than 1,500 temples were constructed by the Hoysalas, of which about 140 survive today. The selected temples represent the development of the Hoysala style over time and are the most important and representative sites.

The nominated property satisfies the condition of authenticity.

In relation to the requirements of integrity, ICOMOS notes that some past alterations and demolitions have impacted on the integrity of some aspects, although they are well-managed today. More specifically, ICOMOS considers that some elements currently excluded should be included within the boundaries, namely the Vishnusamudra Tank and the Tank Road associated with the Channakeshava Temple complex.

[Next slide, please]

The current legal framework and management system provide adequate protection, conservation, and management of the nominated property. Heritage Impact Assessment and risk management mechanisms are embedded in the management system.

The temple complexes are in good condition, and the factors affecting them are under control. ICOMOS has provided some recommendations to improve the condition of historic remains and important views in the buffer zone of the Channakeshava Temple.

ICOMOS considers that the management system is adequate, but has noted issues concerning carrying capacity and visitor management, particularly in light of expectations of increased visitor levels following the possible inscription of the serial property on the World Heritage List. In particular, Channakeshava Temple is a primary tourism attraction and religious centre in the state, and there is an important annual festival organized by local communities which involves large number of participants. The State Party has indicated, in additional information provided during the evaluation process, that the issue of carrying capacity will be taken up in consultation with the Apex Committee.

[Next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

As already noted, the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for inscription in the World Heritage List, and ICOMOS considers that it demonstrates criteria (i), (ii), and (iv). The requirements of authenticity have been met.

ICOMOS considers that the requirements of integrity can also be met once the boundary to the Channakeshava Temple component part is revised to include several additional important attributes.

The legal protection and management system are adequate for the protection of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and the component parts are in a good state of conservation.

[Next slide, please]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas (India) be referred back to the State Party for the following main reasons:

- To expand the boundary of the Channakeshava Temple component part to include the Vishnusamudra Tank and the Tank Road.
- To improve the condition of historical remains and significant views in the buffer zone of the Channakeshava Temple component part.

[Next slide, please]

- To develop and implement a holistic interpretation and presentation plan and improve the management of tourism.
- To establish the carrying capacity of the nominated component parts as a basis for the long-term management of tourism and visitation.

ICOMOS has included several further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide, please]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much ICOMOS.

I would like to see there any comments concerning this property.

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Shukran, Said Rais.

At the outset, we would like to compliment the State Party of India for presenting an excellent dossier on the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas, in southern Indian State of Karnataka, Sorry.

We also appreciate the excellent work conducted by the Evaluation Body.

We have examined the nomination dossier and additional information provided by the State Party as well as the ICOMOS evaluation report.

We have no hesitation in accepting that this property, which comprises a group of three temples, is an exceptional testimony to a very unique architectural and artistic attributes.

Star shaped plans of the temples, minutely carved columns and ceilings, and sculptures that adorn its exterior and interior walls make us realize that its OUV lies in the fine craftsmanship that is unsuppressed. It is the human hands that have achieved such a level of certification, and there are few such examples in the subcontinent.

We have also noted ICOMOS evaluation report, and they, too, have accepted the OUV of the property under criteria (i) and (ii), and we agree with ICOMOS suggestion to also propose the property under criterion (iv) as well. ICOMOS has reported satisfaction over the comparative analysis, its state of conservation and management framework. However, ICOMOS has raised a concern over authenticity and integrity of one of the component properties, Channakeshava Temple.

Nevertheless, the additional information provided by the State Party has already responded to those points clearly. Speaking of the property boundary, for example, we do think that the addition of the Vishnusamudra tank and Kere Beedhi tank road within the property of Channakeshava Temple is not required as it is not contemporary to the temple and does not possess the necessary attributes of the property.

We also note with satisfaction the efforts of the Archaeological Survey of India-ASI, the custodian of the property, and the local administration in effectively managing large-scale crowds during festive seasons. This is one of the reasons why carrying capacity is nothing to concern in this property.

However, ICOMOS recommendations are concerning enhanced interpretation and the protection of historic remains in the buffer zones in decision making regarding conservation and management, especially buffer zone, is a valid concern. We urge the State Party to work on those issues after the inscription.

On the basis of these observations, we have submitted amendments to the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.[38]**, Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas. And let me report to you that 17 State Members clearly have already co-sponsored our amendments, which is more than three fourths majority, and broad-based consensus has emerged for this file.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[Interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

We would like to thank India for preparing this very interesting nomination of the Sacred Ensembles of Hoysalas. The State Party has conducted very thorough and impressive work on preparing the nomination documents, which has been noted by the members of the Committee as well as by ICOMOS experts.

Despite the fact that the elements related to the Channakeshava Temple compound, the Vishnusamudra tank and Kere Beedhi tank road do have historical and cultural value in the context of the compound and also have a functional value, we believe that the justification used by the State Party about not including them within the boundaries of the nominated component part are well-founded. We believe that, given the fact that the connection between the temples and the water elements is not a distinctive feature of the architecture, it is not found in every nominated component and is not a parameter defining the attributes of the OUV.

Moreover, as stated in ICOMOS documentation, the State Party has already included this water tank and the tank road within the boundaries of the buffer zone of the component part, which will ensure the preservation of its historical and cultural surroundings. In this manner, the integrity of the property has been confirmed and is indisputable.

As proposed by ICOMOS, as a complement to the two criteria proposed by India, criterion no. (iv) is important, in our opinion, for further documentary reinforcement of the OUV for the property. We welcome including criterion (iv) in the draft decision.

As a co-author of the proposed amendments to the draft decision, we would like to, once again, express our gratitude to India for its thorough, expert work on this nomination, and we support the inclusion of the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i), (ii) and (iv).

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thailand would like to express our appreciation for the work done by the Advisory Body.

We would also like to commend the State Party of India for their commitment and willingness in the protection of the nominated property.

We welcomed ICOMOS consideration that the nominated property meets the criteria (i) and (ii), as proposed by the State Party, with additional criterion (iv) that has been included by ICOMOS, citing that the nominated property is an exceptional testimony to the Hoysalas style temples which illustrate a significant stage in the historical development of Hindu temple architecture.

Furthermore, ICOMOS has also considered that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series have been met, while recognizing that there are still some works remaining to be done, as recommended by ICOMOS, to further strengthen the state of conservation and management of the property.

My Delegation is pleased to learn that the State Party of India has already addressed some of these issues and provided justification through the additional information submitted earlier this year. We also acknowledge that works for the remaining issues have already been taken up by relevant authorities and are in good progress.

Therefore, my Delegation would like to express our support for the draft amendment proposed by Japan to inscribe the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas to the List of World Heritage sites.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali, you may have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Les Ensembles sacrés des Hoysala constituent un site en série qui répondent aux critères (i), (ii) et (iv).

Ils sont non seulement les témoins exceptionnels de la conjugaison d'une expertise technique inégalée dans la sculpture de la pierre et la créativité des artistes pour traduire les croyances et les récits religieux, mais aussi le résultat fructueux d'un échange d'influences motivé par la volonté d'établir une identité distincte de celle des royaumes voisins.

Nous prenons note des remarques de l'ICOMOS concernant cette proposition d'inscription et accueillons favorablement, avec satisfaction, les réponses apportées par l'État de l'Inde, dont les autorités compétentes ont préparé un plan d'action pour entreprendre la conservation des vestiges historiques dans la zone tampon.

Un plan d'action sera soumis aux différentes instances indiennes, pour approbation au cours du prochain exercice financier, sur lequel l'État partie pourrait donner des précisions, le cas échéant.

En outre, bien qu'il n'existe, jusqu'à présent, aucun impact perceptible de la pollution sur les sculptures, l'État partie de l'Inde donne l'assurance à cet égard que des mesures nécessaires seront prises en intégrant les impacts de la pollution atmosphérique croissante dans les indicateurs de suivi.

Enfin, nous notons avec satisfaction le fait que les communautés sont déjà impliquées dans la conservation et la gestion du bien proposé, dont l'état de conservation est jugé bon par l'ICOMOS.

Au regard de l'ensemble de ces éléments, nous saluons les efforts de l'Inde et l'encourageons à poursuivre les mesures de préservation du site.

Nous appuyons les amendements proposés au Projet de décision **45 COM 8B.[38]** afin d'inscrire les Ensembles sacrés des Hoysala sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

To us, this is an example of a case where there is a very thin line between a referral and an inscription.

The excellent report by the Advisory Body confirms that the OUV has been demonstrated. Authenticity and integrity meet the standards. Conservation measures that are put in place are effective, and the legal framework in terms of protection is adequate. And we particularly appreciate also that the HIA and Risk Management mechanisms are also there.

The only major point that is raised by the Advisory Body relates to the integrity of the Channakeshava Temple Ensemble, where ICOMOS suggests that its boundaries be extended to include Vishnusamudra tank and the Kere Beedhi.

We sympathize with this suggestion and hope that the State Party of India may look into this in the future, but we also feel that it is not essential for the inscription of the serial property.

So, Chair, in our opinion, all the elements are there to inscribe the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas at this session. Belgium, therefore, associates itself with the amendments submitted by Japan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Mr. Chairperson,

Oman commands the State Party of India for the framework adopted for the protection and management of the site of Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas.

Having heard the opinions of other Distinguished Committee members, and the presentation of ICOMOS, and the concerns expressed, we believe that the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List will provide all stakeholders involved with the motivation to continue their efforts and safeguarding of the property.

We also acknowledge the Outstanding Universal Value of the site being the best representative of the 12th to 13th century Hoysala masterpieces of sacred architecture and examples of the new forms of temple architecture developed by Hoysalas.

Therefore, we support the amendment proposed by Japan to inscribe the site based on criteria (i), (ii) and (iv).

Thanks.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation, having thoroughly examined this nomination file, the detailed report of the Advisory Body, as well as additional information provided, considers that the demonstrated attributes and values of the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas have contributed significantly to the diversity of the temple styles of India and have exerted a lasting influence on temples of later periods, both in the region and beyond, thus underpinning the OUV of this property.

Therefore, we support the amendment proposed by Japan recommending the inscription of the serial nominated property under criteria (i), (ii) and (iv).

Regarding specific issues reported by the Advisory Body, we are confident that they will be effectively addressed by the State Party according to the recommendations of the amendment DR and that the relevant report on their implementation will be accordingly submitted.

Finally, we are confident that this property's inscription on the World Heritage List will contribute significantly to the safeguarding and protection of the property, which stands out as an exceptional testimony of the outstanding creativity and inventive genius of the Hoysala people.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to thank the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body for the detailed presentation that showed us the magnificence of this proposal, whose OUV have been fully recognized by the Advisory Body to such an extent that a new criterion, the criterion (iv), has been proposed during the evaluation and eventually added. This is one of the very rare cases when a new criterion is added by the Advisory Body, and it is related to the evidence that the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas represent, as it has been fully recognized, an exceptional physical testimony to the diversity of religious architecture in India.

Considering also the recommendations already contained in the draft proposal, Italy strongly supports the amendment.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for giving me this opportunity to congratulate India on this submission and also to make this intervention on behalf of my Delegation.

Nigeria acknowledges the Sacred Ensembles of Hoysalas as another of our common artistic and spiritual heritage of Outstanding Universal Value which merits continued protection and conservation.

We thank ICOMOS for the excellent work, as usual, that inspired a referral recommendation to allow India to make corrective measures, that include expanding the property area and improving the condition of the historical remains and significant views in the buffer zone of the Channakeshava Temple, in component part, among others; the main objectives being to improve on the site and establishing certain facts to address the factual errors identified before the property is inscribed.

Mr. Chair,

I concur with other Distinguished colleagues. We have witnessed in this session an increased level of proactivity from Member States in addressing gaps that are responsible for delay in approving their nomination property. This submission is no exception.

After discussion with the State Party of India, we are confident that it has responded with a clear picture of what it has done and is doing to address the concerns of the Evaluation Body. India, indeed, shared with us what is already accomplished and projected action plan to address a few others.

As presented in the amendments of the DR by Japan, the prayer is for the Sacred Ensembles of Hoysalas to be inscribed at this session as I co-sponsor.

Nigeria is assured of India's antecedent of good practice and commitment to maintaining the integrity of the property.

We, therefore, urge the Committee to look at the facts before it, which justify an immediate inscription of the property and grant approval to the decision as amended.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you for giving me the floor, Mr. Chairperson.

We note the exceptional attributes of this 12th/13th century nomination comprising of three temples complex, bearing exquisite carvings and architectural details, and very minutely carved iconography on its exterior and interior walls and ceilings, with fine and delicate details.

In the context of the Convention, this nomination is an exceptional nomination submitted by the State Party, India. The temple is indeed a display of an extraordinary and exquisite craftsmanship that surpasses human imagination.

Ethiopia has reviewed the dossier and has also been provided with additional information by the State Party, India. It has also carefully examined the ICOMOS's recommendation.

We are convinced of the OUV of the nominated property, and the state of conservation and management of the property is also excellent.

Therefore, as a co-author, my Delegation requests the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas be inscribed on the World Heritage List at this session.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Chairperson,

As the State Party of Zambia, we are in support of the submission made by Japan for the proposed amendment to the draft decision for the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas.

We have studied the dossier and additional documents provided by the State Party of India and would like to commend them on the excellent preparation.

We also wish to recognize and commend ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre on the support and valuable guidance rendered to the State Party of India.

In concurrence with ICOMOS, we agree that the OUV of the property is well established.

Chairperson,

Even though we agree with the State Party of India that the Vishnusamudra tank is not contemporary to the temples and, therefore, does not tie with chronological aspects of the OUV, we take note of the recommendation made by ICOMOS to include the tank in the nominated property area of its temple component of the Channakeshava Temple.

We, therefore, seek clarification from the State Party of India and request that they be permitted to state their position on the recommendation.

Finally, Chairperson, as earlier stated, Zambia is in support of the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas being inscribed on the World Heritage List as per proposed draft amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa would like to thank the State Party of India for providing us with the opportunity to discover such exciting heritage through this nomination dossier.

After assessing the documents provided by ICOMOS, the World Heritage Centre, and the State Party, South Africa would like to support the proposed amendment and, therefore, suggest an inscription rather than a referral for this nomination.

India has engaged with the issues raised by the Advisory Body after the evaluation mission. Thereafter, India has put a remarkable effort in ensuring that all requests were addressed and responded to.

Specifically, South Africa was concerned that the proposed property boundaries may not include all attributes which are significant and contributing to the Outstanding Universal Value of the site. South Africa, however, trusts the State Party's explanation that expanding the property area around the Channakeshava Temple to include the two components mentioned by the Advisory Body will not be suitable since these elements do not reflect any of the principal attributes associated with the OUV of the proposed property. The State Party does, however, acknowledge their significance and their connection to the Channakeshava Temple complex and, therefore, declared, at least, the Vishnusamudra water tank state-protected monuments.

Additionally, clarity on the overall rationale for the delineation of the buffer zone boundaries was sought by ICOMOS. We trust that the State Party satisfactorily explained the principles followed to decide on the buffer zone boundary definition.

Other issues raised by the ICOMOS evaluation mission are indeed relevant, and South Africa believes that this should not delay and jeopardize the inscription of the World Heritage Listing at this stage. In this case, we are referring to the establishment of carrying capacity for each site, the need for increased monitoring of air pollution on the sculptures, the development of mitigation measures to ensure significant views are not affected, and the

necessary improvement of community involvement in the conservation and management of the nominated property. All these matters are very pertinent and relevant, and we would like to urge the State Party of India to commit to addressing them as soon as possible after inscription.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar*.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, my thanks to the State Party for this very well-prepared nomination file and our thanks also to ICOMOS for the quality of their evaluation report.

We have understood the importance of the attributes and how they convey the OUV. This came through very clearly in the evaluation report, and we feel that the two main criteria, which is no. (i) and (ii), are very, very clearly demonstrated. And ICOMOS then went and added criterion (iv).

After having listened to ICOMOS's recommendations, we hope that the State Party will duly cooperate with the recommendations, and we can fully support the Japanese proposed amendment because we really do believe in the OUV of this site.

Thank you very much, Sir.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

We'd like to thank the Centre and ICOMOS for their continuous support and assistance in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

The Bulgarian State Party would like to support the nomination of the site for the inscription on the World Heritage List as well as the proposed boundaries, including three temples belonging to the Hoysala area from 12th to the 13th century.

We share the view that the addition of the Vishnusamudra tank and associated tank road to the nominated property will completely change its concept. It has been clearly demonstrated that this tank and the related festival came into existence 200 years after the Hoysala rule. They do not carry any attributes for the nomination and, therefore, does not affect the integrity of the Channakeshava Temple.

We commended the decision of the nominating State Party to include it in the buffer zone.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has reviewed the dossier and related documents in respect of the Sacred Ensembles of Hoysalas, and we support the amendment to inscribe the site on the World Heritage List, on the criteria (i), (ii) and (iv).

The integrity and authenticity of the site having also been established.

We look forward to receiving the report on the implementation of the recommendations at the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

We'd like to thank ICOMOS for its detailed analysis and report of this property, and the Secretariat for the proposed draft decision.

We feel that this archaeological site really does bring together an outstanding series of temples dating back to the 12th and 13th century. Over and above the physical attributes, it's also an important part of the religious life of India.

As has already been mentioned, India has already started implementing some of the recommendations issued by ICOMOS such as working on towards the better safeguarding and assessment of the different aspects: tourism management and control, better administrative management as well.

In light of the above said, we can fully support Japan's proposed amendment. We'd like to see our name listed as a co-author for inscription under criteria (i), (ii) and (iv).

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I shall be brief because everything I wanted to say has already been said about this incredible property.

We wanted to thank the State Party, thank ICOMOS, and we appreciate the work being done on an action plan and the buffer zone on the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas.

We also understand that India has made a commitment to ensure the best practices of management considering this property if it is inscribed.

Since its history goes right back to the 12th and 13th century, we feel that this is going to further enrich the World Heritage List, and we are looking forward to seeing its name listed there.

For this reason, we can fully support Japan's proposed amendment for inscription.

And my dear colleagues and dear Ambassador of India, I would be remiss if I didn't mention Octavio Paz when he was talking about India and the existence of a civilization that is different from ours, teaching us not only how to appreciate it but also to love it.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Saudi Arabia, you have the floor. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Good afternoon.

We would like to thank the State Party, India, for all the efforts carried out in order to protect this site, and we would like to thank the Bodies and the ICOMOS for the assessment made so far.

We would like to endorse the amendments submitted by Japan.

Thank you, Sir.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

Greece, do you have anything to add? Argentina, do you have anything to add?

So, you see, we have no more questions or interventions.

I would like to pass the floor to the Distinguished Delegate of India to respond to the questions addressed by Zambia.

India, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

In regard to the question as to non-inclusion of the Vishnusamudra tank, please understand that the Vishnusamudra tank and the tank street, Kere Beedhi, and the raft festival associated with it, the ritual began only in the 16th century, more than 400 years after the establishment of the Channakeshava Temple. It was introduced by a different dynasty, the Vijayanagara dynasty, which ruled in these parts after the Hoysalas had disappeared from history. An inscription dating back to the year 1524, which is nearly 500 years old, exists and is located at the Utpatti village, close to the tank. It records the beginning of the raft festival in this tank and the construction of a pillared hall, a *mantapa*, for this purpose. The tank itself is devoid of any of the attributes of the nomination, such as architectural eclecticism, profusion, ornament, and embellishment to enhance sacredness or artistic agency. However, since it is now culturally significant to the temple, the tank and the street were included in the buffer zone of the nominated property, Excellency.

As regards to the buffer zone, an action plan is prepared by the respective authorities to take up the conservation of the historical remains in the buffer zone. The action plan will be submitted to the district level Heritage Committees and the Apex Committee for approval in the next financial year.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any more interventions? I see none.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.38**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Japan, which is co-authored by the Distinguished Delegations of Belgium, Greece, Bulgaria, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Oman, Egypt, Argentina, Mali, South Africa, India, Qatar and Thailand, and we have received confirmation from remaining Committee members from the floor, including Delegations of Italy, Zambia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Mexico and Saudi Arabia.

The proposed amendment is as shown on the screen.

Revised Para 2: "Inscribes Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas, India, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i), (ii) and (v);".

Para 3, "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:".

Para 4, "Recommends the State Party to give consideration to the following:"

- a) and b) under this para remain as per the original draft decision.
- "c) Improving the conditions of the historical remains and significant views in the buffer zone of the Channakeshava Temple, component part,
- d) Developing and implementing a holistic interpretation plan and tourist amenities;".

Para 5: "Recommends the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for review by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments?

I see none and I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to examine the draft decision in paragraph by paragraph.

So, Paragraph 1, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted.
[gavel]

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended.
[gavel]

Paragraph 4, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this proposal? I see no objections. So, adopted as amended. [gavel]

Paragraph 5, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel]

Dear colleagues, I would like you to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

And if there are no objections, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.38** adopted as amended. [gavel] [applause]

Let me congratulate India on behalf of the entire Committee on this inscription.

India, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

Namaste and Salam.

India rejoices at the inclusion of the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas on the World Heritage List.

On behalf of my country, I offer my thanks to the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS for recognizing the Outstanding Universal Value of this nomination under Agenda 45 COM 8B.[38].

If ever poetry was carved in stone, it is in these monuments of India.

It was Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi's push to promote Indian cultural sites globally that saw this inscription from Karnataka State reach the global arena. Its inscription on the World Heritage List is a great gift to the people of India.

On the eve of Ganesh Chaturthi, I thank the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, the Archaeological Survey of India-ASI, and the State Archaeology Department for their efforts and cooperation.

The Hoysala era is one that contributed enormously to the development of several creative fields as well as spiritual and humanistic thought. These 12th century monuments are a serial nomination of three monuments from the Hoysala period located at Belur, Halebidu and Somanathapura in Karnataka State.

At the Channakeshava Temple at Belur, there is a continuity of worship, rituals, and all festivals since its inception in the year 1117 CE or 906 years ago. This is India. Channakeshava in the Kannada language means "good or benevolent Krishna". These monuments are extraordinary expressions of spiritual purpose and vehicles of spiritual practice and attainment. Set in the foothills of the hilly and forested terrain of the Western Ghats of India, on sites of enduring sanctity, the stone sculptures and carvings are full of cultural iconography and depiction of the stories from the ancient scriptures of India, like the Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Srimad Bhagavatam.

I conclude, Mr. Chair, by saying a line in the Kannada language congratulating the people of India: "*Nanu abbinandu sutene bharata jana jalige*".

Thank you, *bharat mata ki jai*. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

8B.39 The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks (Indonesia) // L'axe cosmologique de Yogyakarta et ses monuments historiques emblématiques (Indonésie)

The Chairperson:

So now, let me invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks (Indonesia), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification for this evaluation, which is on page 110 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B4, and in this notification, some factual errors are actually impacting on the text of the Statement of OUV, which have been already incorporated in the version that is kept by the Secretariat.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. We'd like to give the floor to ICOMOS.

ICOMOS: *[video]*

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks (Indonesia). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 352 of the English version and page 367 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide]

This nomination was submitted as a serial nomination of two component parts, namely the urban axis of Yogyakarta and a section of the Royal Tombs at Imogiri. Based on the dialogue with ICOMOS, the State Party advised that the Royal Tombs component part had been withdrawn from the nomination, and some changes were made to the justification of criteria. A revised nomination dossier, maps and management plan were provided to implement this decision. The ICOMOS evaluation took into consideration the revised scope of the nomination presented by the State Party.

The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks includes the Kraton (or Palace) Complex and a series of linked landmarks, monuments and spaces located along a 6 km-long south-north axis in central Yogyakarta. The axis is aligned between Mount Merapi and the Indian Ocean. This layout is a symbolic manifestation of Javanese cosmological beliefs, connections between cosmic worlds, and philosophical reflections on the cycle of life.

The landmarks are connected spatially, in their design, through rituals, and by the traditional management system known as Tata Rakiting Wewangunan.

The central axis of Yogyakarta is a centre of government and Javanese cultural traditions since its establishment in 1755.

The nominated property exhibits an important interchange of human values and ideas between different belief systems related to Javanese animism and ancestor worship, Hinduism and Buddhism from India, Sufi Islam from either India or the Middle East, and Western influences, which were adapted and integrated into the beliefs and culture of the Mataram Kingdoms over hundreds of years. The interchange of values manifests in the property's spatial planning, architecture, monuments, ceremonies, and festivals.

The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks bears an exceptional testimony to Javanese civilization and living cultural traditions after the 16th century.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

The nominated property demonstrates criteria (ii) and (iii), but criterion (vi) has not been justified.

[Next slide]

The central axis of Yogyakarta includes 144 tangible attributes grouped within five complexes located in Yogyakarta City and the Bantul Regency.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met, although they are vulnerable, particularly to urban development pressures and are dependent on careful consideration of materials in the repair and restoration of the proposed attributes, management of development pressures, and on the continuing intangible cultural traditions.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property boundary and buffer zone are adequate to protect the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, although they could be further extended in the future through minor boundary modification requests to enhance the protection of the nominated property from urban development and other pressures.

[Next slide]

ICOMOS observes that the legal protection and management system are adequate for the nominated property. Through a moratorium on new hotel development and new policy development, the State Party is actively addressing the pressures of urban development, although continued efforts are needed.

[Next slide]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historic Landmarks (Indonesia), be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iii) and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS.

Are there any comments concerning this nomination? So, I see none.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.39**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.39**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And if there are no comments, I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.39** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Indonesia on behalf of the entire Committee.

Indonesia. You may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Indonesia:

[first speaker] Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Salam.

On behalf of the Government of Indonesia, I have the honour to extend our gratitude to the World Heritage Committee for accepting the nomination of The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta and its Historical Landmarks for inscription on the World Heritage List.

We are honoured to contribute another extraordinary gem to the World Heritage List, recognizing the property's rich blend of tangible and intangible attributes.

The property boasts a wealth of living cultural elements, including kris, batik, wayang, and gamelan, all esteemed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. We are delighted that they continue to thrive and pass down to future generations. We sincerely value your unwavering support for this inscription.

May I now invite the Governor of Yogyakarta Province, who, in this occasion, will be represented by the Vice Governor, to address the Committee.

[second speaker] The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta is a profound testament to Javanese civilization and its living cultural tradition, a legacy that has thrived since 18th century. It embodies intricate Javanese philosophical concepts about human existence.

For more than five centuries, the Sultanate of Yogyakarta Hadiningrat has been the epicentre of Javanese civilization, thriving through a diverse tapestry of cultural traditions and practice in governance, customary law, art, literature, festival, and ceremony rituals. We are committed to preserving the property as we have already carried out for centuries.

We also assure that we will maintain the Outstanding Universal Value of the property for future generations.

We deeply appreciate your support and cordially invite to all Delegates to visit the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta.

Thank you, *Matur Nuwun*. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

Indonesia, the mic.

8B.45 Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University (Russian Federation) // Observatoires astronomiques de l'université fédérale de Kazan (Fédération de Russie)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University (Russian Federation), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification for the evaluation of the nomination of the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University, and this is to be found on page 138 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to the ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan University (Russian Federation). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 420 of the English version and page 467 of the French version. On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[The next slide, please]

The Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University has been nominated as a serial property to be included on the World Heritage List, illustrating the development and evolution of optical astronomy and evidence of the gradual transition from positional astronomy to astrophysics. The Kazan City Astronomical Observatory, a classical building constructed in 1837 to enable observations of the sky, is characterized by a semi-circular façade and three towers with domes built to house astronomical instruments. The suburban Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory, where observation activities were transferred from the city, was completed in 1901. It is composed of several structures dedicated to sky observations as well as residential buildings. The observatories, nowadays, perform mainly educational functions. Both observatories represent heritage associated with astronomy and observations of the sky, during a period of emergence and development of optical telescopes from the 19th to the early 20th century.

ICOMOS noted that the importance of the nominated property in the 19th and early 20th century lies in the development of astronomical science in Russia, and then in the Soviet era, in its position as a leading research centre in Russia, particularly in the conquest of space.

However, ICOMOS found that the nomination poses some key problems regarding its scope and selection of components. The importance of historical movable instruments used for sky observation, purposely created for Kazan or transferred from other observatories, is undeniable but cannot be considered to support the justification for inscription because collection of movable objects are out of the scope of the World Heritage Convention and cannot be considered as attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

The nomination dossier focuses on the history and scientific achievements of individual scholars who worked at the Kazan Federal University and underlined the significance of their role in developing science. However, according to the Operational Guidelines, this cannot be considered as a justifying factor for inscription on the World Heritage List, unless cultural or scientific interchange between the scholars produced an outstanding creative response that has a tangible representation on site, or the achievements are proved to have outstanding universal significance and are directly or tangibly associated with the nominated property.

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The Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University is a serial property of two component parts: one located in the historical centre of Kazan; and one in a forested suburban area 24 km west of the city. Boundaries of component part no. 1 encompasses the observatory and laboratory buildings and covers only a small area directly adjacent to them. The boundaries of the second component follows the historical boundaries of the site and covers the cadastral land provided in perpetuity to the Kazan Federal University. The proposed buffer zone of the Engelhardt Observatory covers vast areas, mostly forested, around the nominated property.

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The legal protection is rigorous but still requires some amendments to reach a level of protection that would fully reflect the significance of the nominated property and its attributes.

The management of the nominated property is satisfactory, and the management authorities have enough human and financial capacities to manage the nominated property. The management plan provides clear strategic objectives and should be implemented as soon as possible. The objectives regarding conservation and community involvement represent a priority.

The nominated property lacks conservation research and documentation, which are crucial to prepare a well-informed conservation policy and programmes. A comprehensive conservation plan should be developed and implemented as soon as possible to avoid further degradation of the complex.

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Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

Despite additional information received, the comparative analysis does not convincingly distinguish the Kazan Observatories from other ones of the same period and type that also participated in the development of optical astronomy and in the gradual transition from positional astronomy to astrophysics. Although the two observatories belong to the same academic institution, they were developed in different historic contexts. Hence, their functional and historical interrelationships is not clear.

The rationale for the selection of the component parts does not emerge from cultural, scientific, or functional links that provide the required connectivity, as per Paragraph 137 of the Operational Guidelines. None of the criteria have been demonstrated at this stage. Outcomes of the interchange of values on development of architecture technology in response to scientific research needs, and the representativeness of the type and direct association of the observatories with significant events or ideas could have a physical or functional representation through clear attributes.

The boundaries of the Kazan City Observatories lack legal status and need to be formalized. The buffer zone of the Kazan City Observatories was tight and has been expanded throughout the evaluation process, and now needs to be formalized.

The protection zone of the suburban observatories should include restrictions for the height of the new developments, but regulations are not fully enforced. The proposed buffer zone should be extended to control potential developments in villages nearby and should be formally adopted.

In addition, although the current state of conservation is acceptable, some significant issues concerning the evolution of the nominated property and its integrity have been identified. For instance, in the case of the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory building, the planetarium that nominates spatially and functionally the historic site and the existing development pressures in the setting have a detrimental impact on the integrity of this component part.

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ICOMOS appreciates the intention by the State Party to present the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University and acknowledges the effort made in elaborating the nomination dossier and in investing the necessary resources for protection and preservation of the site as heritage of science.

If the issues above identified are addressed, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property or its component parts, taken individually or in combination with other sites, might have the potential to justify consideration for the World Heritage List, but only once their potential outstanding universal significance is clearly presented in comparison with similar properties at the global level and within the relevant geocultural area. Different nomination strategies for the Kazan Observatories might be envisaged as well, based on a robust comparative analysis and further documentation and research.

Therefore, ICOMOS recommends that the Kazan Observatories (Russian Federation) be deferred for the following main reasons:

- Consider if a robust case can be made based on a global thematic framework of astronomical heritage.

[The next one, please]

- Reconsider the nomination strategy of the current nominated property.
- Develop conservation documentation with appropriate analysis to better understand and present the evolution of the observatories in their architectural, functional and scientific aspects.

A mission to the property would be required once the nomination has been substantially revised. ICOMOS has also included the further recommendation in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

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Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS, for this presentation.

I would like to open the floor for a comment concerning this nomination, starting with Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Let me begin by thanking the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for the comprehensive evaluation of the nomination dossier, Astronomical Observatories of the Kazan Federal University.

We are also grateful to the State Party for having provided the factual errors forms and the additional information addressing the recommendations of ICOMOS.

Having considered all these documents, my Delegation has come to the conclusion that the nominated site merits to be inscribed in the World Heritage List at this session. It is an excellent example of the properties related to the astronomical heritage that are underrepresented on the World Heritage List. Its inscription will contribute to our common endeavour to make it more credible and balanced.

Mr. Chairman,

The Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University constitute a unique type of university observatories designed in the well-known style of Russian classicism. They represent a significant stage in the formation and development of architectural, landscape and technological complexes, typical for astronomy of the period of optical visual observation. Built in 1833, 1837, and 1899, and 1901, they are still in use today for their initial purposes. Among the optical observatories of the 19th/20th century, they stand out for their integrity, excellent preservation, and authenticity.

Responding to the recommendation of ICOMOS, the State Party has accepted to readjust the nomination strategy and propose the site for the inscription on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv).

The Astronomical Observatories brilliantly fulfilled the historical mission to boost the scientific research and enhance Eurasia's intercultural and scientific dialogue. Russian scientists and visiting professors from Europe and Asia worked together to mutually enrich astronomy with their knowledge. The discoveries made in observatories in the 20th century led to the launch of the first successful crewed space flight of Yuri Gagarin, marking the new era in the human history.

Moreover, the Kazan Observatories represent classical and neoclassical architecture combined with technological ensembles, that illustrates more than two centuries of human history. It contains a set of authentic instruments, including the world's only still functioning Heliometer telescope. The site also influenced the formation of similar complexes in the world.

The State Party has already taken the necessary measures to address the recommendation of ICOMOS concerning the management plan and of the property for the long and medium term, and also the legal status of the two buffer zones.

Based on the above, Ethiopia submits amendments of Item 45 COM 8B 45 for consideration and invite the State Party to provide further elaboration.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Mali salue les efforts du Secrétariat et des Organes consultatifs concernant cette candidature relative aux Observatoires astronomiques de l'université fédérale de Kazan.

Soulignons que l'ICOMOS, dans son évaluation, considère que le bien proposé pour inscription a le potentiel d'être inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO. L'état de conservation des deux composantes du bien est satisfaisant. Les sites en question reflètent en effet le développement historique des observatoires astronomiques et de leurs bâtiments, du classique au néoclassique, de l'évolution scientifique de l'astronomie optique à l'astrophysique. Autant dire qu'il est plus que nécessaire d'avoir de tels sites sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

La Fédération de Russie a élaboré un plan de gestion de ces observatoires astronomiques, à long et moyen terme, et elle met en œuvre des politiques et des programmes pour préserver le site et sa VUE.

En outre, le plan directeur pour la conservation et l'utilisation du bien est en cours de mise en œuvre, avec un financement approprié et des mesures organisationnelles mises en œuvre par l'État partie de Russie.

La Russie se dit également disponible et serait honorée d'accueillir une future mission de l'ICOMOS.

Au vu de l'ensemble de ces éléments, nous saluons les efforts de l'État partie de Russie. Nous sommes convaincus que l'inscription de ce bien assurera non seulement sa protection, sa conservation et la sauvegarde pour les générations présentes et futures, mais elle contribuera également aux objectifs et à la mission principale de la Convention du patrimoine mondial.

Par conséquent, nous appelons le Comité à réserver un avis favorable pour son inscription et appuyons les amendements proposés.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Mr. Chair.

Qatar would like to co-author the amendment proposed by Ethiopia and support the inscription of the Astronomical Observatory of Kazan Federal University on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

We have carefully examined the submitted nomination dossier and the management plan of the property, and agree that the nominated property has Outstanding Universal Value.

The presented dossier shows that both component parts are in good condition. Their historical, architectural, and landscape integrity as well as educational and scientific function are preserved.

Mr. Chair,

The State Party is making maximum effort to protect the nominated property from potential impact related to the urban development. The buffer zones have been approved, due legal protective regimes as well as requirement to the current town planning regulation have been adopted. We would like also to note that the tourist visits and the tours of the Museum of the Englehardt Astronomical Observatory allow to raise awareness about the astronomical science as a whole and the attribute of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property in particular.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I'd like to pass the floor to India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving India the floor on the Agenda Item 45 COM 8B.[45], Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University, which has got a different recommendation by the Expert Body, but we have amendments presented for inscriptions.

I thank the excellent work done by the World Heritage Secretariat and the Expert Body.

We respect the views of the Advisory Body. Hence, when the Advisory Body has given a different recommendation, then there are major considerations involved. If the amendment is for deferral to inscription, then serious discussions and clarifications are required.

The nomination dossier is quite detailed in terms of describing the scientific achievements associated with the property and its historical significance, indicating the potential for its Outstanding Universal Value. But the Expert Body feels that the dossier is unable to translate this potential into describing the property itself in detail, supported with technical information like drawing, so as to be able to clarifyingly define the attributes of the property.

Apart from the ICOMOS recommendations of:

- a) Re-examine, or clearly stating the rationale for selection of the two observatories.
- b) Defining property boundaries to completely express the outstanding universal value.
- c) Re-examine the criteria for inscription.

It is also suggested that some of the texts in chapter 2, Description of the property, can be converted into an annexure, and its conclusions, in correlation with the attributes of the property, be made the focus of description in the main chapter, which could help strengthen the justification for inscription.

India's expert body, the Archaeological Survey of India, has gone through the document. The State body of the Russian Federation met us and had detailed discussion on it. They have provided information and clarifications. After having gone through the clarifications given by the State Party of the Russian Federation, we have come to

the conclusion that it lies in the benefit of the Convention to have this property inscribed on the World Heritage List, and the State Party of India supports the amendments for inscription.

We would like to ask the following questions to the State Party of Russia:

- Comparative analysis can be strengthened by citing, in each case, how the nominated property is different from the comparative case study, instead of giving an overall conclusion.

Some aspects that may be explored to strengthen the proposed Outstanding Value:

- Does the geographical location of the observatories give them any advantage in astronomical observations which other observatories may not have?
- Architectural. Instead of focusing on the style like neoclassical, may be the original development of the optical telescope-based observatory at Kazan as a unique building typology may be a better approach for justification.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I request that you give the floor to Russia to respond.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for the comprehensive report. Also, I wish to thank the State Party of Russian Federation for presenting such great nomination dossier for the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University.

Obviously, the buildings of Astronomical Observatories of Kazan University have preserved their authenticity. Both the city and suburban observatories still fulfil their original scientific and educational function. The component parts of the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan University vividly represent their historical, cultural, scientific, and technological evolution as well as the stage-by-stage development, and ensuring a high level and professionalism of astronomical research and technology.

In many ways, they laid the foundation for the exploration of outer space and the discovery of new celestial bodies.

Being originally international and interdisciplinary, fundamental and applied research of Kazan astronomers is carried out in close contact with leading scientific centres of the world.

The continuity and inseparable connection of the two component parts is also demonstrated by the architectural embodiment. The architectural form of the Engelhardt Observatory reflect the continuity with the classical urban planning and space solution of the City Observatory and the ensemble of Kazan University. Together, these two complexes illustrate a significant period in the history of formation of scientific and educational architectural landscape complexes.

ICOMOS acknowledges that the state of conservation of both components of the nomination is satisfactory.

In view of the above, Oman supports the draft amendment presented by Ethiopia to inscribe the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan University on the World Heritage List.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor. I'll be very brief.

Chair,

We understand one of the issues raised by ICOMOS concerning this nomination is comparative analysis.

In this regard, with your permission, Chair, we would like to hear from ICOMOS as well as from the State Party, Russia, about the connection between the comparative analysis of this nomination and ICOMOS thematic studies, because we understand that ICOMOS had conducted thematic studies in this area two times, and the reports of these studies are useful tools to discuss this kind of heritage.

So, our question is, in other words: how those studies are used in this dossier?

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have listened the detailed presentation from ICOMOS about the proposal of the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University for the World Heritage List.

This is a very peculiar nomination, representing heritage associated with astronomy and observation of the sky, a type of heritage which is, as it has been recognized by the Advisory Body, is not well represented on the World Heritage List.

Now, a significant part of the features of the nominated property, as it is also demonstrated by the brochure, the detailed brochure that was distributed by the State Party, constitutes moveable heritage, represented by the significant and various astronomical instruments used in the observatories.

As stated by the Paragraph 48 of the Operational, Guidelines: "Nominations of immovable heritage which are likely to become movable will not be considered". Nevertheless, it is clear that for this kind of architecture, instruments, telescopes, astronomical tools, etc. represent an indisputable complement.

Therefore, Italy would like to know from Russian Federation which kind of provisions the State Party can guarantee in order to assure the conservation of immovable heritage together with the movable one.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation would like to thank the Advisory Body for its very comprehensive evaluation report.

After having carefully examined the nomination file, we would like to address a question to the State Party concerning the selection criteria of the component parts of this nomination. Specifically, we would like to ask the State Party, which are the cultural, social, scientific, or functional links between the two selected components of the serial nomination based on the requirements set by Paragraph 137 of the Operational Guidelines.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Zambia appreciates the wonderful work done by ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre in conducting the assessment and preparing the draft amendment of Russia's Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University, respectively.

Despite the observation by ICOMOS that this site is about collections, Zambia is more than convinced that this site still remains and qualifies as a site with an astronomical global significance that has retained its original functionality.

In accordance with the principles enshrined in Article 11 of the World Heritage Convention, Zambia expresses its endorsement of Ethiopia's proposed amendments aimed at supporting the inclusion of the nomination of Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University onto the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The observatories located in Kazan represent a remarkable phenomenon within the context of the Eastern European Plain and Eurasia during the 19th century. This is in accordance with the Operational Guidelines Paragraph 19. They played a pivotal role in advancing scientific research and fostering intercultural and scientific exchanges across Eurasia, in line with the Convention's emphasis on cultural and scientific cooperation.

You may refer to Paragraph 49 of Operational Guidelines, Mr. Chairman. Initially convinced as international and interdisciplinary institutions, the fundamental and applied research conducted by Kazan astronomers continues to maintain close collaboration with prominent global scientific institutions, exemplifying the Convention spirit of international collaboration in heritage preservation. This is in reference to Article 6 of the World Heritage Convention.

According to Operational Guidelines Paragraph 44, the matters concerning the preservation of the sites integrity and authenticity have been diligently addressed as mandated by Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention, and the measures implemented by the State Party are specifically designed to ensure the safeguarding of its Outstanding Universal Value. In addition, Mr. Chairman, these measures, congruent with the strategic goals outlined in the management plan, demonstrate the State Party's commitment to fulfil its obligations under the Convention. Mr. Chairman, you may refer to Article 5 of the World Heritage Convention on this.

And with this submission, Mr. Chairman, I still want to insist, on behalf of the State Party of Zambia, that this site should be inscribed accordingly.

I submit.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa would like to start by congratulating the Russian Federation for bringing this expertly developed nomination of the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University. We are also encouraged by the State Party's cooperation with Advisory Bodies, as demonstrated yesterday when the State Party accepted all recommendations by ICOMOS with regard to the deferral of the nomination of the Historic Centre of Gorokhovets.

We thank ICOMOS for a detailed report that assists the Committee in making a decision.

In its evaluation report, ICOMOS notes that OUV can be easily demonstrated through criterion (iv).

Mr. Chair,

South Africa considers that the nomination, in its current form, makes a compelling case for also criteria (ii). With respect to criteria (ii), South Africa is convinced that the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University do, indeed, demonstrate exchanges in human values through science and continuity in architecture, culture, and astronomical research from the 19th to the 21st centuries with that geocultural region.

With respect to criteria (iv), we are convinced that ICOMOS c) has potential, as in our view, already demonstrated through this nomination, which demonstrate unique examples of classical and neoclassical buildings linked with technological ensemble.

South Africa, therefore, agrees with the amendments proposed by the State Party of Ethiopia, which calls for criteria (ii) also to be accepted as demonstrated.

We are, therefore, calling for the inscription of this property on the basis of these two criteria, which is criteria (ii) and criteria (iv).

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia :

Salaam Aleykum.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes the nomination, Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University, to UNESCO World Heritage List, giving the representation of astronomical heritage sites in the existing UNESCO World Heritage List.

We fully support Ethiopia proposal.

The nomination represents not only historical and cultural heritage, but also reflects the history of the development of scientific thinking.

We note the significant role of Kazan University Observatories in such important world discoveries as the launch of the first artificial earth satellite, the first man's entry into space and landing on the moon, the study of the sun, planets and other celestial bodies in the universe in general.

In our opinion, the presented property is an example of scientific heritage and exceptional phenomenon for the East European Plain and Eurasia as a whole in the 19th century and a natural result of scientific synthesis and dialogue between the cultures of the West and the East, the North and the South, Europe and Asia.

For this reason, we would like to support the presented amendments.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Having listened to the presentations and arguments on this floor in favour of amendment proposed by Ethiopia as well as our earlier exchanges with Russia Federation and the responses provided by the State Party this morning, Nigeria would like to join the co-sponsors of this amendment to the draft decision and would like to be added to the list of the co-sponsors.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thailand wishes to thank the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat for their reports, and the State Party for their nomination dossier.

We want to underline one important point. The nomination of the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University on the World Heritage List was prepared within the "Astronomy and World Heritage" Thematic Initiative in order to establish connection between science and culture, which echoes a vivid example of synergy of the UNESCO mandate.

Thailand welcomes and recognizes the efforts of the State Party regarding the implementation of activities within this important endeavour, and therefore, we would like to support the amendment proposed by Ethiopia.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more interventions, so I would like to pass the floor to the Russian Federation to respond to the questions addressed by Ethiopia, Egypt, India, Japan, Italy, Greece.

Russian Federation, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Good afternoon.

First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone for your questions.

In order to ensure the sustainable, comprehensive protection of the properties, we have approved the Master Plan and other documentation. The protection status and the development of the territories of these properties are regulated at the local and federal levels. We have banned any kind of construction within the protection zone of the observatories. The properties are managed and function in consideration of a Strategy that is valid until 2043. In order to prevent potential threats from new projects, we conduct an impact analysis in order to ensure the protection, authenticity and integrity of the property.

Urban planning of the City Observatory, as a federal protected object as part of the University, is ensured by Special Urban Protection Zones and is also strictly regulated.

As for the comparative analysis, the comparative analysis was conducted with 11 observatories from the World Heritage List of UNESCO and also with more than 30 optical observatories in Asia, the Americas, and Europe. These include the university observatories of Colombia and also from France, Germany, Argentina, Hungary and other countries. I would also like to note that both Kazan Observatories are continued to be used for their initial purposes, and this has already been stated in various statements.

As for additional information on this issue, the Russian Federation immediately joined work on the Thematic Initiative of UNESCO "Astronomy and World Heritage". In 2009, at the Kazan University, together with the World Heritage Centre of UNESCO and the International Astronomical Union, we conducted an international conference on this topic with the participation of a large number of countries. At this conference, a decision was adopted to potentially include our Observatories in the World Heritage List. During this time, we have also conducted other international congresses and seminars, including with the discussion of attributes and the OUV, marking the

60th anniversary of the first flight into space and other aspects related to conservation, scientific research of these and other optical observatories from the historical and modern periods.

Our nomination is fully aligned with the UNESCO Initiative, and the Russian Federation has conducted a significant amount of work, working with many observatories from around the world, including to conduct a comparative analysis of the properties included in the World Heritage List and optical observatories. We have carefully studied the thematic studies of ICOMOS, in 2010 and 2017, and we highlight that this nominated property will be very important in closing the gap with respect to the lack of observatories in the World Heritage List. Our country is ready to continue to implement the Thematic Initiative "Astronomy and World Heritage".

There were many, many questions, so I can continue.

With respect to the Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention of 1972, which does not consider moveable heritage as something that's included in the OUV, Russia places particular emphasis on the preservation of the instruments and the observatory. Some of them are stored inside the observatory, and they continue to fulfil their function and are used for educational purposes. Others are included in the collections of historical museums, the Lobachevsky Museum in the university as well as the Engelhardt Observatory Museum, and we have included the documentation.

As for immovable heritage, it is protected by national laws concerning museum collections in the Russian Federation.

And there were two more questions. Could I continue?

The Chairperson:

Conclude them, please.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

As for the selection criteria, these were done as follows:

- The second criterion: The astronomical observatories played a key role in the development of optical astronomy in the 19th and 20th century, the transition from classical astronomy to modern astrophysics. This property reflects the synergy between human culture and values as well as academic work, and this was a very international project from the start, involving the representatives of various universities from Poland, Russia, and other countries. This led to the founding of an astronomical school, a university which is part of the International Astronomical Union,
- As for criteria no. (iv), we have already said a lot about architecture.

In conclusion, how can we explain the selection of the component parts, including the City Observatory and the Suburban Observatory as part of the serial nomination? It was determined by the fact that both of them reflect a certain stage of development in astronomy in terms of optical observations and their contribution to astrophysics. Both are unique cultural objects and science. They have been used for a wide range of scientific studies and have made a great contribution to the changes in our region and around the world.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, I would like to pass the floor to ICOMOS to respond to some inquiries, specifically by the Distinguished Delegation of Japan.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The question posed by the Distinguished Delegate of Japan concerned how the thematic study was used.

There has been a reply by the State Party. ICOMOS recognized, in its evaluation text, that the State Party has provided additional comparison, comparative analysis. However, this comparison has not been able to clarify in what way these observatories would be distinguished by others, and the comparative analysis prepared by the State Party also recognized that there are a number of other similar observatories that exist and that still exist, and that are comparable and similar to their own.

When it comes to the thematic study, one thing needs to be understood. That is the thematic studies are not aimed to identify whether the cases that are exemplified demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value. They basically compile information available on this field and on specific properties or sites that are part of this thematic study. One thing that ICOMOS checked, recognized that the Observatory of Kazan were not mentioned in this study, but that is not the key point. The point is that the thematic studies offer a framework for looking at sites that might be useful for building a comparative analysis.

There was another point that ICOMOS considered under the comparative analysis, and was exactly the selection of the component parts. Because, in relation to ICOMOS, as understood in its evaluation, is that the two component parts demonstrate different period of histories and don't look really to reflect the two criteria, the three, actually the three criteria that the State has initially submitted, then reducing the focus on the criterion (ii) and criterion (iv). Essentially, in these two parts, in the general part of the comparative analysis, ICOMOS could not find how the comparison that has been carried out by the State Party on several observatories could demonstrate how this serial property could be singled out compared to other ones that have been included in their comparative analysis.

The other point that ICOMOS has underlined concerns that the rationale for the presentation of these two properties in one series was not justified, according to the paragraphs of the Operational Guidance that are relevant to this. Of course, these two observatories are part of the same Kazan Federal University but that, ICOMOS did not find this sufficient to justify the series.

I hope I have responded to the question concerning comparative analysis that was posed by Japan.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS.

Are there any more questions concerning this nomination?

So, there are no more questions. Then, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.45**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Ethiopia, which is co-authored by the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa. Furthermore, there has been support from the Committee members, from the floor, namely Distinguished Delegations of Mali, Egypt, Qatar, India, Oman, Zambia, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and Thailand. And I do believe Greece and Italy had taken the floor, but I think it was just for the query.

So, the proposed amendment.

Para 2: "Inscribes the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University, Russian Federation, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv);".

Para 3: "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:".

Para 4: "Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:"

- a), b), c) are deleted.
- So, the revised Para a): "Ensuring the application of the approved Management Plan for the Astronomical Observatories of KFU for the long- and medium-term and implementing policies and programmes for the preservation of the property and its Outstanding Universal Value, as well as the Master Plan for the Conservation and Use of the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory, provided with appropriate funding and scientific and organizational measures,
- b) Implementing at the Engelhardt Astronomical Observatory *in bracket* (component part 002), a Heritage Impact assessment of all proposals related to the regeneration of the approved buffer zone, as well as controlling the possible impact of the development of settlements *in bracket* (Oktybarsky and Orekhova villages), Novaya Tura Technopolis, and their urban planning documentation,
- c) providing information on the legal status of the two approved buffer zones;"

Para 5: "Invites the State Party in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to actively participate and contribute to programmatic activities of the Thematic Initiative "Astronomy and World Heritage" to enhance scientific research and capacity-building on this matter, and to raise the visibility of the Initiative, relevant properties and the sites related to astronomy;".

Para 6: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 1 December 2025, a report on the implementation on the above-mentioned recommendations for review by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, I would like to invite you, dear colleagues, to examine the draft decision, paragraph by paragraph.

So, Paragraph 1, we don't have amendments. Do we agree to accept the paragraph as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. [gavel]

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel]

Paragraph 3, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal? So, I see none. The paragraph is adopted as amended. [gavel]

Paragraph 4, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel]

Paragraph 5, we have a proposal. Do we agree with this proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel]

Paragraph 6.

The Rapporteur:

If I may intervene, Mr. Chair, the date would be 1 December 2024.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Do we agree with this paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel]

Dear colleagues, I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

And if there are no objections, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.45** adopted as amended. [gavel] [applause]

Congratulations to the Russian Federation on behalf of the entire Committee on this inscription.

Russia, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: [interpretation from Russian]

[first speaker] Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Shukran, Rahmat in the Tatar language.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the wonderful organization of this Committee session, for your hospitable welcome that you have given us to this Holy Land.

Thank you very much, Chair, for your professional organization of our work and for creating a constructive atmosphere that promotes dialogue and fosters our exchanges.

We would also like to thank the members of the Committee for recognizing the Outstanding Universal Value of the Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University. We are grateful to Ethiopia, and South Africa, as well as other countries which proposed the very constructive amendments. We thank everyone who lended their support to us, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Mali, Zambia, India, Nigeria and Thailand. We would like to thank everyone, all countries and all Committee members that participated in our discussions.

I would also like to express our gratitude to the World Heritage Centre and a special thanks to ICOMOS for your work on our nomination which will continue.

The adopted decision will help preserve the unique heritage which is a blend of culture and science. Kazan Federal University is a major academic and scientific centre, and the inscription of its Observatory to the World Heritage List is a very important decision for the entire scientific and student community of the Republic of Tatarstan and our country as a whole.

It will allow us to attract additional attention among youth to how important it is to cherish your heritage. This decision will also help promote the deepening of international scientific ties.

Kazan is the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan in the Russian Federation. Historically, it has been a crossroads of civilizations, a symbolic crossroads of cultural, religious and scientific traditions. The Kazan Federal University and its Observatories have successfully fulfilled their historical mission; their mission of being a bridge between the West and the East, Europe and Asia, North and South. And today, this region, the Republic of Tatarstan, is undergoing a rapid development, and it is known, in Russia and beyond, as a great model for intercultural and interfaith dialogue.

With your permission, I would like to give the floor to the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Tatarstan of the Russian Federation.

[second speaker] Thank you very much.

For us, this is our fourth property inscribed on the UNESCO List in Tatarstan. We welcome you, and I would like to say a few words regarding Tatiana Petrovna.

Thank you, Tatiana Petrovna Lalionova. To my colleague, good afternoon, although it's already evening. Thank you so much.

If we were to say that we were delighted, that would be an understatement. Thank you to everyone. Thank you to each and every one of you, to each country, every member of the Committee, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Rakhmat, thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

So now, we have about ten minutes left, and with the agreement between the next nominations, Portugal and France, Portugal agreed to allow France to go first before we close the session.

8B.49 The Maison Carrée of Nîmes (France) // La Maison Carrée de Nîmes (France)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of The Maison Carrée of Nîmes (France), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

Le Secrétariat :

Merci, M. le Président.

En ce qui concerne, l'évaluation de cette proposition d'inscription, nous avons reçu une notification d'erreurs factuelles, qui se trouve à la page 104 du Document INF.8B4. Dans cette notification, certaines corrections factuelles ont un impact sur le texte de la Déclaration de valeur universelle exceptionnelle. Ces corrections ont déjà été incorporées dans notre version qu'on a ici à l'écran.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS.

ICOMOS :

Merci, M. le Président.

C'est la présentation de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS de la Maison Carrée de Nîmes (France). Le rapport de l'ICOMOS se trouve dans le Document INF.8B1 à la page 469 de la version anglaise et à la page 517 de la version française.

Pour cette évaluation, l'ICOMOS a reçu une lettre d'erreurs factuelles et accepté certaines de ces erreurs.

[Diapositive suivante, s'il vous plaît]

La Maison Carrée est un des premiers exemples de temple romain qui puisse être associé au culte impérial dans les provinces de Rome. Le programme architectural et la décoration soigneusement élaborée, reproduisant des caractéristiques connues des édifices construits à Rome, communiquaient en outre symboliquement le programme idéologique d'Auguste, qui fit basculer la Rome antique de la République à l'Empire, ouvrant ainsi un nouvel âge d'or connu sous le nom de *Pax Romana*.

Conçue suivant le plan d'un rectangle, la Maison Carrée est un bâtiment pseudo-périptère hexastyle composé d'une unique *cella* précédée d'un *pronaos* et entourée d'une colonnade. Le temple de style corinthien, édifié avec une pierre calcaire locale, se dresse sur un podium et est accessible par un escalier de quinze marches. Les principaux attributs du bien proposé pour inscription sont les éléments structurels et ornementaux de la Maison Carrée, l'emplacement stratégique du temple sur le forum et l'importance culturelle de l'édifice en tant que monument dédié à titre posthume à la lignée impériale divinisée.

L'analyse comparative a démontré que le bien est un exemple ancien, et un des mieux conservés, de temple romain construit dans les provinces romaines, qui illustre les débuts du basculement de la Rome antique de la République à l'Empire, et témoigne du processus associé de romanisation du territoire conquis par le biais d'un culte impérial pour assurer stabilité politique et harmonie dans la région annexée. L'ICOMOS considère que le bien proposé pour inscription répond au critère (iv).

[Diapositive suivante, s'il vous plaît. La diapositive suivante, s'il vous plaît. Merci]

La délimitation du bien correspond à la base de l'édifice. La zone tampon comprend la zone du centre médiéval de Nîmes et s'étend vers l'ouest pour englober les Jardins de la Fontaine, avec les vestiges du temple de Diane et la tour Magne au sud, la délimitation atteint la Porte de France et, au sud-est, intègre la zone le long de l'avenue Feuchères.

Le temple n'était pas un monument individuel mais faisait partie d'un ensemble de bâtiments ayant une fonction publique, construits sur le forum ou autour de celui-ci, ce dont témoignent les vestiges archéologiques. L'ICOMOS reconnaît que la réalité historique de l'ensemble du forum a été perdue en raison des développements urbains ultérieurs et considère que l'inclusion de l'étendue présumée de ce cadre historique dans la zone tampon est suffisante.

Les restaurations effectuées sur le temple depuis le XVII^e siècle ont permis à la Maison Carrée de retrouver sa forme originelle, sans modifications majeures de sa structure, et de préserver les éléments de son décor. Les conditions d'intégrité et d'authenticité sont remplies. Quelques recommandations ont été incluses dans le projet de décision afin de réduire la vulnérabilité du bien.

[La diapositive suivante, s'il vous plaît]

La Maison Carrée est un bien public protégé en tant que monument national historique depuis 1840. Toute modification de ses caractéristiques ou tout travail de restauration nécessite une autorisation du ministère de la Culture ou de la Direction régionale des affaires culturelles. Deux mécanismes de protection réglementaires sont en place pour la zone tampon. L'ICOMOS considère que la protection juridique du bien proposé pour inscription est appropriée.

La gestion du bien pour inscription relève du niveau local, étant assurée par la municipalité de Nîmes et exécutée en collaboration avec la Direction régionale des affaires culturelles, la Direction régionale de l'environnement, de l'aménagement et du logement, ainsi que la Direction départementale des territoires. Le Comité de Bien Maison Carrée Patrimoine Mondial de l'UNESCO a été créé en tant qu'organe décisionnel. Le plan de gestion prend en compte les valeurs patrimoniales représentées par le bien proposé pour inscription et le contexte socio-économique urbain dans lequel il s'inscrit.

[Diapositive suivante, s'il vous plaît]

Voici un résumé de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien proposé.

[Diapositive suivante, s'il vous plaît]

Pour conclure, l'ICOMOS recommande que la Maison Carrée de Nîmes (France) soit inscrite sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sur la base du critère (iv), et inclut des recommandations supplémentaires dans la proposition de décision afin de contribuer à la conservation du bien à long terme.

[Diapositive suivante. La diapositive suivante, s'il vous plaît]

Merci beaucoup pour votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS, on this presentation.

I would like to see if there are any comments regarding this nomination?

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I had the privilege to visit this place, one of the ambassadors went for introductory mission there. We have listened for two days for the explanation from the Nîmes governance there.

I would like to thank ICOMOS for the positive analysis, and they are putting it for the nomination. This saved us a lot of what we are going to say.

So, thank you very much. I am very happy that we see this is a positive recommendation.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I see no more interventions.

Therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.49**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for this draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

There no more comments.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.49** adopted. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Congratulations to France on behalf of the entire Committee.

France, you may have the floor.

La Délégation de la France (Observateur) :

[premier orateur] M. le Président du Comité, M. l'ADG Culture, M. le Directeur du patrimoine, Mmes les expertes, MM. les experts, Excellences,

Ceux qui sont allés à Nîmes, comme l'ambassadeur d'Oman, le savent, la Maison Carrée est quasi parfaite dans sa pureté et sa simplicité. C'est un joyau unique. Nous sommes heureux qu'elle puisse bénéficier de toutes les conditions pour sa sauvegarde. Je remercie l'ICOMOS pour sa recommandation favorable et le travail de ses experts, les membres du Comité pour leur soutien.

Je passe la parole au maire de Nîmes, Jean-Paul Fournier.

[deuxième orateur] Permettez-moi tout d'abord de remercier le pays hôte, l'Arabie saoudite, pour la qualité de l'accueil. *[applaudissements]* Je veux aussi souligner le travail des experts du Conseil international des monuments et des sites. Je veux surtout saluer et remercier la décision des 21 délégués, des élus membres du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

Cette décision honore, nous, Nîmois, avec fierté et émotion que je mesure les causes et conséquences. *[applaudissements]*

Je ne serais pas complet sans évoquer le soutien des équipes de l'ambassade de France et celle du ministère de la Culture.

La Maison Carrée, dont la beauté artistique est remarquable, est un témoignage unique du début de l'Empire romain.

Je ne peux que louer l'action que mène depuis des décennies l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture afin de contribuer à la préservation et au partage de la transmission du patrimoine. Nous serons dignes de cette décision.

Je terminerai simplement en disant que la Maison Carrée, chère aux habitants de Nîmes et aux citoyens de la République française, est désormais le bien commun de toutes les Nations Unies.

Je vous remercie. *[applaudissements]*

The Chairperson:

Congratulations again.

Dear colleagues,

I would like to extend a special thanks to the interpreters for their dedicated and hard work today, so, please, give them another round of applause. *[applause]*

I am passing the floor now to the Director-General of the World Heritage Centre.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Just quickly to say that we have one side event tonight, which will take place in Hegra Room, organized by ICOMOS and IUCN on "How to list tentatively, how to evaluate conclusively". It will start at 6:30.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Director, and see you tomorrow. *[gavel]*

The meeting rose at 6:22 pm. // La séance a été levée à 18h22.

NINTH DAY
Tuesday, 19 September 2023
SIXTEENTH PLENARY MEETING
10:11 am – 1:01 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

NEUVIÈME JOUR
Mardi 19 septembre 2023
SEIZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h11 – 13h01
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

The Chairperson:

Good morning, dear colleagues.

I invite you to take a seat.

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

2023 CYCLE (Ct'd) // CYCLE 2023 (suite)

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

As indicated during the ninth meeting of the Bureau this morning, today, we will have another 12 nominations files to be examined. The list can be found on the updated calendar posted by the Secretariat on the World Heritage Centre webpage.

For this session, in this morning, we will examine nominations submitted by the States Parties of Portugal, Iran, Thailand, Netherlands, Türkiye, United States, Mongolia, Italy.

And in the afternoon session, we will examine nominations submitted by the States Parties of Suriname, Greece, Canada and Argentina.

Some files were brought forward in agreement with the States Parties concerned. I hope all can agree with this workplan for today.

I would also like to remind you that the Working Group on budget, which was established last Monday, will meet again today from 2:00 to 3:00 pm in the Bureau Meeting Room, under the Chairperson of Ms. Yara Al-Ghafri, Oman.

Thank you.

CULTURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

8B.48 Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone [extension of "Historic Centre of Guimarães"] (Portugal) // Centre historique de Guimarães et zone de Couros [extension de « Centre historique de Guimarães »] (Portugal)

The Chairperson:

So now I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone as an extension of the Historic Centre of Guimarães (Portugal). But before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, you may have ^[inaudible].

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the nomination for the Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone, and this is to be found on page 135 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B4. This notification has some factual errors that have an impact on the text of the Statement of OUV, and these have been already integrated in the version that we have at the Secretariat.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS.

ICOMOS: [video]

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the extension to the Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone (Portugal). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 457 of the English version and page 505 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide]

This is a nomination for an extension of the site of Historic Centre of Guimarães (Portugal) inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2001. This is an extension of the intra muros area of the Historic Centre of Guimarães, consisting of two monastic complexes and an industrial area, called the Couros Zone. Named after the traditional craft of leather tanning, the Couros zone features former tanneries dating from the 12th to the 20th century, proto-industrial processing facilities, residential quarters, public spaces and water management infrastructure.

The addition of the Couros Zone to the Historic Centre of Guimarães enhances and reinforces the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property.

The Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone is an exceptionally well-preserved town that illustrates the evolution of particular building types from the medieval settlement to the present-day city, and particularly in the 15th–19th centuries.

The Couros Zone bears witness to the wealth that independence brought to Guimarães and that made possible its harmonious urban and architectural development until the end of the 19th century.

The pre-industrial working area of the Couros Zone expands the represented range of building typologies and historic layers of the well-preserved Historic Centre of Guimarães. Additionally, both areas have maintained their medieval urban layout.

The two construction techniques, *taipa de rodízio* and *taipa de fasquio*, were developed in the region of Guimarães and exported to Portuguese colonies in other parts of the world, becoming a distinct characteristic of Portuguese colonial architecture.

The comparative analysis justifies the relevance of the nominated extension to the already-inscribed property of the Historic Centre of Guimarães.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated extension of the Historic Centre of Guimarães meets criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv), and contributes to expanding and amplifying the already-approved justification of these criteria.

[Next slide]

The nominated extension complements the inscribed property with a lower-lying industrial area and two monastic complexes located south along the Couros river. The extramural Couros Zone developed coherently alongside the already-inscribed property and adds attributes that exemplify, complement, and amplify the Outstanding Universal Value of the already-inscribed property.

The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met. Some recommendations have been included in the draft decision in order to reduce the vulnerability of the integrity and authenticity of some attributes.

The boundary of the nominated extension is adequate, although, in ICOMOS's view, the inclusion of the Largo da República do Brasil and of the Church and Oratory of Nossa Senhora da Consolação e Santos Passos would have strengthened the integrity and the rationale of the nominated extension. After discussions with ICOMOS during the evaluation procedure, the State Party expanded the buffer zone that is now adequate and constitutes a good basis for the necessary added layer of protection for the property and its nominated extension.

[Next slide]

ICOMOS commends the efforts made to improve the legal status of the nominated extension since its inclusion in the buffer zone of the already-inscribed property. The process of registering the Couros Zone, including the historic tanneries as national monuments was still ongoing when the nomination dossier was submitted. ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated extension will be adequate once the designation of the Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone as a National Monument is finalized and published in the Official Gazette.

Several important management instruments that have been initiated following the reappraisal of the values and attributes of Guimarães are still under development.

ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated extension is uneven. While some parts are in good condition, other buildings are in average or poor state of conservation.

[Next slide]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated extension.

[Next slide]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the extension of the Historic Centre of Guimarães and Couros Zone (Portugal) be approved on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS, for this presentation.

I would like to know if there are any comments concerning this nomination.

So, I see none and I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.48**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on this draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.48**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And if there are no more comments, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.48** adopted. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Congratulations to Portugal on behalf of the entire Committee.

Portugal, you may have the floor for a two-minute statement.

The Observer Delegation of Portugal:

[first speaker] Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me start by thanking you for your excellent stewardship of this extended session of the World Heritage Committee, and Saudi Arabia for its generous hosting of this session, and as all.

Likewise, Portugal would like to extend its appreciation to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for their in-depth and consistent work in the examination of such a large number of files.

Guimaraes was the cradle of the Portuguese nation, having been the first seat of the Kingdom of Portugal when the country became independent in 1143. The city of Guimaraes, whose extended boundaries we are inscribing today, has been on the World Heritage List since 2001.

That inscription was crucial for the preservation and enhancement of the integrity and authenticity of the medieval area. After having inscribing the Historical Centre, the municipal authorities continued to have reflection on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, adding layers that complement and amplify the meaning of the property and better encompass 1,000 years of urban, economic, social, architectural, and industrial development. This nomination is the result of that reflection.

I would now like to pass the floor to Ms. Ana Cotter, Councilwoman from Guimaraes.

[second speaker] Guimaraes is proud of this inscription and is committed to do its utmost to preserve the intrinsic value of the property.

I would like to send a special word of appreciation to the local community for its continuous and decisive involvement in this process, which, I am sure, will continue in the future.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the World Heritage Committee for making this inscription a reality.

Thank you, UNESCO. Thank you, ICOMOS. Thank you, Saudi Arabia, for your kind hospitality.

Obrigada, Guimaraes. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

Mic, Portugal. Congratulations, Portugal, but would you please close the mic?

Thank you.

8B.40 The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh (Iran (Islamic Republic of)) // Le Paysage culturel de Masouleh (Iran (République islamique d'))

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh (Islamic Republic of Iran), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of this nomination, which is to be found on page 113 of both English and French version of Document INF.8B4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh (Islamic Republic of Iran). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 363 of the English version and page 379 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide, please]

The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh is a bowl-shaped area that extends around the historic city of Masouleh in Northern Iran, in the Alborz Mountains. The landscape was shaped by millennia-long nomadic and then semi-nomadic pastoralism as well as by ancient mining, smelting, and blacksmithing activities, which declined and lost their economic role. The strategic location of Masouleh along important communication routes turned the area into a refuge for populations from different regions in the plains and into a trading centre.

Two living traditions, the semi-nomadic Taleshi herdsman and sedentary craftsmen and tradesmen, coexist in the historic city of Masouleh. However, it is not clear whether transhumance is still practiced.

Masouleh features a compact urban and architectural fabric organized in tiers around the Bazaar Area.

The focus of the nomination, in ICOMOS view, is unclear: it swings between several separate themes that do not coalesce in one cohesive picture of the nominated property and of what could be its potential Outstanding Universal Value. This unclarity permeates the whole nomination: the comparative analysis did not succeed in proving that the Cultural Landscape of Masouleh stands out among its comparators and that it can be seen as the best representation of the Taleshi semi-nomadic pastoral tradition or other traditions of any of the other ethnic groups, or that a new original cultural tradition has emerged from the interchanges among these groups. In fact, these groups seem to co-exist in separate spaces within the nominated area. Unclarity on what the State Party intends to nominate also impact on the justification of the proposed criteria, which are not supported by different sufficient evidence, lack focus and address separately the landscape and the city of Masouleh. Since the focus of the nomination has been shifting, it has been difficult to understand what attributes can credibly support the justification for inscription.

[The next slide, please]

This slide shows the boundaries of the nominated property and of the buffer zone. Although described in detail, the rationale for their delineation, based on national protection designation, is not consistent with the proposed justification for inscription of the distribution of attributes.

[Next slide, please]

The protection of the nominated property seems adequate and effective for the urban and architectural value represented by the historic city of Masouleh, and for the archaeological remains at Kohnah Masouleh as well as for the natural values. However, it is not clear how the agro-pastoral semi-nomadic system is protected and sustained. A management system is in place. Although herding communities were asked information and consent to the nomination, they are not involved in the decision-making body of the management of the property.

The management system focuses on the urban and architectural heritage, with effective measures and campaigns to carry out maintenance and conservation with the involvement of the locals, and on nature conservation. On the other hand, no management measures seem to have been taken to support the agro-pastoral system, whereas

tourism and its development in the nominated area are strongly encouraged. Although tourism can bring economic benefits to the inhabitants of the town of Masouleh, it will be necessary to assess its impacts on the socio-cultural system, particularly that of the herding communities.

[Next slide, please]

The three narrative threads proposed in the nomination dossier and in the additional information as a basis for the nomination of Masouleh remain separate and do not convey what could be the potential justification for Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

In summary, the comparative analysis has not succeeded in proving that the nominated property stands out among its comparators. Therefore, none of the criteria have been demonstrated; hence the conditions of integrity and authenticity have not been met.

[Next slide, please]

In conclusion, ICOMOS notes that, whilst the property may bear exceptional national value, it does not meet the requirements of the Operational Guidelines for demonstrating OUV. Therefore, ICOMOS recommends that The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh (Islamic Republic of Iran) should not be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

[Next slide, please]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS.

I would like to see if there are any comments concerning this nomination.

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS for its report and evaluation of the nomination dossier of the Cultural Landscape of Masouleh.

Oman has carefully studied the Advisory Body report, as well as the additional documents submitted by the State Party, and the factual errors notification. We believe that a further dialogue between ICOMOS and the State Party will be helpful to come out with a more solid and coherent nomination dossier of the property, taking into consideration all the concerns.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to speak about the importance of this Cultural Landscape.

The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh tells a very interesting story about the exchange of human values and the formation of the first examples of an Islamic terraced city, which was erected in the Ilkhanid period in the 13th and 14th centuries. The significance of this becomes even more apparent when we consider that the city of Masouleh enjoys the general characteristics of Islamic cities located in hot and dry regions, while its formation is on the temperate and humid Hyrcanian plateau. We can easily see that, in the design of the city of Masouleh, this conflict was resolved in a proper and specific way, leading to a progress in the knowledge of Islamic architecture and urban planning during the Ilkhanid period. This is the issue that seems ICOMOS has a positive opinion to it, in its response to the factual errors notification.

It should be added that The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh has another exceptional feature, which is its environmental that has provided the opportunity for the interaction and understanding of different ethnic groups throughout history since the Neolithic period onwards. Masouleh culture is a blend composed of the cultures of immigrant tribes, and has grown and developed in interaction with the descendants of the ancient Cadusians. As we understand, ICOMOS might have some ambiguity in this regard, but the supplemental information provided by the State Party justifies the significance of the said subject matter.

Due to the importance of this historical place, Oman proposes a draft amendment for consideration, and I would ask you, Mr. Chair, to give the floor to the State Party of Iran for further clarification on the justification of the OUV, the linkages between the integrated parts of the property, and the recommendation of the Advisory Bodies.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Now, we heard from the Delegation of Oman about the historical value of this particular property. We don't necessarily dispute that, but the explanations from ICOMOS essentially were very clear.

First of all, OUV has not been demonstrated, and secondly, the focus of the present nomination has shifted, and therefore, it was difficult to come up with a definite conclusion. And thirdly, there could be an impact from the tourism. So, all in all, I understand that ICOMOS believe that this is not the property is not right for the inscription.

But, on the other hand, there was a presentation of the cultural value of this particular property from the Delegation of Oman. In this particular case, a very standard reaction to this file would be deferral. We don't have to close the doors to this property. This may be a good property if there are different ways of presentation but, nevertheless, at this moment in time, we believe that deferral is probably a better reaction under these circumstances.

Having said that, I would also like to support the request from the Delegation of Oman for clarifications from the State Party of Iran on the justifications of this nomination. And also, my understanding is that there was a very long discussion between Iran and ICOMOS on this particular file, and therefore, I would like to ask the question regarding the contents of this particular discussion from the State Party of Iran as well as from ICOMOS.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Qatar appreciates the commendable efforts of the Advisory Body and underscores the significance of The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh as an exemplary Islamic terraced city, aligning with criteria (ii) and (v).

We recognize the fundamental role of Masouleh in the history of Islamic urbanization and its contributions to the historical knowledge of iron production, as well as the State of Qatar would like to underscore the importance of involving herding communities in the decision-making process, acknowledging their significant role in shaping the future of this cultural landscape, additionally, the focus on strengthening preservation and sustainability measures within the management plan to ensure the long-term protection of the site.

Mr. Chair,

While Qatar acknowledges ICOMOS's decision not to recommend inscription, we also acknowledge the valuable recommendation extended to the State Party. We believe that this recommendation could serve as a solid foundation for a potential referral.

Having the above said, the State of Qatar support the draft decision amendment as proposed by Sultanate of Oman.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We listened to the analysis by ICOMOS with great attention and the report of ICOMOS at the same time.

In our view, the conclusion to not inscribe the property in the World Heritage List is a bit hasty in the current context.

We would like to note that the nomination was prepared during the difficult pandemic period, when international contacts and communications were upended between experts from different countries. Undisputedly, all countries were in the same situation, but nevertheless, preparing each nomination has its own specific circumstances. For some of them, the pandemic had a greater Impact than others.

Another reason is, in 2022, we didn't have a meeting of the World Heritage Committee and we can see that in these in-person meetings, experts have been engaged in active professional dialogue, and they have been sharing information and are receiving some invaluable experience in their work with nominations and other mechanisms as part of the Convention.

In this way, by viewing these factors which did not depend on Iran, which were out of their control, led to some practical problems which were noted by ICOMOS in its report.

At the same time, we would like to emphasize the strong aspects of The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh: The high level of preservation, the strong monitoring mechanism, one management structure, the inter-sectoral Management Committee, the historical and architectural value of the property are reflected in the dossier.

There are some herding communities living in the area that live a traditional lifestyle and that have been transmitting their values for many, many years from the Neolithic period till this day. The city of Masouleh, with its beautiful architecture, is the first terraced Islamic city and developed at the crossroads of important trade and immigration routes. All of this could potentially be a solid foundation for criterion (ii).

The active role of local communities should also be noted because they support the inscription of the property to the World Heritage List, and they are contributing to this work.

If the Committee decides to refer the nomination, then the focus of the nomination will be defined more clearly, certainly, and The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh as a Universal Value will certainly be confirmed. This would be the correct decision, which would allow ICOMOS to support Iran in improving its nomination.

We support the proposed draft amendment by Oman, and we support the proposal to listen to what Iran has to say.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Belgica*.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, we'd like to remark that a non-inscription, usually or until recently, there was a common practice with non-inscription that the State Party would withdraw their nominations, and we regret that this is not the case at this time anymore.

The essential element in our discussions is OUV, and we have listened very carefully to ICOMOS who stated that, at this point, they have not detected OUV. So, at this point, we cannot support the proposed amendment.

We would like to also emphasize that a referral, in our opinion, does not seem very helpful for the State Party because it would mean that there would not be a mission of ICOMOS, there would not be help in their reworking of the file. So, we think that is something to contemplate on.

As it was explained Sunday, in the information session, the big difference there is between "referral" and "deferral". So, there are indeed historical value, which is undoubtedly, and so, therefore, I think it would be interesting to hear, like the Ambassador of Japan said, to hear more about the ongoing dialogue between Iran and the Advisory Body and to learn more about that aspect.

But, like I said earlier, at this point, we cannot support the amendment as suggested.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Salaam Aleykum.

Saudi Arabia would like to thank ICOMOS, the World Heritage Centre, and the State Party for their efforts in evaluating, and coordinating, and conserving this nominated site.

The foundation of Masouleh, here, clearly benefits from the characteristic conditions which offered innovative solutions for the creation of an Islamic terraced city in the climatic region of Hyrcania. Urban dwellings are subject to certain social norms and discussing urban development in Islamic history and environment, physical, social, and meaning comparisons with other Islamic cities and original settlements are not comparable.

Saudi Arabia would like to support the amendments presented by Oman and the comments of the other members of the Committee on the presented amendments.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Shukran. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We are prevailed to the exchanges that took place between the State Party of Iran and the Advisory Bodies, and Nigeria is happy with a compromise outcome of resolving to work together in order to better prepare and update the nomination file of this property. This arrangement is perfectly in line with the principles of the World Heritage Convention.

The amendment submitted by the Sultanate of Oman to the draft decision proposes to referral. We are looking forward to a good outcome and of the proposed receipt of the Expert Body to better present the nomination file that will portray the Outstanding Universal Value and the integrity of the property.

Nigeria endorses the amendment and call on the Committee to adopt the draft decision as amended.

I thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Nigeria. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to thank the Advisory Body for its very informative report regarding the nomination of The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh (Iran).

Although we recognize the efforts made by the State Party to demonstrate the values and attributes of this property, we still consider that a more comprehensive documentation is required to reflect its potential global significance. Thus, the recommendations of the Advisory Body, contained in its evaluation report, would contribute significantly towards this direction.

Therefore, we agree with Japan's proposal that the nomination should be deferred so as to allow the State Party to proceed with all the necessary actions, as well as to benefit from an Advisory mission in order to present, at a later stage, a complete nomination file.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines recognizes the historical and cultural importance of Masouleh.

We appreciate the efforts of the Advisory Bodies and we take note of their conclusion that the OUV is not demonstrated yet. We appreciate the efforts of the State Party in providing explanations and more information, and we hope that the Advisory Bodies takes into consideration for further cooperation in the future.

Having said that, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines makes echo to the comments made by Belgium, Japan, and Greece.

While the conclusion of the Advisory Bodies is not to inscribe because the OUV is not justified, the referral proposed in the amendments by Oman demonstrates that there is Universal Value. So, we do prefer to defer this file and to give enough time to the State Party to prepare another file with a mission and which will include all the attributes necessary to inscribe this important site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Chairperson,

As a State Party of Zambia, we are in support of Japan's submission that the nomination should be deferred.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more questions. I would like to pass the floor to the State Party to respond to some of the questions addressed by the Distinguished Delegates of Oman, Japan, and also Belgium.

The Observer Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor.

Let me first begin with thanking you for your excellent Chairmanship and also the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their very best arrangement of this Committee and for their hospitality. I also thank all the members of the World Heritage Committee for their work.

Mr. Chair,

We have come to this conclusion that, after sending the additional information to the ICOMOS, some ambiguities were raised because of different subjects that we explained, making it rather difficult for ICOMOS to decide about the demonstrating the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh. We are happy to note that ICOMOS is indeed satisfied with the management and conservation, and also the protection of the site. Now, we fully understand the concerns of the Advisory Body and we appreciate them.

As Iran fully believes in the Outstanding Universal Value of Masouleh; however, in order to meet the concerns of ICOMOS, we will be delighted to extend an invitation to ICOMOS in order for them to make an Advisory mission to Iran, soon enough, to cooperate with us in reconfiguring the file so that the Outstanding Universal Value and, thus, the criteria are fully demonstrated and justified. We sincerely hope that ICOMOS will accept our invitation and, accordingly, we will be able to present the reconfigured dossier after the referral of this nomination to the Committee, as soon as possible for their evaluation.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

ICOMOS has received two orders of questions: One was from the Distinguished Delegate of Japan, who asked about the nature of the conversation between ICOMOS and the State Party of Iran; and the other State Party who joined the question was Belgium, who also asked clarification about the distinguish between "deferral" and "referral".

With regard to the nature of the conversation we had with the State Party of Iran, ICOMOS has met the Delegation from Iran to explain its position why the nomination was recommended for non-inscription. We explained face to face the content of our report. The State Party represented us that they would have sought the support from Committee members to have a different decision, which is in the power of the Committee. We discussed about what could be for them the best way to go if the Committee decides otherwise than what ICOMOS has recommended. But ICOMOS cannot change, it cannot modify its recommendation. It is ICOMOS Panel that takes the decision about what recommendation to propose to the World Heritage Committee cannot be modified during conversation outside the evaluation process. So, there has been no compromise position achieved between, as we have heard from... I think it's important to clarify this point, ICOMOS cannot change its advice to the Committee.

Having said that, with regard to the deferral and referral, and the distinction about this. Deferral is a measure, a recommendation that offers more scope of action to a State Party to reconfigure a nomination, as the State Party of Iran has highlighted, it does have the possibility to have an evaluation mission after the dossier has been submitted. It has the possibility it has no limit in the timeframe when the State Party has to come back with a reconfigured nomination.

On the other hand, referral back is recommended when there are limited small issues to be addressed because referral back does not allow the possibility to rewrite a new dossier, reconfigure a dossier. The timeframe for the evaluation of a referral back is much shorter than what it is offered for deferral, so no evaluation mission can happen because there is no time to do that, and referral back is used for management issues, protection, conservation, minor adjustment of boundaries that have been already identified and clarified through evaluation missions already occurred to properties that are evaluated.

I think I have responded to all questions.

With regard to the question from the State Party of Iran about an Advisory mission, this is something that is in the hands of the Committee to decide. ICOMOS remains always available to Committee members and States Parties to work. Indeed, an Advisory mission could be much more fruitful within a deferral recommendation. This has been

the experience of ICOMOS in many instances because within the referral back, there is very limited space for reconfiguring a nomination.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS.

So, after hearing from the State Party and explanations of ICOMOS, I would like to open the floor again.

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank my colleagues, the members of the Committee, as well as the ICOMOS for all the explanation provided.

I have a discussion with the State Party, and as they have also suggested that they are requesting Advisory mission of ICOMOS, that is in itself a deferral. And therefore, I will go with that decision.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

I would like to support the amendment as proposed by Oman.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan, you would like to take the floor?

The Delegation of Japan:

Mr. Chair,

I just wanted to hear a bit more. But let me just make one particular point because everybody in the room agrees that there's a need for a mission to reconfigure it, the proposal. I think that is what we call deferral. That is my observation. But I want to hear views from other Delegations.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

After hearing the views of the Ambassador of Oman, who is the original presenter of the amendment, if the original presenter of the amendment himself is saying it's a deferral, then... and Japan also has mentioned about deferral. I see that we are moving towards a consensus in the house, towards deferral, and India would like to move on that path of consensus.

India has traditional, and historical, and civilizational ties with the State of Iran and the people of Iran, and we wholeheartedly, from our hearts, support the people of Iran in their quest to have this beautiful nomination, to be perhaps one day inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Therefore, we support the path of consensus, Excellency.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

The comprehensive concept of cultural landscapes includes physical space as well as social organization, beliefs, living traditions, and identity, which are belonging to each society. This is why cultural landscapes include a holistic approach that includes the physical approach to a landscape and not a fragmented one of heritage. Therefore, it can be understood as a rich register of social history and its developments. Due to the importance of protecting these types of heritage, we believe that it is important that the State Party addressed the recommendations of ICOMOS, and we would support Japan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belgium, and Greece, as well as Zambia.

We have recent examples of such sites such as the Menorca sites, which, after having received ICOMOS recommendations, implemented them and was later able to inscribe the site. We believe that the site deserves to be inscribed later on after such measures have been taken.

This is why we would support deferral.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In light of this interesting ongoing discussion, we indeed also believe that the wider scope of action that a deferral implies seems to be appropriate in this case.

So, we thank the Delegation of Oman to have agreed to alter its amendment, and we hope that we can reach a consensus on that.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We also agree with the second intervention by the Distinguished colleague of the Sultanate of Oman and with the consistent conclusion reached by the Distinguished Member of India. We understood that there was no compromise reached by the Advisory Body and the State Party, and we understood also that "R" with mission means "D" in disguise.

So probably, the logical and consistent conclusion and the consensus in the room is for a "D".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

My Delegation had supported the amendment proposed by Oman but, nevertheless, after having heard all of the States Parties that took the floor and which expressed their views in favour of deferral, we would like to say that we also support this consensus. We thank ICOMOS for the high quality of your report and for all of your efforts, and we truly hope that Iran will be able to have this property inscribed on the List. We hope that Iran will have the necessary time to provide the necessary additional information.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good morning to you and Distinguished Excellencies.

South Africa did meet with the State Party of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who carefully and thoroughly explained the reasoning behind the request for a referral. However, seeing that there is a consensus in the room around deferral, we would like to support that proposal.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

In order to sum up, we simply wish to state that we agree with the consensus, that is to say, deferral.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Having listened to all Committee members, I would like to ask you to give the floor to the Distinguished Delegate from Iran.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Having listened to the general discussion on the consensus, I think Nigeria will also join the general consensus.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With emerging consensus, Thailand would like to join a consensus for deferral.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, before I pass the floor to Iran, would you please, Your Excellency, the Ambassador of Oman, to specify the question for the State Party?

The Delegation of Oman:

I would like to ask them whether they are in agreement with this because they have initiated the request for ICOMOS to go on a mission, and that is the basis: To go for a mission means deferral. So, I want to hear from them.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Iran, you may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I said before, we believe strongly that Masouleh has the potential of Outstanding Universal Value, but at the same time, we accept the decision of the Committee.

One request that we can make is that we will work on this dossier to prepare it and bring it back as soon as possible, but we request the Committee to keep our quota so that we cannot lose the chance of bringing another site at the same time when we bring that deferred site to the Committee for their evaluation.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, do we have any more comments on this?

So, I see none and I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.40**, but before doing so, I'd like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Oman, which was to refer [back] the nomination, which is now changed to defer. This has been supported by the Distinguished Delegations of Qatar and South Africa, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Japan, Greece, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Zambia, India, Mexico, Italy, Argentina, and Thailand.

I'm going to read out the amendment.

Para 2: "Defers the examination of the nomination of The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh, Islamic Republic of Iran, back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- a) Further strengthen the justification for criteria (ii) and (v) by refocusing it as an outstanding example of Islamic terraced city as well as a significant example of Taleshi and Cadusian cultures and iron smelting technology,". This has been rephrased slightly from the original without changing the meaning.
- "b) Provide precise maps for the nominated property to include all elements of herding within the property,
- c) Provide a monitoring plan for monitoring all attributes of the semi-nomadic and agro-pastoral system,
- d) Present a programme for supporting and strengthening the local communities in the regeneration of degraded forests and grassland areas and in the monitoring, sustainable management, conservation and decision making regarding the preservation of natural values for the benefits of local livelihoods,
- e) Deliver a detailed plan for protection measures in place to ensure that the traditional semi-nomadic pastoral system continues to thrive,
- f) Present a clear socio-economic development strategy to ensure that tourism does not erode the current socio-economic fabric of the nominated property;".

Para 3: "Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Involve herding communities in the decision-making body and ensure that the management system focuses on the urban and architectural heritage, with effective measures and campaigns to carry out maintenance and conservation with the involvement of the locals and also on nature conservation,
- b) Engage herders in the management planning through being members of Steering Committee of the Cultural Landscape of Masouleh,
- c) Strengthen preservation and sustainability of the interrelation between the agro-pastoral semi-nomadic system and urban society,
- d) Reinforce management measures to support the agro-pastoral system, considering the tourism development in the nominated area;".

Based on the discussions and agreement with the Committee members, we can add a Para 4: "Encourages the State Party to invite an Advisory mission to support the State Party in reviewing the attributes *comma*, Outstanding Universal Value and management for the proposed nomination."

I would just like to go back and ensure that we have all the Committee members who supported the deferral. It's Oman, Qatar, South Africa, Japan, Russian Federation, Belgium, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Greece, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Zambia, India, Mexico, Italy, Argentina, and Thailand.

That's the proposed amendment on screen.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I think Saudi Arabia were in favour of referral, not for deferral. Russian Federation, also.

The Rapporteur:

Sorry. So, Russian Federation and Saudi Arabia were for the referral initially.

The Chairperson:

Okay. So, I will pass the floor first to ICOMOS to clarify some matters regarding this draft decision before we proceed.

ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

With regard to the point b) of the draft decision, ICOMOS has heard also the comment made by the State Party about reconfiguring the nomination dossier, while the wording, here, is much more specific. In light of the discussion that the Committee members had just before, perhaps, the Committee members might consider a more general recommendation revolving around reconfiguring the nomination to bring into light the theme under which the nominated property might demonstrate OUV, which gives the State Party the full scope of exploration for coming back with a reconfigured nomination.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much.

I do agree with the last comment from ICOMOS that we need be more generic because the file is going to be reconstructed.

My last point is regarding the request of the State Party to maintain their quota. This is what I would like to add, maybe, a sub-article or something.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

It's true. Initially, we had supported the decision to refer the dossier, so we had supported the amendment proposed by Oman. But, after having heard the discussion that took place subsequently and having listened to the various opinions of ICOMOS, of Iran, we would like to join the consensus on the deferral.

At the same time, we just heard an intervention by the Representative of Oman with respect to maintaining the quota in the draft decision, which Iran had also mentioned, and we support this.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saudi Arabia.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Good morning.

Mr. Chairman,

Having listened to the views of ICOMOS and the State Party, we would like to join the consensus and accept the deferral.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

As I spoke earlier on, Ethiopia joins the consensus and would like to propose also deferral.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

I just wanted to make one statement on one question.

First of all, I would like to support what ICOMOS mentioned earlier: We need to have a wide scope for this. So perhaps, as ICOMOS suggested, we should probably have a wider reference to this.

Now, on the last point: In case of deferral, can a State Member submit another dossier for another nomination? Honestly, we have no strong views against it, but at the same time, I'm not quite sure if this is legally okay. I understand that, at this moment in time, if you have referral files that can come back to the next session and that is not counted as one of the files, if I am not mistaken. But at the same time, in case of deferral, that may not be possible. So, I just wanted to be clear if we are to say something on that, the legal context has to be very clear. And from that perspective, can I ask the Legal Advisor to clarify on this issue?

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Italy, you would like to take the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

It was exactly the same question. If we can have a legal opinion about the feasibility according to the Rules of this proposal.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I'll pass the floor to the Legal Advisor to clarify the procedure of this.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

In response to the question, the Operational Guidelines are clear in this regard, and they are contained in Paragraph 61. I shall quote from the beginning of that paragraph, I am quoting:

"The Committee has decided to apply the following mechanism concerning examination of nominations:

- a) examine one complete nomination per State Party,
- b) set at 35 the annual limit on the number of nominations it will review, inclusive of nominations deferred and referred by previous sessions of the Committee, extensions (except minor modifications of limits of the property), transboundary, and serial nominations,".

End of quote.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

We would like to thank the Legal Advisor for the detailed clarification on this issue.

We understand the concerns of Iran. We also understand the questions raised by the Distinguished Representatives of Japan and of Italy. But we would like to hear the voice of the representative of the World Heritage Centre and specifically, perhaps, an expert on the nomination process, who might be able to clarify to us, what decisions are in the works for potentially expanding the quota for countries, and including nominations that were referred or deferred in the annual quota.

Could we, please, ask for clarifications from the representative of the World Heritage Centre?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

Rwanda Delegation would like to join other Delegations and also advert to the proposed amendment before you.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, at this point in time, we would like to withdraw our request to intervene.

I want to listen to the views of the Secretariat, and I'm very thankful to the Legal Advisor for being very clear, as he usually is in legal terms. This is canon, this is the Law, these are the Operational Guidelines. Whether we like it, whether we don't like it, whether we are a big nation, whether we are a small nation, this is the canon. It's the Law equally applicable to all. And that is why I really appreciate the views of the Legal Advisor because he puts the rules as they are, and he has mentioned that there is no difference when it comes to referral or deferral. As of now, they both are presented as the same. Of course, there is a difference in the sense that a mission goes in a deferral, but as for the nominating, a new nomination is concerned, a State Party is allowed only one nomination per year, and that is the choice of the State Party whether they want to make a new nomination, whether they want to bring a referral, they want to bring a deferral. These are the position how it stands today.

India is of the position that we want the number of nominations to be increased. We want more than one nomination per Member, per State, per year. This view of India is very strong, but I feel that the views of the Committee on this, the financial implications on these, of course, these are all subject matter to be discussed later on. However, as the canon, as the Law that stands as of now, which the Legal Advisor has been very clear. But as requested by the Russian Federation, we wait to hear the views of the Secretariat.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

We would also like to hear from the Secretariat, but I just want to add one question to that.

It seems that, under Item 12, there is a proposal that the referral files and deferral files are not counted as one. In that case, if this amendment is adopted at this Committee, State Party of Iran can submit one additional file in addition to the file that we are talking about. So, my question, to be clear, that is our understanding, my question is: There is an amendment under Item 12 to that effect, and therefore, if the Committee agrees on that amendment, we don't have to mention that in this particular decision. That is the way I see it. And the State Party of Iran's request is met as a result if this amendment is adopted. So, that is the question I wanted to add.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. So, I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat...

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

I would like to bring the attention of my Distinguished colleague from Japan.

In Law, in the field of Law, in canon, you don't say what may happen in the future. If a law is passed, if a canon is passed, then what will happen? No, how the law exists right now, how the canon is right now, that is applicable. That is the point we are discussing. If at all, you want this decision to be deferred till that point, that Agenda Item no. 12 is discussed and then come back to this particular Agenda item, we can agree to that. If Agenda Item no. 12 is so important, then I suggest let us bring that Agenda item forward, let's put a hold to all the discussions because what is going to be applicable to one country has to be applicable to all 195 countries, including India. So, if Agenda Item no. 11, which deals with preliminary assessments, that is also important, if Agenda no. 12, which seeks to limit the number of presentations and also bring a hierarchy, if at all the discussions on all these Agenda items are subject, as the Japanese Ambassador has tried to put forth, then what if this happens? If they are all subject to the outcome of the decision under Agenda Item no. 12, which will be discussed in the future, then my request is that you bring Agenda Item no. 12 right now. Put a hold on all these discussions. Let us discuss and decide on Agenda Item no. 12 and then we move forward.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So, we are here examining the draft decision, not any other items. I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat based on the request of the Distinguished Delegates of Japan and India.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

If you'll allow me, I will come back to the importance of the credibility of the World Heritage Convention of 1972. We've been talking about it for the past nine days.

I remind you that the members of the Committee can make a request to the State Party. They can't ask them whether they want this request or whether they have any specific conditions. This is not appropriate for the World Heritage Convention. We're moving into a discussion which is not appropriate. A member of the Committee can ask a State Party a question on what is being presented, but, with all due respect, here, we're not supposed to be discussing a general item which will be discussed under Item 12, as mentioned by the Ambassador of India.

This discussion focuses on a procedure during which one State Party, supported by four other States Parties, requested a referral. Now, there seems to be an absolute majority in favour of a deferral. We have a text in front of us and, as it stands, you have stated that we cannot accept a referral. So, this text needs to be fine-tuned, and in order to achieve this, ideally, this decision should not be taken now, a text should be worked upon to be appropriate for this decision. This is not something that we can do over the next three hours, I believe. Experts, and ICOIOS, and the Secretariat need to be involved. So, if you'll allow me, I would suggest that this decision is not mature enough to be adopted right now. Therefore, if the Chair agrees, perhaps we could work on a text that is in line with the decision that may be taken after the discussion. However, suspending this nomination examination in order to discuss Item 12 is, in my view, not desirable.

Perhaps, Alessandro could answer some questions about nomination practices in terms of referral and deferral.

However, as the text stands, and as has been recognized by Iran, the text needs to be drafted and this needs to be done in collaboration with experts under optimal conditions.

Perhaps, if you will allow me, Chair, I would give the floor to Alessandro now to answer the questions from Japan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Alessandro.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

After the very clear intervention, both by the Legal Advisor and the ADG Culture, I think that the question of Japan and, maybe, from Russia was beyond recalling the law, the canon, or the provision. It's maybe to talk about its concrete application.

Indeed, its concrete application tell us that, under the current Paragraph 61, point a), in both cases, whether the Committee will decide for referral or deferral, there will be no difference in terms of the quota. When the nomination will come back, it will count as a nomination. Indeed, under point a) of Paragraph 61 of the Operational Guidelines, it is said that the Committee will examine only one nomination per State Party. Therefore, the application of this provision is quite clear.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Alessandro.

So, given that the original proposal was adjusted from refer [back] to defer, and that needs some time to readjust the whole draft decision, what I would propose is that I give some time to the Secretariat, and also to work with ICOMOS and Oman to readjust the whole draft Decision.

Oman, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Oman:

Actually, I totally agree with what the ADG said.

I was going to recommend to do as we did with Bangladesh, that we need time because this decision was set for referral. Now, we are going for deferral. The wording totally, I will agree. I think the ADG put it very clearly. Therefore, I do suggest that we put this on hold so ICOMOS, Member State, Oman, we reconstruct the decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, we will get back to this, examining this draft decision, when it's mature enough.

Thank you.

8B.41 The Ancient Town of Si Thep (Thailand) // La ville ancienne de Si Thep (Thaïlande)**The Chairperson:**

So, moving to the next item, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of The Ancient Town of Si Thep (Thailand), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification concerning the nomination of The Ancient Town of Si Thep (Thailand), and this notification is on page 155 of both English and French version of Document INF.B4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS: *[video]*

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of The Ancient Town of Si Thep (Thailand). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 374 of the English version and page 391 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide]

The Ancient Town of Si Thep is a serial property that represents the architecture, artistic traditions, and religious diversity of the Dvaravati Empire, that thrived in Central Thailand from the 6th to the 10th centuries, and important phases in the history of Southeast Asia. It demonstrates the influences from India, including Hinduism, and

Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. The local adaptation of these traditions resulted in a distinctive artistic tradition known as the Si Thep School of Art, which later influenced other civilizations in Southeast Asia.

The comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated property for inscription on the World Heritage List, and ICOMOS considers that criteria (ii) and (iii) have been met.

[Next slide]

This nominated property comprises three components: a distinctive twin-town site, featuring an Inner and Outer Town sharing the same moats; the massive Khao Klang Nok ancient monument, which is the largest Dvaravati pagoda in Thailand; and the Khao Thamorrat Cave ancient monument, the only cave monastery in Thailand or Southeast Asia with evidence of Mahayana Buddhism. All the attributes are within the property area.

The requirements for the authenticity and integrity have been met.

The boundaries of the component parts and buffer zones are adequate. Some important elements of the monument have been identified on private land located beyond the current square-shaped boundary of the component part 2. The State Party is currently in the process of land acquisition to include these elements.

[Next slide]

The legal protection and management of the property are in place and sufficiently resourced. They would be enhanced by the finalization of the draft Management Plan, which contains an effective framework for action, including the needed engagement with local communities.

Unlawful excavations, and past and cancelled development pressures have posed threats to the property. There are few factors affecting the nominated property at present, although it is vulnerable to climate impacts, extreme weather events and the potential loss of community support.

[Next slide]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the Ancient Town of Si Thep (Thailand) be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iii). ICOMOS recommends that the name of the property be changed to "The Ancient Town of Si Thep and its Associated Dvaravati Monuments". A number of further recommendations have been included in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS, for this presentation.

I would like to know if there are any comments concerning this nomination.

So, I see none and, therefore I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.41**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.41**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Therefore, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.41** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Thailand on behalf of the entire Committee.

You have a two-minute statement.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On behalf of the Kingdom of Thailand, I would like to give the floor to our Prime Minister to express our appreciation to all the Delegations.

The Prime Minister of Thailand: *[video]*

Mr. Chairperson, members of the World Heritage Committee, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government and the people of Thailand, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Committee members and the Advisory Bodies for recognizing the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of The Ancient Town of Si Thep, which led to the decision of the inscription of the site of the World Heritage List today.

The Ancient Town of Si Thep, located in Phetchabun Province, consists of three interconnected ancient monuments and could date back to the prehistoric period. Despite its remarkable representation of the Dvaravati culture, The Ancient Town of Si Thep bears exceptional distinguished characteristics and artistic architectural style that have been recognized as the Si Thep School of Art.

The inscription of The Ancient Town of Si Thep today signifies the beginning of cooperation and collective actions to conserve, restore, and protect this invaluable site to be a learning centre and a treasure, not only for people all over the world but also for the future generations.

I look forward to welcoming you all to our remarkable World Heritage site of The Ancient Town of Si Thep, and to join hands on the conservation and development of sustainable ecotourism together with Thai people.

Khop Khun Khrap. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Congratulations again, Thailand.

8B.44 Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium (Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium) (Netherlands) // Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium (Planétarium royal Eise Eisinga) (Pays-Bas)

The Chairperson:

So now, I move to the next nomination, and I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium (Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium) (Netherlands).

ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS: *[video]*

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium (Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium) (Netherlands). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 410 of the English version and page 480 of the French version.

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Located in a modest house within the historic centre of Franeker, the Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium (Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium) is the oldest continuously operating planetarium in the world. Built between 1774 and 1781, this accurately working model of our solar system provides an up-to-date and realistic image of the positions of the Sun, the Moon, the Earth and the five other planets that were known at the time.

Conceived and largely built by an ordinary citizen, the planetarium mechanism is ingeniously built into the ceiling and the closet-bed wall of the living room. To this day, it is open to the public and used as an educational centre dedicated to astronomy.

The fact that the mechanism is still in working order is evidence of the ingenuity and foresight of the maker, who left detailed instructions for its maintenance.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis, considering classical planetariums built in the Renaissance and early modern period justifies the consideration of the property on the World Heritage List on the basis that Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium is the oldest permanently functioning mechanical planetarium.

The nominated property meets criterion (iv), but criteria (i) and (iii) have not been demonstrated.

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The nominated site covers 0.0027 ha and includes the planetarium in the old living room of the canal house, Eise Eisingastraat 3 in Franeker. It is entirely owned by the municipality of Waadhoeke in the province of Fryslân, in the northern region of the Netherlands. The buffer zone spans the immediate surroundings of the nominated property and covers an area of 2.12539 ha.

ICOMOS considers that the integrity and authenticity of the nominated property have been adequately demonstrated.

The delimitation of the boundaries, as adjusted during the evaluation procedure, reinforces the inextricable relationship between the planetarium and the building in which it is located, emphasizing that the nominated property is an immovable cultural property. The buffer zone is part of a larger designation aimed at protecting the cityscape and inner city of Franeker, which has complementary legal provisions, thus adding a layer of protection to the nominated property.

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The building housing the planetarium is protected as a national monument. The buffer zone falls within the status of the protected cityscape of the inner city of Franeker (now part of the municipality of Waadhoeke), established in 1979.

The Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium Foundation has been in charge of running the planetarium since 2001. A managing director and nine workers handle day-to-day operations. A comprehensive management plan was developed in 2021 to support the nomination dossier. The plan clearly defines the factors affecting the nominated property and establishes five guiding principles. ICOMOS considers that the existing protection and management mechanisms are effective to address current and identified future management challenges.

[Next slide]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium (Royal Eise Eisinga Planetarium) (Netherlands) be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iv).

ICOMOS recommends that the name of the property be changed to "Eisinga Planetarium in Franeker".

A number of further recommendations have been included in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS, for this presentation.

And now, I would like to ask the floor if they have any questions concerning this nomination.

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

We won't take long. We just want to underline that sometimes World Heritage sites can be enormous and amazing sites, even larger than the size of the country of Belgium. But there are hidden gems on the World Heritage List as well.

The Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium is a remarkable example of such a small treasure. The facade on the street not much wider than our desk. This inscription will recognize the labour of love of Eise Eisinga, a wool carder in Friesland, Frisia. The planetarium he built in his living room is a wonderful piece of engineering, mathematics, and, of course, astronomy. It may be small, but it is spectacular and, Chair, with the inscription of The Koninklijk Eise Eisinga Planetarium, we also acknowledge the efforts of the people now and, basically, over the past two centuries to conserve the planetarium and tell its story to the world. Considering the scale of the planetarium, this too is exceptional.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any additional comments? So, I see none.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.44**, but before doing so, I'd like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.44**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.44** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to the Netherlands on behalf of the entire Committee.

You may have the floor, the Netherlands.

The Observer Delegation of the Netherlands:

[first speaker] *Shukran, Said Rais,*

On behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and our whole Delegation, let me first thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the warm welcome and the excellent organization of this conference.

We're very proud that the Eisinga Planetarium in Franeker is now inscribed on the World Heritage List, and we would sincerely like to thank the ADG Culture, the Director of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, and, of course, the Committee members for this decision which marks the finalizing of our Tentative List for the European part of our Kingdom. We will continue working on our Tentative List for two sites located in the Caribbean part of our Kingdom.

To reaffirm our commitment to the World Heritage Convention, we have presented our candidature for the term 2025-2029.

With that, I pass the microphone to Ms. Marga Waanders, Mayor of Waadhoeke, which includes Franeker.

[second speaker] Mr. Chairman,

We are very, very happy with a decision to inscribe the Eisinga Planetarium, Franeker, on the World Heritage List.

The idea was born in 2003 and now, in 2023, we celebrate this wonderful milestone in the history of the planetarium, the oldest still working planetarium. Already 250 years inspiring and amazing people around the world. Now, we are part of the worldwide UNESCO World Heritage family. We are proud and feel the deep responsibility for this unique property to protect it and keep it in a perfect condition.

We are grateful for the hospitality of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A big thank you to the Committee, the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, and the nomination team from our State Party, the Province of Friesland, and the municipality of Waadhoeke and its citizens.

Mr. Chairman,

We celebrate the inscription of one of the smallest World Heritage properties about the largest phenomenon, our universe, and for the Frisian people at home: "*untranslated sentence in Dutch*".

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

8B.46 Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure (Türkiye) // Mosquées médiévales d'Anatolie dotées de colonnes et d'une structure supérieure en bois (Türkiye)

The Chairperson:

So now, moving to our next property and nomination to be examined, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure (Türkiye), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification for the evaluation of the Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure from Türkiye, and this notification is on page 157 of both the English and French versions of Document INF.8B4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure (Türkiye). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 432 of the English version and page 490 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

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Rarely surviving due to the vulnerable nature of its building materials, the five mosques composing the nominated serial property represent the early wooden hypostyle religious buildings in the historic development of Islamic architecture. These five mosques, which illustrate best examples in terms of scale, design, workmanship, furnishing, and decoration, share a common feature where a flat ceiling is supported by columns through wooden or stone capitals and this load-bearing structure is enclosed by a stone envelope. The construction of these mosques can be linked to the Mongol invasions of this area in the 1240s and the subsequent immigration of Central Asian craftspeople knowledgeable about wooden construction technology and possessing excellent woodworking skills, coupled with the driving forces from powerful political figures in the Anatolia region. The excellency of the woodwork and painted decorations testify to the exceptional level of artistic and craftsmanship achievement once prevalent in medieval Anatolia.

The comparative analysis and the additional information provided during the evaluation process have successfully established the important position that the nominated property holds in the development of Islamic architecture. The serial approach and the rationale for selecting the component parts are justified.

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The nominated property comprises five wooden columned or "hypostyle" mosques built between the late 13th and mid-14th centuries, each of which is located in a different province of Türkiye, as well as a number of associated buildings and a small graveyard.

The conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated serial property and of its buffer zones are adequate.

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The nominated property is legally protected under the highest level of cultural heritage protection in Türkiye as well as other protective mechanisms that safeguard the attributes of proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

[Next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

Even though the management system is in place, the overall management of the five component parts should be enhanced. Improvements can be made to the current management system by establishing sub-working groups to ensure coordination. The implementation of the management plan should be monitored closely since most of the acute issues are expected to be addressed by the actions listed in the plan.

The mosques are affected by serious factors, such as fire risk, moisture in the fabric, and insect attack. Immediate actions are required to address these issues. A comprehensive risk management plan should be completed in priority. In addition, a Heritage Impact Assessment of the cable car project near the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque which could significantly affect views to and from the mosque should be submitted and the project halted. Capacity-building to improve knowledge and skills in heritage conservation and monitoring is imperative for those responsible for regular maintenance.

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To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure (Türkiye) be referred back to the State Party for the following main reasons:

- Complete the establishment of the sub-working groups within the scope of the management plan;
- Submit the Heritage Impact Assessment of the cable car project near the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque and halt the project;
- Complete the comprehensive risk management plan for the series as a whole;

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- Develop a maintenance manual based on internationally accepted conservation principles;
- Update the outdated conservation plans of the nominated component parts;
- Implement the tourism-related actions described in the management plan;
- Develop a set of indicators to assess the effectiveness of the outcomes of implementing the management plan of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that the name of the nominated property should be changed to "Wooden Hypostyle Mosques of Medieval Anatolia" in order to convey more concisely and accurately the essential characteristic of the nominated property.

ICOMOS has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

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Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to open the floor for comments concerning this nomination, and I will start with Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Allow me to congratulate the Turkish authorities for the preparation of this excellent nomination dossier. Also, I would like to thank ICOMOS for the thorough presentation.

We studied carefully the nomination dossier and the Advisory Body documents, and we believe that this nomination deserves careful attention for its quality and uniqueness.

Mr. Chair,

Built in a unique wooden structure system, where a flat wooden ceiling is carried by wooden posts that have *muqarnas* or *spolia* column capitals, and exhibiting exceptional carpentry skills and artistic work, the selected five mosques represent outstanding examples of a specific building type that constitutes an important place within the development of Islamic architecture. There are five mosques, have some shared architectural features and historical connections, and highly maintain their authenticity in terms of location, use, function, design, and materials, which justified their selection as a group to represent the best preserved and early examples of the hypostyle-type wooden mosque.

We have no doubt about the justification of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, based on criteria (ii) and (iv).

Regarding to the comparative analysis, we think it's adequate despite some weaknesses expressed in the ICOMOS report. We trust the State Party to address the concerns and recommendations raised by ICOMOS, and we have information that the State Party has already taken some actions in this regard.

The Tourism Promotion and Education Sub-Working Group was established and held its first meeting on 22 May 2023, with the participation of representatives of all components, under the coordination of the site manager.

Mr. Chair,

The implementation of tourism-related actions in a holistic and coordinated manner is carried out by the Tourism and Promotion Sub Working Group, within the period determined in the plan. Accordingly, this group decided to give priorities on three issues within the annual work:

- Improving the visitor facilities and information services;
- Enriching experiences of tourists, providing adequate information and promotion through educational resources; and
- Ensuring there is no negative impact of potential increase of visitors on the nominated properties.

Also, the Scientific Committee has been established according to the Science and Consultancy Protocol concerning Works to be Realized in Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structures, which was signed between the General Directorate of Foundations and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Foundation University. Additional support will be obtained from the Ankara Regional Director of Restoration and Conservation Laboratory for the preservation of hand-drawing painting and wooden structure.

For all the above mentioned, Oman proposed a draft amendment to the original draft decision to inscribe the property on the World Heritage List under criteria (ii) and (iv).

Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. [interpretation from Arabic] Egypt. [end of interpretation from Arabic]

The Delegation of Egypt:

Shukran, Said Rais.

We would like to congratulate the State Party of Türkiye for submitting the nomination of this outstanding property, which is an exceptional testimony to a rarely surviving type of wooden hypostyle mosques of Islamic architecture.

ICOMOS report states that the criteria (ii) and (iv) have been met. The conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met. The boundaries include all the attributes. The buffer zone provides an extra layer of protection for the nominated property, and the current legal protection and management are adequate. Furthermore, the management plan of the nominated property is comprehensive.

We would like also to congratulate the State Party for the comprehensiveness of the comparative analysis, which has successfully established the important position the nominated property holds in the development of Islamic architecture by demonstrating clear historical, cultural, and artistic links between the components of the serial nomination as it has been acknowledged by ICOMOS.

We understand that the State Party has already implemented many of the recommendations of ICOMOS, including:

- The establishment of sub-working groups;
- Implementing the tourism-related actions;
- Revision of the outdated conservation plans;
- Addressing the acute issues and the threats common to all five component parts; and
- Drafting the preparation of a monitoring and maintenance manual.

Considering all this, Mr. Chair, we believe that the Wooden Hypostyle Mosques of Medieval Anatolia deserves to be on the World Heritage List in this year, and would call for the adoption of the amended decisions, which we are sponsoring.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Shukran, Said Rais.

First of all, I would like to thank ICOMOS for the excellent work as usual.

In this case, Japan supports the inscription of this property and also supports the amendments proposed by Oman for the following reasons:

- Firstly, five wooden hypostyle mosques and their structure represent the evidence of influence of Central Asian architectural style on the Islamic architecture in Anatolia at that time. This is a very unique property of historical significance;
- Secondly, ICOMOS recognized criteria (ii) and (iv); Thirdly, ICOMOS also recognizes the validity of comprehensive analysis, integrity, boundary and legal protection;
- Fourthly, main concerns expressed by ICOMOS are related to the Heritage Impact Assessment on the cable car and the completion of comprehensive risk management plans and systems. On those concerns, State Party of Türkiye has responded positively, including the suspension of the cable car operations during the process of the HIA. Also, the State Party has taken a number of measures to address the concerns expressed by ICOMOS in terms of protection and management.

I would like to ask the Chair to give the floor to the State Party of Türkiye to confirm those points, but our belief is that this property represents a model case, one of the model cases of good work done between ICOMOS and the State Party of Türkiye, and we hold her to support the inscription of this property.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Chair.

The Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure are part of the long history of humanity, whose constructions date back to the late 13th and mid-14th centuries. We have read considerable facts to not doubt the integrity and authenticity of the property, as well as proves that the hypostyle mosques built in Anatolia are dotted with Outstanding Universal Value.

We thank ICOMOS for the objective assessments that resulted in the draft decision, which amendment, proposed by the Sultanate of Oman, Nigeria is co-sponsoring, having also listened to some justifications by the State Party of Türkiye.

As already argued by our Distinguished colleagues who are of the same opinion, Türkiye has provided satisfactory responses to the recommendations with the expectation that the inscription of this site on the World Heritage List is not delayed further by a referral decision.

We note, especially, that the cable car project, one of the strong concerns in the experts' report, is being reconsidered to projecting a Heritage Impact Assessment. Türkiye has established a Scientific Committee as advised, and it has assured Delegation of its resolve to adhere to the forward-looking recommendations contained in Paragraph 4, 5 and 6 of the draft decision, including the adjustment proposed for the name of the property.

While appreciating Türkiye for its flexibility, commitment, and cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, Nigeria is of the opinion that the Wooden Hypostyle Mosques of Medieval Anatolia should be inscribed on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv).

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

La Délégation de la Bulgarie :

Merci, M. le Président.

La Bulgarie souhaite soutenir l'inscription du site en série Mosquées médiévales d'Anatolie selon les critères (ii) et (iv).

Les sites proposés pour l'inscription témoignent d'une tradition ancienne se distinguant clairement des structures classiques. Les travaux exceptionnels et la maîtrise des constructions permettant la réalisation de structures de toit entièrement en bois témoignent d'une étape de la tradition en Anatolie, qui montre des liens culturels multidirectionnels et des influences magistralement réfractées à travers les traditions locales. Tout cela les distingue des exemples ultérieurs et antérieurs de l'architecture de culture islamique et fait que le site en série mérite d'être inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine culturel mondial sous le nom Mosquées hypostyles en bois de l'Anatolie médiévale.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar:

Mr. Chair,

The State of Qatar appreciates the Advisory Body evaluation, and Qatar acknowledged the nominated property is comprised of the five hypostyle mosques built in Anatolia between the late 13th century and the mid-14th century.

On the term of OUV of the nominated property, Qatar takes note that the nominated property fulfils both criteria (ii) and (iv).

Mr. Chair,

The serial property, composed of the five component parts, contains all the necessary attributes that can reflect the architectural style, construction techniques, cultural traditions, workmanship, and aesthetic of the major types of mosques that developed in the history of Islamic architecture, as well as each component of the property retains a high degree of authenticity in terms of form and design, materials and substance used, use and function, spirit and feeling, tradition and management system, location and setting.

With the above being said, the State of Qatar supports the draft amendment to inscribe the Medieval Mosque of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure (Türkiye) on the basis of the criteria (ii) and (iv).

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair.

I wish to echo what other members of the Committee have said, congratulating the State Party, and we believe that this property deserves to be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv), and we support the amendment proposed by Oman. We are one of the co-authors.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, for giving me the floor.

We would also like to appreciate the work done by the Advisory Bodies.

My Delegation has critically examined the dossier, and I had a discussion with the State Party on the details of the file. We would like to commend the State Party, Türkiye, for submitting the nomination of the Medieval Mosques of Anatolia, for the conservation work and the management of the property, but also the comparative analysis demonstrating the clear historical significance of the site.

In light of this, my Delegation believes that the property deserves to be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv). We would like to support the amendment proposed by the Sultanate of Oman and also co-author the amendment.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson, for giving us the opportunity to intervene on this item.

South Africa commends the State Party and ICOMOS on their collaboration following the evaluation mission, including the subsequent submission of the additional information that was required.

South Africa has noted confirmation from ICOMOS that the nominated property has met criteria (ii) and (iv), and that the serial approach and rationale for selecting the component mosques is justified. We, therefore, understand that ICOMOS is satisfied that most of the elements of the OUV have been met. The State Party of Türkiye has confirmed the initiation of processes to address maintenance, conservation, and other management-related issues highlighted by ICOMOS in the report and in the draft decision.

Considering the overall positive report by ICOMOS, South Africa, therefore, believes that this unusual hypostyle structural system evidenced in the five component mosques should be recognized. We, therefore, support the amendment proposed by the Delegation of Oman for the inscription of the property.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina:

Thank you, Mr. President.

[interpretation from Spanish] We thank ICOMOS for the presentation of this report on the nomination of Medieval Mosques of Anatolia.

As has been set out in this report, this is a serial nomination with five mosques, which together represent the first religious buildings in the hypostyle architecture of the Islamic style, showing carpentry skills and decoration skills. These are an exceptional testimony to the craftsmanship of medieval Anatolia. The comparative analysis of ICOMOS sets out the distinctive features of this site within Islamic architecture. It's also underrepresented on the World Heritage List. It meets the criteria (ii) and (iv), and authenticity and integrity requirements. We feel that the recommendations have been fulfilled, and this is why we support the proposal of Oman to inscribe this property on the World Heritage List.

Thank you. *[end of interpretation from Spanish]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines support the amendments presented by Oman and would like to inscribe the Medieval Mosques of Anatolia on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv).

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

As other speakers have mentioned, we recognize the work undertaken by ICOMOS as well as the State Party of Türkiye in presenting this exceptional nomination.

We wholeheartedly support the inscription of these hypostyle mosques, which are the result of Turkish Islamic traditions combined with Anatolian architecture. This is why we support the amendment put forward by the Sultanate of Oman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Having listened to ICOMOS and in terms of their evaluation, and also having listened to the various States Parties in terms of their submissions, it's very clear that, as a State Party of Zambia, we are convinced that we should tag along with most of the Committee members who are calling for the inscription of this site.

I submit, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Saudi Arabia. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

We commend the efforts undertaken by the State Party and ICOMOS.

We support the inscription of this site on the World Heritage List and the amendments put forward by Oman.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Mali souhaite soutenir les amendements proposés par Oman et propose l'inscription du bien sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more comments and, therefore, I would like to pass the floor to the State Party to respond to the question addressed by the Distinguished Delegation of Japan.

The Observer Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To confirm the points raised by the Distinguished Delegate of Japan, which we already have submitted to ICOMOS:

- The cable car project near Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque has been halted by the Afyon Municipality, and the Heritage Impact Assessment report will be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for evaluation by ICOMOS when it is completed, so it is under way;
- Regarding the risk management plan, the management plan contains specific actions against earthquake, fire, flood, and infestation risks in mosques as defined in the management plan, and there are some measures already taken;
- Among the five components, the conservation plan for Afyon is being updated and a conservation plan for Ankara is under preparation. So, the conservation plan for the urban-protected site in Ankara is a work in progress and the conservation plan for the urban-protected site in Afyon has already been completed; and
- The management plan contains several monitoring indicators including structural stability, material deterioration, environmental impact, water related damage, tourism-related impacts, number of restoration projects, education resources and activities, and risk preparedness.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments concerning this nomination? I see none.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.46**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Oman, which is co-authored by Egypt, Qatar, and also by the Russian Federation. Now, from the floor, we have received confirmation from the Committee members: Japan, Nigeria, Bulgaria, Ethiopia, South Africa, Argentina, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Mexico, Zambia, Saudi Arabia, and Mali.

The proposed amendment.

Para 2: "Inscribes the Medieval Mosques of Anatolia with Wooden Posts and Upper Structure, Türkiye, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv);".

Para 3: "Takes note of the following provisional Statement Of Outstanding Universal Value:".

Moving to Para 4: "Recommends that the State Party give recommendation to the following:

- a) Completing the establishment of the sub-working groups within the scope of the management plan,
- b) Completing the Heritage Impact Assessment Report of the cable car project near the Afyonkarahisar Ulu Mosque and submitting it to the World Heritage Centre for review by ICOMOS,
- c) Completing the comprehensive risk management plan for the serial property as a whole,
- d) Developing a maintenance manual based on internationally accepted conservation principles,
- e) Updating the outdated conservation plans of the component parts,
- f) Implementing the tourism-related actions described in the management plan,
- g) Developing a set of indicators to assess the effectiveness of the outcomes of implementing the management plan of the property,".

The remaining points on the original Para 3, h), i), j), k), l), get adopted as is, except for the deletion of the term "nominated" in h). So, these points stay as they are.

Para 5: "Decides that the name of the property be changed to "Wooden Hypostyle Mosques of Medieval Anatolia";" and

Para 6: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, dear colleagues, I would like to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

So, for the first Paragraph, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to accept...

Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to add our support to the proposed amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, for the first Paragraph, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a new proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have proposed text. Do we agree to this paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the draft decision as a whole and I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.46** adopted as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations, Türkiye. You may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Türkiye:

[first speaker] Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to express how delighted I am, with a heart filled with gratitude and a deep sense of pride, as we celebrate today the inscription of the Wooden Hypostyle Mosques of Medieval Anatolia onto the prestigious World Heritage List.

This marks a significant milestone in our shared commitment to preserving and celebrating the rich cultural heritage of Anatolia. The inclusion of these extraordinary Wooden Hypostyle Mosques is a testament to the tireless efforts of many individuals and organizations who have dedicated to the conservation and protection of these historical gems. These mosques, dating around 700 years, have not only withstood the test of time but have also borne witness to centuries of history, culture, and spirituality. They are a living testament to the craftsmanship, innovation, and cultural diversity that defined medieval Anatolia.

I extend our heartfelt thanks to each member of the World Heritage Committee for their diligent evaluation and recognition of the Outstanding Universal Value of these mosques. I also wish to thank the Permanent Delegation

of Oman, in particular, for presenting an amendment to add the property to the World Heritage List and to all the other Committee members who supported the amendment.

In conclusion, on behalf of the people of Türkiye and all those who cherish our world's cultural heritage, I want to once again express our deepest appreciation to the World Heritage Committee for this honour.

I would now like to hand over to the General Director of Heritage and Museums at the Ministry of Culture, Mr. Birol Incecikoz.

Thank you.

[second speaker] Thank you.

On behalf of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, I would like to thank all the Distinguished Committee members and ICOMOS for their support and acknowledgement of the OUV of the Medieval Wooden Mosques of Anatolia, which has a special importance in the development of Islamic architecture.

We are aware of our responsibilities regarding the protection of cultural heritage and determined to fulfil the recommendations of ICOMOS. Therefore, I would like to thank all responsible institutions and experts at national and local levels, especially to the Directorate General of Foundations, municipalities and Scientific Advisory Boards who contributed to the nomination dossier.

Finally, my experts colleagues at the Ministry worked hard and ensured inspection of the first serial World Heritage site of Türkiye. I thank them all for their dedicated work.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations on behalf of the entire Committee.

The mic, Türkiye.

Türkiye.

8B.47 Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks (United States of America) // Les ouvrages en terre cérémoniels Hopewell (États-Unis d'Amérique)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks (United States of America).

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS: *[video]*

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks (United States of America). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 445 of the English version and page 454 of the French version.

[Next slide]

Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks is a series of eight monumental earthen enclosure complexes built between 2,000 and 1,600 years ago. Their scale and complexity are evidenced in precise geometric figures as well as hilltops sculpted to enclose vast, level plazas. There are alignments with the cycles of the Sun and the far more complex cycles of the Moon. These earthworks served as ceremonial centres, built by dispersed, non-hierarchical groups, whose way of life was supported by a mix of foraging and farming. The sites were the centre of a continent-wide sphere of influence and interaction, and have yielded finely crafted ritual objects fashioned from exotic raw materials obtained from distant places.

They are the most representative surviving expressions of the indigenous tradition now referred to as the Hopewell culture (1 to 400 CE).

ICOMOS considers that the methodology for the comparative analysis is sound, and the rationale and criteria for selecting the component parts for the serial nomination are justified.

The nominated property demonstrates criteria (i) and (iii).

[Next slide]

The eight component parts of the nominated property are situated in Licking, Warren, and Ross counties in the southern part of the State of Ohio, along the central tributaries of the Ohio River, in east-central North America. They were built on the upper-level terraces of river valleys in a landscape shaped during the last glaciation of

northeastern North America. They include landform-based shapes plus geometrically precise earthen circles (diameters greater than 300 meters with less than a 0.25 meter variance), squares, and octagons in a variety of combinations. Many were built to standard dimensional units and related geometrical principles, that were used across the region and that conceptually link all these archaeological sites to each other.

The conditions of integrity and authenticity of the whole series and of the individual component parts have been met, although some elements have been damaged or altered during their long history. Some recommendations have been included in the draft decision in order to facilitate an accurate understanding of the component parts by the visitors.

While the concept of a ceremonial landscape is raised in the nomination dossier, the State Party stresses that the landscape aspect does not play a relevant part in the nomination and is not an attribute that supports the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Small privately-owned portions of land included in the property have been identified for acquisition in the future.

[Next slide]

The legal and regulatory environment of the proposed property is robust and well enforced.

The management system is effective, although it relies on good coordination between different Government agencies, private owners and communities. Heritage Impact Assessment mechanisms and risk management provisions should be included in the management system. Further involvement of local communities in the decision-making processes could be explored.

In addition, follow-up has to be ensured concerning the acquisition of the leasehold of the Octagon Earthworks component part.

[Next slide]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks (United States of America) be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i) and (iii), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS, for this presentation.

I would like to see if there are any comments concerning this nomination. So, I see none.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.47**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.47**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see there are no comments or objections and I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.47** adopted. *[gavel]*
[applause]

Congratulations to the United States of America behalf of the entire Committee.

You may have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the United States of America:

[first speaker] Thank you.

On behalf of the US Delegation, I would like to thank the members of the World Heritage Committee for the inscription of Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks to the World Heritage List. That sounds so wonderful to say out loud. I'd also like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for being such a gracious host for this event and, in particular, recognize the Chair for his leadership of this Committee.

We appreciate the professionalism of ICOMOS and their work in evaluating this nomination.

I'd like to acknowledge the many people who have contributed to this nomination, including the dedicated staff at the National Park Service and the Ohio History Connection who care for these sites.

Now, I'd like to turn the floor over to a representative of the people to whom this means the most, the Native Americans who are descended from the builders of the earthworks, Chief Glenna Wallace of the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma.

Please take the floor.

[second speaker] Thank you.

Today, eight remarkable earthworks in Ohio, built by our Native American ancestors some 2,000 years ago, have now been officially designated a World Heritage site after nearly 20 years working towards this goal.

My immediate reaction is to shout and to shout with joy, but at the same time, my eyes are moist with tears and my lips, my chin and my voice tremble. My exhilaration is coupled with reflection as I am so humbled, so honoured, and so thankful that the world, at long last, recognizes the commitment, the spirituality, the knowledge of astronomy, mathematics, art, geology, and aesthetic vision resulting in the imaginative thinking used by our ancestors to create these magnificent earthworks. They were not just geniuses, they were uncommon geniuses. Their genius lives on today in many descendant tribes, including the Seneca Nation, the Miami Nation, the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, and the Wyandot Nation, who have also sent representatives here with us today. I am so thankful for the many, many individuals and organizations that helped make this inscription a reality. We are honoured and immensely blessed.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

MIXED HERITAGE // PATRIMOINE MIXTE

8B.33 Highlands of the Mongolian Altai (Mongolia) // Hauts plateaux de l'Altai mongol (Mongolie)

The Chairperson:

Now, we will continue with the mixed nominations, and I invite ICOMOS and IUCN to present the mixed nomination of the Highlands of the Mongolian Altai (Mongolia).

ICOMOS and IUCN, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Highlands of Mongolian Altai (Mongolia). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 490 of the English version and page 527 of the French version.

[Next slide, please]

The Highlands of the Mongolian Altai is a mountainous, steppe-like landscape located in the Altai Range, at the north-western edge of Mongolia, at the border with China and the Russian Federation. This mixed property is a series of two component parts – the Altai Tavan Bogd National Park and one section of the Siilkhem Mountain National Park. The nominated series exhibits different habitats and preserves a rich stratification of archaeological remains dating back to the Palaeolithic, through the Eneolithic, Bronze and Iron ages, to the Turkic, Uyghur and Mongolian periods. The landscape is still used by semi-nomadic herder communities.

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The boundaries of the nominated serial property are contained within the perimeter of the Altai Tavan Bogd National Park and of Section A of the Siilkhem Mountain National Park. The buffer zones are also included within the boundaries of the two parks or coincident with them. During the evaluation process, the State Party expanded the Altai Tavan Bogd National Park component part and its buffer zone to include completely the Upper Tsagaan Gol site. The Petroglyph Complex of Tsagaan Salaa – Baga Oigor is mostly contained within the nominated Siilkhem National Park component part, while a small section is in its buffer zone.

[The next slide, please]

Some Rock art sites are protected at the national level, whilst others only at the provincial level. The nominated property enjoys some form of traditional protection in relation to the sacredness to the people of the landscape, the petroglyphs, and certain mountains.

The management system is basic but suited to local conditions. However it needs some clarifications and strengthening.

The state of conservation is overall good. Affecting factors, such as climate change, increased tourism, and unplanned road construction need proactive response, including close monitoring.

[The next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property for what it concerns the cultural aspect.

The nominated property of the Highlands of the Mongolian Altai has been nominated from a cultural perspective as a combination of an archaeological landscape with persistent living pastoral traditions. During the evaluation process, the State Party has modified the proposed justification for inscription and the proposed cultural criteria. Initially, they were criterion (ii), (iii), (iv), and (vi), then changed to criterion (iii), (v), and (vi).

ICOMOS needed further information to make a proper assessment of the nominated property, and the State Party has harnessed the dialogue throughout the evaluation process, thus allowing ICOMOS to clarify that this landscape has the potential to demonstrate being an outstanding example of an archaeological landscape bearing exceptional witness to civilizations that have disappeared and illustrating defined past significant stages in human history.

However, ICOMOS does not see the potential of the living traditions to fulfil any of the World Heritage criteria, although herder communities play a key role in the preservation of this landscape.

ICOMOS considers that, out of the criteria proposed by the State Party, the nominated series has the potential to demonstrate criteria (iii) and (iv). However, further information is needed on the overall archaeological landscape and the archaeological remains in it.

Only ten sites have been described. Given the lack of sufficient information on the density and distribution of archaeological sites and remains beyond those presented in the dossier and in the additional information, it is difficult for ICOMOS to ascertain whether the boundaries of the nominated component parts are adequate from a cultural perspective.

It is, therefore, essential to compile and appraise all existing knowledge on the archaeological landscape and archaeological remains beyond the ten documented sites. The systematic mapping and inventorying of archaeological sites need also to continue to improve the understanding of this archaeological landscape and as a basis for monitoring and conservation.

Protection should be extended beyond the ten documented sites to cover the entire archaeological landscape. Designations would need to include measures for the protection of all archaeological remains and the archaeological potential of the landscape.

The management system would benefit from clarification on governance and decision-making. The management plan for the petroglyphs needs to cover the archaeological landscape and to include management measures for it. Its provisions should be integrated into other relevant spatial or development plans with legal status at the national level.

[The next slide, please]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the nomination of the Highlands of the Mongolian Altai (Mongolia) be deferred to allow the State Party, with the advice of the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to address the following main points from the cultural perspective:

- Gather, compile, and appraise all existing knowledge on the archaeological landscape and archaeological remains;

[The next one, please]

- Develop a programme for systematic inventorying and documentation of archaeological remains and features of the archaeological landscape;
- Revise the nomination dossier and refocus the narrative of the nomination on the archaeological dimensions of the landscape;
- Consider whether the currently proposed boundaries for the nominated property are adequate or need revision.

ICOMOS has included further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

ICOMOS also considers that such a revised nomination would need to be considered by an expert mission to the site.

[The next slide, please]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Highlands of the Mongolian Altai are nominated as a mixed site, including natural criterion (x).

The IUCN report can be found in the English and French versions on the pages shown on the screen.

[Next slide, please]

The nominated property consists of two nominated component parts, overlapping partially with Altai Tavan Bogd National Park and Siilkhem Mountain National Park.

The total area of the nominated property and the buffer zone was just presented by ICOMOS.

[Next slide, please]

The nomination presents the property under criterion (x) to secure habitat areas for numerous rare and endangered species, such as the Argali, Siberian Ibex, and the Snow Leopard. The nomination document also cites the broad range of ecosystems along a steep altitudinal gradient and high floristic diversity as a justification for inscription.

[Next slide, please]

While the nomination and supplementary information provides species data, the figures from the State Party do not suggest exceptionally high biodiversity that would support the case for criterion (x). Comparative analysis with other sites in the region suggests a lower species diversity, particularly concerning plants and birds in the nominated property.

The data currently available suggests the nominated property's biodiversity is of regional significance, predominantly comprising species characteristic of steppe, forest-steppe, mixed forest, sub-alpine vegetation, and alpine vegetation, but as a stand-alone nomination, it does not distinguish itself significantly from nearby World Heritage areas.

Further research and updated species inventories would be required to potentially make the case for global significance under criterion (x).

[Next slide, please]

The boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zones appear to be adequately delineated. Nevertheless, it is recommended that the eastern part of Siilkhem Mountain National Park-Section A and the southeastern end of Altai Tavan Bogd National Park be included in the nomination to improve the property's integrity and representation of wildlife values present in the areas not included in the nominated property.

The nominated property is under State ownership and overlaps with two national parks. National laws, decrees, and regulations fully protect the property, and the hunting of Argali, Ibex, and Snow Leopards is prohibited.

Regarding the management of the nominated property, the IUCN World Heritage Panel noted that the current management plan does not include sufficient resource allocation and measurable success indicators. Staffing levels are considered low, considering the vast area covered by both national parks, which poses challenges in effectively managing the property.

However, overgrazing and land degradation have been identified as threats, and the number of livestock within the nominated property continues to rise, indicating a trend that requires stronger management attention.

Further potential threats include proposed development projects in the vicinity, including a power station, roads, and mining operations. These developments could indirectly impact the nominated property through increased access and traffic.

[Next slide, please]

In conclusion, IUCN finds that the nominated Highlands of the Mongolian Altai do not currently demonstrate global significance under criterion (x).

IUCN recommends deferring the nomination to allow for a fully revised and expanded nomination. This revised nomination should establish complete and up-to-date species data for the nominated property to inform an updated and revised comparative analysis that may potentially support the case for criterion (x).

Given the nominated property represents the most complete sequence of altitudinal vegetation zones and thanks to its notable hydrological integrity, IUCN recommends the State Party to also explore criterion (ix) for a revised nomination.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much ICOMOS and IUCN.

So, I would like to ask the floor if they have any comment concerning this nomination. So, I see none. I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.33**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.33**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And I, therefore, declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.33** adopted. *[gavel]*

NATURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE NATUREL (suite)

8B.32 Evaporitic Karst and Caves on Northern Apennines (Italy) // Karst et grottes évaporitiques de l'Apennin du Nord (Italie)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite IUCN to present the nomination of the Evaporitic Karst and Caves of Northern Apennines, Italy. But before I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the Evaporitic Karst and Caves on Northern Apennines, and this is to be found on page 2 of Document INF.8B4.Add.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good morning.

[Please, can I have the next slide with the map?]

So, the Evaporitic Karst and Caves of Northern Apennines is a serial property spanning 3,680 ha with nine component parts and buffer zones totalling 8,348 ha.

These components represent two distinct geological periods:

- Firstly, the Triassic period (approximately 200 million years ago) associated with the breakup of the supercontinent Pangea and the formation of the modern continents; and
- Secondly, the ecological catastrophe known as the Messinian Salinity Crisis phase (from 6 million years ago), when the Mediterranean Sea largely evaporated.

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The current cave system, which is developed within these formations over the last 500,000 years, the cave system that hosts over 900 caves, including some of the world's deepest gypsum caves, reaching 265 meters below the surface. Furthermore, the property also contains unique chemical deposits and minerals, some of which are not found anywhere else. The nominated property also contains many noteworthy and unique hydrological features and surface karst forms, including unusually large gypsum cone features, salt springs, and speleothems.

The nominated area can be considered as the area with the most profusely studied, most accessible, more comprehensively displayed, and well-protected epigenic gypsum cave systems of the world. It contains an exceptional diversity of well-documented chemical deposits and minerals associated with this type of gypsum caves.

So, in conclusion, IUCN considers that the nominated property demonstrates global significance under criterion (viii) in its representation of epigenetic gypsum karst. In this sense, the nominated property would also fill a gap in the World Heritage List, that was identified in past IUCN thematic studies.

[Next slide, please]

The protection regime of the nominated property is composed of a wide range of protective designations at all levels:

- 96% of the nominated property is protected under the European Union's Natura 2000 network;
- 70% is protected by a national park and two regional parks; and
- Most of the remaining areas are nature reserves, protected landscapes, and protected areas under local law.

The buffer zone and the land adjacent to the nominated property is subject to the territorial and landscape planning of the Emilia-Romagna Region that establishes the rules for the management of the territory.

[Next slide, please]

Overall, IUCN notes that adequate protection through these different legislative and management programmes are covering most of the nominated property. However, according to our evaluation, there remain gaps in protection within the nominated property and for some important attributes of the proposed OUV which are located close to but outside the nominated areas. Whilst the boundaries mostly encompass the attributes of OUV within the nominated property, there are these gaps, notably outside the boundaries of the component parts of Alta Valle Secchia and parts of Vena del Gesso Romagnola. A revision of the boundaries and a complete protection coverage is, therefore, still required.

The property has a management system that benefits from adequate staffing and adequate budget. There are good monitoring systems for geological, ecological, and climatic aspects that are in place. While the management structure is outlined in the nomination, it is not yet fully operational.

Overall, threats to the property are low, but there is some gypsum quarrying, agriculture, and possible threats from increased tourism, and it is recommended not to extend one quarry permit, which is a potential threat, and to initiate restoration activities.

[Last slide, please]

Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, IUCN recommends the Committee to refer back the nomination to the State Party to deal with these remaining small modifications to boundaries and consolidating of the protection regime to fully and adequately cover the nominated area.

I'd also just like in closing, Mr. Chair, to acknowledge, as with a number of the other sites we presented here, the very good level of dialogue with the State Party regarding these remaining issues that we consider need to be solved in relation to the property before it could be inscribed.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like...

Ethiopia, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Ethiopia expresses its appreciation to the IUCN for its very in-depth evaluation and its important suggestion to this very significant nomination.

We have thoroughly considered this nomination, as it could fill a gap in the World Heritage List, that the IUCN itself has highlighted, since 2008, for karst in evaporite rocks.

Furthermore, my Delegation would like to recall that in *2021 Revised global framework for the application of criterion (viii) of the World Heritage Convention*, it was noted that the IUCN, there has been no progress regarding nominations in relation to gypsum karst.

We believe that the Evaporitic Karst and Caves of the Northern Apennines merits inscription on the World Heritage List, as it may finally fill in the gap in criterion (viii) due to its unique characteristics. The property represents the most complete, well-preserved, accessible, and an example of the karst phenomena in gypsum.

The nine component parts of the serial nomination include the evaporite cave with the deepest drop in the world, the world largest epigenetic cave, and the largest karst salt spring in Europe.

The Evaporitic Karst and Caves in Northern Apennines property groups the worldwide and first and best studied areas with regard to geology, mineralogy, hydrogeology, and speleology in evaporite karst systems since 16th century. IUCN evaluation states that the nominated property meets the criterion (viii) and, thus, recognizes its Outstanding Universal Value.

Regarding the conditions of integrity, protection and management, we recognize that the State Party has provided significant and important updating to comply with the arguments for which a referral has been proposed.

Regarding the legal protection, the State Party has demonstrated that the entire nominated property and its buffer zones are covered by an integrated system of legal measures, acting in combination with each other, that prohibits any modification or degradation. It is also the understanding of our Delegation that quarrying activities is prohibited on the entire property, and the only active quarry is located in the buffer zone. We welcome the State Party's commitment, which has already been assured, not to extend it and to start restoration activities as soon as practical.

Therefore, we are pleased to be the lead proponent for inscription of this property on the basis of its Outstanding Universal Value.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The past few days, we've spent a lot of time moving cultural sites which have been recommended by the Advisory Bodies for referral or even deferral, in that case.

Considering the fact that when you look at this thematic area, this is a thematic area which is underrepresented on the World Heritage Listing, Zambia will not hesitate but move first to recommend the inscription of this site so that we can have more geological sites being represented, and especially that we are also coming from a State Party which has got a geological site. So, we would like to have a number of sites which can provide a site for benchmarking geological studies and research.

I submit, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The nominated property is an impressive site with extensive epigenic gypsum karst, which fills a gap in karst World Heritage sites in the area, with the most profusely studied, most accessible, more comprehensive displayed and better protected epigenic gypsum cave system in the world. The nominated property also contains an exceptional diversity of well documented chemical deposit and mineral associated with gypsum caves, and has a very high density of caves. IUCN admits the quality of the karst system is excellent, so we believe the criterion (viii) is fully justified.

As for the integrity and protection and management requirements, it looks like the State Party has responded the concerns of the Advisory Body positively.

Therefore, we support the proposed amendment.

We would like to ask the State Party, at this stage, if there is any activity which could threaten the nominated property.

Thank you.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Oman wishes to appreciate the efforts made by the State Party and the Advisory Bodies for their collaborations to inscribe the site on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (viii).

We find that the nominated property is impressive, very well preserved and managed, and perfectly meets criteria (viii). This site, characterized by unique values, has a great scientific importance and contain unusual large diversity of chemical deposits and mineral associated with gypsum deposits and gypsum caves, in addition to its unusual, well preserved, and extensive abiogenic gypsum crystalline, where some of these minerals are found nowhere else and in no other area, as yet documented, the same mineral diversity.

For conserving its OUV, the State Party has already taken many actions represent by providing adequate resources for the management of the nominated areas and according to the management strategy. In addition, a long-term monitoring system has been set up and a structure of governance and management has been already drafted. Furthermore, we commend the revision of the quarry adopted in 2023 to exclude any enlargement of the quarry parameter and ensure final restoration of the quarry. We also commend the availability by the State Party to submit a minor boundary modification to enhance the condition of integrity of the property.

For these reasons, we support the amendments proposed by Ethiopia.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, since the lunch break is approaching, I would suggest that we resume the discussion on the afternoon session.

But I would like to ask the Director of the World Heritage Centre to list the speakers who'll take place at this session.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The following Committee members have requested to take the floor. By order of intervention, we will start with Argentina, then Egypt, Greece, India, South Africa, Bulgaria, Belgium and Qatar.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Also, the last thing I would like to ask for is, as agreed, that a group will meet to adjust the draft decision of the nomination submitted by Iran. ICOMOS and the Secretariat are ready to assist this group, but we would like to know who will be part of this group. As we understand, Oman will be leading on this group.

From the members of the Committee. Egypt, you would like take part of that group? Greece?

So, it seems we have none...

Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Nigeria will volunteer as well.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Nigeria.

Okay, so we will wait the results this afternoon.

Thank you so much.

I will pass the floor for general announcement, also for the Director of the World Heritage Centre.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you. Mr. Chairperson.

It's just to announce that we will have a one side event, which will start at 1:30 in Hegra Room, which is the Advisory Bodies space, organized by ICCROM and IUCN in the framework of the World Heritage Leadership and its title: "The Heritage Place Lab: Fostering Research-Practice Collaboration in World Heritage".

And also, if you allow me, just to recall to the members of the Committee that the Budget Group will meet from 2:00 to 3:00 at the Bureau Room.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and see you at 3:00. *[gavel]*

The meeting rose at 1:01 pm // La séance a été levée à 13h01.

NINTH DAY
Tuesday, 19 September 2023
SEVENTEENTH PLENARY MEETING
3:12 pm – 5:59 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

NEUVIÈME JOUR
Mardi 19 septembre 2023
DIX-SEPTIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h12 – 17h59
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

The Chairperson:

We kindly ask you to take your seat, please.

Thank you.

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

2023 CYCLE (Ct'd) // CYCLE 2023 (suite)

NATURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE NATUREL (suite)

8B.32 Evaporitic Karst and Caves on Northern Apennines (Italy) (Ct'd) // Karst et grottes évaporitiques de l'Apennin du Nord (Italie) (suite)

The Chairperson:

So, dear colleagues, we will resume the examination of the nomination submitted by the State Party of Italy.

We took some interventions from Ethiopia, Zambia, Japan and Oman, and now, I would like to pass the floor to Argentina to continue the discussion.

Argentina. Ready?

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Sorry to keep you waiting.

We wanted to thank and to congratulate Italy for this excellent nomination, and thank the IUCN for its very accurate and detailed evaluation.

We really do think this is a unique site and that the way that this site encompasses such a broad range of geological aspects is of great importance. We would like to see this property inscribed on the List, and we think that this is such a thorough, well preserved property that there is no reason for it not to be. We see that because there is a whole series of landscapes surrounding this, be they agricultural or other, then the integrity of the site is well intact.

And we think that some of the key management aspects have been very well handled, in particular when it comes to protecting the archaeological and geological attributes of the site. Monitoring is also adequate for the property, and therefore, we think that this property really deserves to be inscribed on the World Heritage site, and we'd like to support the amendment.

But we do have one question for the State Party: Is there a plan for developing tourism in this area, and how can you ensure that it's sustainable?

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Egypt would like to express its support for the inscription of the Evaporitic Karst and Caves of Northern Apennines on the World Heritage List, based on criterion (viii). We recognize the exceptional value of this site and the importance of preserving it for future generations, and support the inscription during the current session.

With over 900 caves, including some of the largest, deepest, and most complex in the world, this site provides unparalleled opportunities for scientific research and exploration. This site is not just a scientific treasure. It also holds historical significance as the birthplace of the scientific exploration of the caves. Its accessibility and well-preserved state ensure that it continues to be a leading research site.

Egypt commends Italy's dedication to the preservation and management of this exceptional site, and the establishment of the World Heritage oriented management structure is a positive step towards ensuring the long-term protection of its natural values and attributes.

We look forward to the Committee's decision of inscription.

Thank you very much, Sir.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation would like to commend the State Party for elaborating this nomination file, as well as the Advisory Body for its very well structured and detailed report and for its useful recommendations.

Having examined thoroughly the submitted information, we consider that the natural values and geological attributes of the component sites are well documented, whereas the particular geological and climatic context of the nominated property are well demonstrated. This impressive serial property, which, as already mentioned, belongs to an underrepresented category of the World Heritage List until now, is one of the most complete, accessible and well-preserved examples of the karst phenomena in gypsum. It should also be underlined that this property unites the most internationally studied areas that belong to this natural system in terms of hydrogeology, mineralogy, and speleology.

In view of all the above, our Delegation strongly supports the amendment proposed by Ethiopia for the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (viii) and its Outstanding Universal Value.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency, for giving India the Chair.

We join the list of countries supporting Italy, and we'd also like to support its inscription.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving us the floor.

The Delegation of South Africa has considered the documentation provided regarding the proposed serial nomination under criterion (viii) by Italy, which is the Evaporitic and Karst Caves of Northern Apennines, comprising of seven components in the Emilia-Romagna Region.

The Advisory Body, IUCN, after assessing the property, recommended for it to be referred back to the State Party due mostly to issues to be addressed later to its integrity, protection and management. The OUV of the proposed property was not questioned. The State Party of Italy has provided a thorough and expansive supplementary information report, concentrating on the issues and recommendations listed by the IUCN.

Specifically, in terms of formal protection, Italy confirmed that, albeit not all components are protected under the same legislation, all of them, along with their buffer zones, are formally protected under either the regional or national legislation.

Regarding the existing right for the Monte Tondo quarry, it is noted that this quarry is located within the buffer zone of the Vena del Gesso Romagnola component. It is expected that the mining of this quarry will continue within the current approved perimeter for the extent of the volume already authorized. It is, thus, foreseen that the extraction activities will remain for approximately another ten years.

Additional issues faced by ICOMOS, such as the development of a visitor management plan that identifies areas of expected high levels of visitation and the carrying capacity of the nominated property, should be promptly addressed by the State Party of Italy, and they should not jeopardize the potential inscription of the world on the World Heritage List.

As such, Mr. Chair South Africa support the amendment proposed by Ethiopia regarding the inscription of this property in the World Heritage List.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The nominated property is located in Northern Italy and it's a serial site of nine components. We believe it meets the requirements of criterion (viii) because it contains numerous surface and underground karst formations, which form some of the most complete and outstanding evaporite karst systems in the world. It provides excellent conditions for studying karst forms in gypsum deposits. For this reason, the formations have been studied there since the 16th century, and it is where speleology and many of the modern scientific theories of evaporitic karst were born. Due to its accessibility, even today, it is a leading research site.

In terms of integrity, the proposed property includes about 90% of all of the rocks in the Northern Apennines, with excellent quality and integrity of karst system.

Reliable legal protection is ensured for the entire site, which is included in the European Union Natura 2000 network, in a national park, two regional parks, nature reserves or protected landscapes under the national legislation of Italy.

Currently, the management is conducted by two bodies which have the management plan, budget, and personnel for the effective management of the entire territory.

Taking this into account, we support the amendments proposed by the Distinguished Delegation of Ethiopia and we support the inscription of the property.

We commend the State Party for the careful preparation of the documentation, in collaboration with the Advisory Body, and encourage the State Party to implement the recommendation of the amendment draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Briefly, very brief, just to say that the Delegation of Belgium would like to support the revised amendment proposed by Ethiopia and uploaded two days ago.

We would like to thank the State Party of Italy for the commitment not to extend the permits for quarrying in the Monte Tondo quarry and to start restoration activity as soon as possible. The major concerns regarding the boundaries of the nominated property as well as the single unified protection system are, according to us, sufficiently covered.

So again, we would like to support the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar*.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like, first of all, to thank the Advisory Bodies for their performance and their exhaustive report. I should also like to thank the State Party for their response to the cooperation and collaboration with the Advisory Bodies.

We believe that there is enough argument here to justify the inscription, bearing in mind that the State Party has resorted to a number of measures, including stopping the mining activities in this property.

Thus, bearing in mind all these considerations, we do endorse the inscription.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Rwanda.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Rwanda aimerait soutenir le projet d'amendement présenté par l'Éthiopie ainsi que l'inscription du site présenté par l'Italie.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more interventions. So, I would like to pass the floor to Italy to respond to some of the questions addressed by the Distinguished Delegates of Argentina and South Africa.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, as far as the ongoing activity which could threaten the nominated property, I would like to stress and make it clear that no economic and industrial activity threatens the sites and, in particular, quarrying activity is prohibited on the entire property. As some Distinguished Delegates already said, there is only one active quarry in the buffer zone of one component part. In the last months, a general revision of the quarrying plan of this area has already been adopted, and it excluded any enlargement of the quarry perimeters, and the exploitation of the quarry is allowed only within the limited amounts already licensed. So, the years can be also less than ten as the Distinguished Delegate of Bulgaria said; it's just limited to the amount that are already licensed. The plan states that the final restoration of the quarry and the relative funds have already been set aside in the quarry's concession deed.

For the tourism development in the area and the sustainability guarantee, I would like to underline that the caves that can be visited are only five out of approximately 900. For the caves that can be visited, which in any case can only be accessed with guided tours, a system to manage and monitor tourist visits is already in place and will be further strengthened. Furthermore, no artificial lightning will be installed in the caves as the visits are and will be possible only with lightning helmets. So, tourism will certainly remain specialized, we are talking of geotourism, and limited in size, with numbers of accesses absolutely compatible with the preservation of the ecosystem.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any more comments or interventions?

So, I see none and I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.32**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Ethiopia, which is co-authored by the Distinguished Delegation of Bulgaria, and from the floor, we have received confirmation from the Distinguished Delegations of Zambia, Japan, Oman, Argentina, Egypt, Greece, India, South Africa, Belgium, Qatar, and Rwanda.

The proposed amendment.

Para 2: "Inscribes Evaporitic Karst and Caves of Northern Apennines, Italy, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (viii);".

Para 3: "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:".

Moving to Para 4: "Welcomes the State Party's commitment not to extend the permit for quarrying in the Monte Tondo quarry and to commence restoration activities as soon as practical;"

Para 5: "Recommends the State Party to fully establish the plan management structure for the serial property, and to consider:

- a) Submitting a minor boundary modification to enlarge two component parts located in the Alta Valle Secchia and in Vena del Gesso Romagnola – Monte Moro,
- b) Developing a single unified protect system for the component parts of the serial property,"
- c) and d) remain as per original text except for deleting the "nominated" word.

Para 6: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024 a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Good afternoon.

We would like to add our name amongst the names of those who are endorsing this document.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thailand would like to support the amendment as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Le Mali souhaite également soutenir les amendements proposés.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We've been listening very carefully to the discussion with participation from the State Party, Italy, and we would like Mexico's name to be listed as supporting this proposed amendment too.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Nigeria supports the draft amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I think we should move to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

For the First Paragraph, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to accept the paragraph as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended? *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this amendment? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues, I would like to invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

And if there are no objections or comments, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.32** adopted as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Italy, congratulations on behalf of the entire Committee.

You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

[first speaker] Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On behalf of the Italian Republic, is a sincere privilege to share here in Riyadh with the international community the fact that, this time, Italy has diversified its World Heritage List with a natural property, thus highlighting the Earth's extraordinary treasures and our always growing responsibilities of preservation and enhancement towards future generations.

Our profound gratitude goes to you, Mr. Chairman, for the excellent and very professional conduct of this long session, and to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body for the successful work accomplished these days, and the constant spirit of open and transparent collaboration shown.

Let me dedicate such a global recognition to the proud and brave people of Emilia-Romagna, recently hit by heavy floods but always keen in any circumstances to let their resilience, passion, and skills prevail to promote with stronger determination and share with the whole world the fantastic qualities of their hearts and minds, as well as the richness of their land.

Italy remains warmly grateful to the Distinguished members of this Committee, in particular to Ethiopia, for having successfully presented the amendment to the draft decision and to the other members who expressed their support. Thanks to your support, friendship, and trust, Emilia-Romagna will be, from today, recognized not only for being the birthplace of Pavarotti, Fellini, Armani, Ferrari but also for its fascinating geology and their unique caves filled with amazing gypsum crystals.

I have the pleasure to give the floor to Barbara Lori, Regional Minister for International Cooperation.

Thank you. *[applause]*

[deuxième oratrice] M. le Président,

Merci.

Je voudrais tout d'abord exprimer ma gratitude à l'Arabie saoudite pour avoir organisé la 45^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

Merci à M. la Directrice générale, merci à l'UICN pour son évaluation précise et pour les recommandations suggérées, merci aussi aux autres États membres du Comité pour leur soutien. L'inscription du bien Karst et grottes évaporitiques de l'Apennin du Nord sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial est une nouvelle occasion pour partager des connaissances avec tous les pays, ainsi que pour les habitants de ces territoires de préserver leurs valeurs naturelles exceptionnelles pour les générations futures.

Je tiens à remercier le ministère de l'Environnement, le Comité scientifique régional, la Fédération spéléologique régionale, le système des parcs de la région Emilia-Romagna, les 19 municipalités, les universités de Modena, Reggio Emilia, Bologna pour leur travail extraordinaire. Merci à tous encore.

Je vous invite avec plaisir à visiter et connaître le monde souterrain exceptionnel des Karsts et grottes évaporitiques de l'Apennin du Nord en Italie.

Grazie a tutti. [applaudissements]

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

CULTURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

8B.50 Jodensavanne Archaeological Site: Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery (Suriname) // Site archéologique de Jodensavanne : établissement de Jodensavanne et cimetière de Cassipora Creek (Suriname)

The Chairperson:

So now, I would like to invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site: Jodensavanne Settlement and Cassipora Creek Cemetery, Suriname, but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of this nomination, which is on page 153 of both the English and French version of the Document INF.8B4 and, in this notification, some factual corrections have an impact on the text of the proposed Statement of Outstanding universal value. These corrections have already been incorporated in the version that we keep in the Secretariat.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, I'd like to pass the floor to ICOMOS.

ICOMOS: [video]

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site (Suriname). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 479 of the English version and page 332 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide]

The Jodensavanne Settlement is part of a serial nomination which illustrates early Jewish colonization attempts in the New World. It was founded in the 1680s and includes the ruins of what is believed to be the earliest synagogue of architectural significance in the Americas, along with cemeteries and the foundations of brick buildings, boat landing areas, a military post, and a small section of the military defence line, Cordonpad, among other elements. The Cassipora Creek Cemetery is the remnant of an older settlement founded in the 1650s which ceased to exist three decades later when its inhabitants migrated to Jodensavanne. Unusual for the Atlantic Sephardic diaspora, these early Jewish colonies were not situated in existing urban settings, and were longer-lived than many. Located amidst indigenous territory, the settlements were inhabited, owned, and governed by Jews who lived there together with free and enslaved persons of African descent. The archaeological remains, together with historical documentation, allow an exceptional story to be told of the centuries-long development of this Jewish "state within a state".

The settlements had the most extensive arrangement of privileges and immunities known in the early modern Jewish world. The property was nominated under criteria (ii) and (iii). However, ICOMOS considers that criterion (ii) has not been demonstrated.

In view of the specificities of the Jodensavanne settlement and the parameters chosen for the comparative analysis, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is distinct from other testimonies that illustrate the first attempts of Jewish settlement in the New World and justifies consideration for the World Heritage List.

[Next slide]

The nominated property is comprised of two component parts: the remains of the Jodensavanne Settlement on the heavily forested banks of the Suriname River; and the Cassipora Creek Cemetery, 2 km downstream. No further information is available at this time concerning the Cassipora Creek Settlement, and only the cemetery is included

in the nominated property. The area suspected of being the location of the Cassipora Creek Settlement is included in this component part's buffer zone.

The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met. However, ICOMOS highlights the need to strengthen protection of the surroundings of the nominated property's component parts in order to avoid negative impacts to the authenticity of the nominated property in the future.

Some issues concerning the delineation of the boundaries have been resolved through the evaluation process. ICOMOS considers that the revised boundaries are now coherent with the identified attributes.

[Next slide, please]

The nominated property has the highest legal protection at the national level, but ICOMOS notes the possibility of additional protection being afforded to the archaeological site and its surroundings.

A management plan exists by which the local indigenous population is co-responsible for the nominated property's management. The collaboration between the Redi Doti Village Council and the Jodensavanne Foundation through a renewable four-year Memorandum of Cooperation is harmonious. No conclusive information is provided concerning the possible involvement of other groups of stakeholders. ICOMOS considers that an adequate and stable budget for the investigation, operation, maintenance, conservation, and presentation of the nominated property is essential.

ICOMOS, furthermore, considers that the state of conservation is adequate and that most factors affecting the nominated property are well identified and controlled. However, possible future threats, especially related to climate change and development pressures, should be closely monitored. The elaboration of an integral risk preparedness plan should be considered.

[Next slide]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

[Next slide]

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Jodensavanne Archaeological Site (Suriname) be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iii), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[Next slide]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS, for this presentation.

I would like to ask the floor if they have any comments concerning this nomination.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chairman,

As a member of the Group of Caribbean Nations, CARICOM, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines congratulate Suriname on its achievement of World Heritage status for the Jodensavanne Archaeological Site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I see no more interventions.

So, I would like to invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.50**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.50**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt., and I declare that Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.50** adopted.
[gavel] [applause]

Congratulations to Suriname.

You may have the floor. Suriname, you may have the floor for two-minute statement.

The Observer Delegation of Suriname:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This is a fantastic and joyful moment, not only personally, but also for my country.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Suriname and the Jodensavanne Foundation, I would like to thank the World Heritage Committee for this decision for inscribing Surinamese third World Heritage site on the World Heritage List. Also, thanks to the States Parties that have supported this nomination.

The last time a property of Suriname was inscribed was 21 years ago. It has been a long, incredible, and challenging but very rewarding journey from 1971 onwards, when the Jodensavanne Foundation was established as the management body to protect and preserve this unique historical site, enormous efforts have been undertaken by many dedicated persons during more than 50 years to preserve and study this site. This 17th century site is an unparalleled testimony of a Jewish civilization within the Atlantic Sephardic diaspora, that was granted territorial and communal autonomy in colonial Suriname and that existed in a slave society and within indigenous territory. It has a remarkable and fascinating narrative to be shared with the world.

During the Advisory Body's technical evaluation process, some tough questions have to be answered, but these questions kept us sharp. We thank the ICOMOS technical evaluation mission expert, Ms. Eugenia Maria Bacci from Venezuela and ICOMOS Evaluation Unit for the evaluation and final recommendation to inscribe the property, as well as the Nomination Unit of the World Heritage Centre for its valuable comments on the different drafts of the nomination dossier.

I must also mention and pay gratitude to the late Peter van Dun of the Dutch Conservation Department and the late Ron van Oers, then doing his graduation study and later worked for the World Heritage Centre, who both assisted us with the drafting of the Tentative List, which has been submitted in 1998. I am sure they are very proud of us and looking down on us with satisfaction for this achievement.

I also would like to take the opportunity to thank the World Heritage Centre for its continued support for the conservation and sustainable tourism endeavours financed by, respectively, the Netherlands and the Japanese Funds-in-Trust at UNESCO. I also take this moment to express our gratitude to the Government of the Netherlands as well as that of Japan for their contribution.

Furthermore, we would like to dedicate this inscription in honour of all individuals that form part of this intriguing history of Suriname. Without them, there would not have been any Jodensavanne Archaeological Site.

Last but not least, I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for enabling my in-person participation at the fifth World Heritage Site Managers' Forum 2023, which is an excellent way of bringing site managers of around together to learn more and share each other's experiences and knowledges.

[message in State Party language] and God bless.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

Suriname. So, we have a request from the floor from the Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage. You may have the floor for two minutes statement.

The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage (Observer):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I speak on behalf of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage. I'd like to put forward some questions that have been raised about this nomination.

We are aware that the proposed site is within and not adjacent to indigenous peoples' territory belonging to various indigenous villages.

The first question is, therefore, what the formal proponent, namely the State Party, has done or verified to ensure that a thorough, free, prior, and informed consent process has been carried out, and also that the role of ICOMOS has been to ensure the same.

And secondly, we seek clarification on how this situation of a site within indigenous peoples' territory will be dealt with in light of the fact that indigenous peoples' rights are not even legally recognized yet in Suriname and indigenous peoples do not have any formally recognized collective rights, in spite of judgements by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights against the State of Suriname, which have confirmed the property rights of indigenous peoples to their lands and which oblige the State Party to adopt legislation on indigenous peoples' rights in order to uphold its obligation under international law.

Finally, we ask what steps will be taken to ensure that the indigenous peoples and affected villages are appropriately engaged through a thorough, free, prior and informed consent process in the future management of the place.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

8B.40 The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh (Iran (Islamic Republic of)) (Ct'd) // Le Paysage culturel de Masouleh (Iran (République islamique d')) (suite)

The Chairperson:

As you know, a Drafting Group was established to propose a consensual text for the draft decision of the nomination of The Cultural Landscape of Masouleh (Islamic Republic of Iran).

The text has been distributed and I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Oman, who had kindly accepted to take the lead on this group, to present to the Committee the outcome of their work.

You may have the floor, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to start by thanking all those who participated for this amendment, including the Secretariat, the ICOMOS, and some of the members of the Committee. And also, I would like to thank the State Party because they have looked at this and they are in agreement. The decision now, the amended decision is with the Rapporteur, and I hope it can be also presented for the rest of the Committee.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to ask you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.40**, but I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on this draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received the amendment from the Drafting Group, which is shown on screen. I can read that out.

The revision to Para 2: "Defers the examination of the nomination of The Cultural Landscape of Mosul, Islamic Republic of Iran, in order to allow the State Party, with the advice of ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, if requested, to reconsider the scope of the nomination and bring into focus the potential themes that might support a robust case for demonstrating potential Outstanding Universal Value, including where needed through the reconfiguration of the nominated property;"

Para 3: "Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Involve communities in the management of the nominated property, including the monitoring, conservation and decision-making processes,
- b) Present a clear socio-economic development strategy to ensure that tourism does not erode the current socio-economic fabric of the nominated property and further benefit local communities;"

Para 4: "Encourages the State Party to invite an Advisory mission to support the State Party in reconfiguring the proposed nomination."

End of amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like you, dear colleagues, to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

And for the First Paragraph, we don't have any amendment to the proposed text. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3; we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Therefore, I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole, and if there are no comments or objections, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.40** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

MIXED HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE MIXTE (suite)

8B.34 Zagori Cultural Landscape (Greece) // Paysage culturel de Zagori (Grèce)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS and IUCN to present the mixed nomination of Zagori Cultural Landscape, Greece.

ICOMOS and IUCN, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We wait for the slides. Thank you.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Zagori Cultural Landscape (Greece). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 502 of the English version and page 541 of the French version.

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Zagorochoria or Zagori villages extend along the western slopes of the northern part of the Pindus mountain range, a remote area characterized by a diversity of geological formations, flora, and fauna. These traditional settlements underwent a transformation influenced by remittances sent by expatriates to fund private and public infrastructure during the 18th and 19th centuries. A network of stone-arched bridges, stone cobbled paths, and stone staircases linking the villages in the present Municipality of Zagori formed a system that served as a political and social unit connecting the communities of the Voïdomatis River basin, showcasing a traditional architecture of limestone masonry and drystone cobbled pathways adapted to the mountain topography.

Based on the additional information, ICOMOS considers that comparative analysis demonstrates that the nominated property stands out from similar properties in the same geocultural region due to its concentration of traditional villages and the level of their preservation, its vernacular architecture of traditional stone building, the stone bridges and stone paths connecting the villages, and the imposing natural setting in which the villages are found.

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The nominated property, located in the region of Epirus, encompasses 20 traditional villages and surrounding rural landscape in three municipal units of the present Municipality of Zagori: Central Zagori; Tymphi; and Pápigo. The buffer zone coincides with the limits of the Municipality of Zagori, which is partly contained within the Northern Pindos National Park.

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The legal protection of the nominated property is comprehensive, including laws applying to natural, cultural, and intangible attributes.

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Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers that none of the criteria proposed by the State Party have been demonstrated, but that the nominated property meets criterion (v), which was not proposed.

Despite the commendable additional information provided, systematic information about the traditional architecture in the villages that are included in the nominated property needs to be assembled in order to establish a centralized documentation for all the individual attributes to create a baseline for conservation and management.

The current collection of individual conservation measures should be integrated into a single comprehensive conservation plan for the whole nominated property.

Issues have been identified regarding the integrity and authenticity of some traditional villages that are included within the nominated property and that would require to be included in the buffer zone.

Concerning the category of the nominated property, ICOMOS considers that the requirements of cultural landscapes have not been met, since the processes, relationships, and dynamic functions that are essential to a cultural landscape and its distinctive character are no longer maintained in a robust state.

The management system needs a coordination platform and mechanisms, given the numerous designations, institutions, and levels of implementation that overlap with the nominated property. The proposed Management Plan needs to include financial programming, a detailed timetable, and a Local Master Plan based on a comprehensive conservation plan.

Considering the factors affecting the nominated property, particularly depopulation, tourist pressures, reforestation, and climate change, both a tourist strategy and a risk preparedness and disaster risk management strategy need to be included in the proposed Management Plan, as well as a sustainability strategy that addresses the continuity of traditional masonry and building techniques and skills, all of which are essential for the long-term maintenance and conservation of the traditional villages.

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To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Zagori Cultural Landscape (Greece) be referred back to the State Party for the following main reasons:

- Consider including the villages of Skamnéli and Eláti in the buffer zone;
- Prepare documentation on the traditional architecture in the villages that are included in the nominated property to create a baseline for conservation and management of the property as a whole;

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- Develop a comprehensive conservation plan including all attributes in a holistic way;
- Develop a coordination platform and mechanisms for the management of the nominated property;

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- Develop a tourism strategy.

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- Taking into account the evaluation of the requirements on the category of the nominated property, ICOMOS further considers that the name of the property should be changed to: "Zagorochoria, the traditional villages of Zagori".

ICOMOS has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

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Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair.

[If we continue with the next slide, please, with the map]

So, Zagori Cultural Landscape, as you've heard, is a mixed site nomination; in relation to nature conservation values, it's nominated under natural criteria (viii) and (x).

It covers an area of 41,000 ha with a buffer zone of slightly over 58,000 ha.

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With regard to criterion (viii), the IUCN World Heritage Panel considers that the geological values of Zagori are significant at a regional level, but they do not attain global significance considering other areas already recognized on the World Heritage List for their karst values.

Regarding criterion (x), supplementary analysis indicates potential global significance. Notable biodiversity features include a rich plant biodiversity, globally important bird species, diverse invertebrates, and endemic fish species. These biodiversity features of the property include an extensive plant diversity with 1,700 recorded species. Additionally, the nominated property is home to some globally important bird species, including the Egyptian Vulture and diverse, threatened, and endemic invertebrates. The riparian systems of the rivers Aaos and Voidomatis show high endemism of fish, including globally threatened species such as the European Eel.

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However, the complete record of the nominated property's biodiversity is still pending, including that of sacred forests and old-growth trees. This incomplete data presents challenges in assessing the full potential of the property under criterion (x).

In terms of proposed boundaries, considering integrity requirements, the IUCN World Heritage Panel noted that they only cover a part of Northern Pindus National Park. This limits the property's ability to represent the biodiversity values, as important attributes are only partly covered by the nominated area.

To address this issue, IUCN would recommend consideration of a revision of boundaries to include the entire Northern Pindus National Park. Additionally, the potential inclusion of river sections outside the nominated property and outside of the National Park, which are essential for conservation of threatened species, could be explored.

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Zagori Cultural Landscape benefits from various legal frameworks at the national and international levels. It is protected by Special Protection Areas and Habitats Directives Sites under the European Union's Natura 2000 Network.

There are potential threats to the property, which encompass hydropower, water abstraction, progressive changes to grazing regimes that underpin some of the coevolved biodiversity, amongst others. Whilst a special Management Plan has been drafted for the property, it primarily focuses on cultural values, and the nature conservation values would require more developed and clear objectives and indicators.

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So, in relation to the nature conservation values, IUCN recognizes the potential of the Zagori Cultural Landscape, potentially with increased boundaries to meet criterion (x). However, to fully realize this potential, there would be a need for a revised nomination and a management approach to consider a property that would include biodiversity conservation as a central component.

For these reasons, IUCN's view would be to recommend a deferral for this property in relation to nature conservation values.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to open the floor to any comments concerning this nomination, and I will start with Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman,

The State Party had originally submitted this nomination of Zagori Cultural Landscape as a mixed site.

The built environment of Zagori consists of unique urban-like residences, structures for the community, such as schools, fountains, churches, and also an impressive network of stone arched bridges. It took its present form during the 18th and 19th centuries. At that time, it acquired a special architectural identity due to the mobility of its inhabitants and their economic prosperity. Zagori combines the above cultural characteristics with the rich and diverse natural environment, comprising also some impressive geological formations. The nomination file of the region of Zagori highlighted the cultural landscape of the region as shaped by the interaction of man and nature over the centuries.

After reviewing the evaluations of the two Advisory Bodies and consultation with the State Party, our Delegation proposed this amendment for the following reasons. The two Advisory Bodies presented in their respective reports some important but contradicting proposals:

- IUCN proposed a significant extension of the boundaries of the nominated property, covering an area far beyond the boundaries of Zagori Cultural Landscape, and recommended the deferral of the nomination. However, the State Party believes that such a demarcation involves areas which present different characteristics from a cultural point of view, and therefore this extension would negatively affect the nomination cohesion;

- ICOMOS, on the other hand, considered that the Outstanding Universal Value of Zagori is demonstrated, and criterion (v) is justified. According to ICOMOS, Zagori villages stand out as an outstanding example of traditional settlement that reflects a distinctive culture developed in Zagori, representative of the common legacy of Byzantine and Ottoman vernacular architecture of the larger Balkan region;
- ICOMOS also states that the nomination meets the requirements of authenticity and integrity as defined in Operational Guidelines, and considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List;
- It submits a number of recommendations regarding mainly the management of the property, which the State Party endorses and commits to implement, as they are in line with its national policies for cultural heritage protection and sustainable development.

In conclusion, given the above, we consider that nomination of Zagori Cultural Landscape should be inscribed in the present Committee session under criterion (v) since it presents all the requirements provided in Operational Guidelines.

The Management Plan provides for an integrated protection of both cultural and natural values of the property. The solid measures proposed in it have the constant consent of all stakeholders and will undoubtedly contribute to the efforts for sustainable development of this remote and mountainous area.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for giving India the floor on the Agenda Item 45 COM 8B.[34], Zagori Cultural Landscape (Greece), which has got a deferral recommendation from IUCN for the natural component but a referral recommendation from ICOMOS for its cultural component. We, now, have amendments presented for inscription for the cultural part.

I thank the excellent work done by the World Heritage Secretariat and the Expert Body.

The State Party of Greece, along with its experts, met us and explained the position. In the amendment, the State Party has dropped the natural site criteria and has proposed inscription under criteria (v). India's expert body has found this in order, and we have co-authored the amendments. We find criteria (v) as satisfied.

It is unfortunate that the natural site criteria are being dropped, as it has a beautiful, rich natural heritage as well. Zagori Cultural Landscape is located in the mountainous Epirus Region of north western Greece. It consists of a rural landscape where small villages, known as Zagorochoria or Zagori villages, extend along the western slopes of the northern part of the Pindus Mountain range. It represents a traditional settlement that reflects a distinctive culture developed in Zagori, representative of the common legacy of Byzantine and Ottoman areas of the larger Balkan region. Thus, its OUV has been established.

We, therefore, consider that the original name of the nomination, "Zagori Cultural Landscape", should be retained.

I request you, Mr. Chair, to kindly give the floor to the State Party to furnish additional information concerning the property's designation as a cultural landscape.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I'd like to pass the floor to Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chairman.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks ICOMOS and IUCN for their assessment of this site, and the State Party for its submission.

Having examined the documents in relation to the Zagori Cultural Landscape in Greece, we agree that the property boasts striking examples of traditional limestone architecture, traditional houses and mansions, cobbled pathways, 18th and 19th century public infrastructure, stone stairways and bridges which links the villages, rural dry-stone structures, and interesting geological formation and topography. We note with interest the reference to intangibles such as stone masonry skills and farming techniques. Essentially, these attributes are the reasons why this site stands out from similar villages, as these well-preserved traditional villages, depicting the vernacular architecture of stone construction of the Balkan region as set in exquisite natural surroundings with elements retained from the Bronze Age.

The property was nominated under criteria (iii), (iv), (vi), (vii), (viii) and (x), but the decision from ICOMOS was to refer and IUCN to defer. ICOMOS, however, advise that this site satisfies criteria (v) as an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, and it is in this context that we review the nomination. St Vincent and the Grenadines agrees that the site satisfies criteria (v) as well as the criteria of authenticity and integrity as outlined in Operational Guidelines. Its state of conservation was classified as fair, and the comparative analysis is justified.

Accordingly, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines registers its support for the inscription of the Zagori Cultural Landscape as a World Heritage site, based on criteria (v) as stated in the amendment.

We look forward to receiving the report on the implementation of the recommendations by December 2024.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

The Zagori Cultural Landscape, with its numerous traditional villages and impressive network of stone arch bridges, impressive natural environment, and dramatic geological formations, clearly merits inscription on the World Heritage List.

We follow the view of the Advisory Body, ICOMOS, in relation to the inscription of the Zagori Cultural Landscape, based on criterion (v). In addition to the cultural value of the nominated property, we would also like to emphasize the importance of the area for biodiversity. Zagori Cultural Landscape has a very high level of species endemism and a diverse mosaic of habitats with extensive forests including old growth forests, even beech forest. That is why IUCN stated that the nominated property may be of Outstanding Universal Value under criterion (x).

As a co-author of the amendments, we would like to support the inscription of the Zagori Cultural Landscape at this moment under criterion (v), but considering the importance of the Zagori Cultural Landscape for nature conservation, we would also like to suggest the State Party of Greece to investigate the potential for a future inscription on criterion (x), based on a reconfiguration of the boundaries of the property, in order to include the relevant biodiversity related attributes.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you Chair.

Nigeria wants to thank the Advisory Body and the World Heritage Centre for their efforts on this nomination. We also appreciate the State Party's effort to take the comprehensive and integrated approach to promoting both the natural and cultural values of the property.

Seeing that the architectural values of the Zagorochoria is on the way through their declaration in total as a historical site in accordance with the very strict archaeological law. For this, we believe that they will consequently subject to strict control and licensing procedure for all types of works and interventions.

The foregoing mentioned as proof of commitment and the justification of criterion (v), the statement of integrity authenticity as an additional information for us, provide the ground for a consideration of the draft decision.

Nigeria, therefore, supports amendment proposed by Egypt and commends Zagori Cultural Landscape for inscription on the World Heritage.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair.

The Ethiopian Delegation would like to thank the Advisory Bodies, and we have tried to go thoroughly, go through the document.

The nomination of Zagori Cultural Landscape highlights the long architectural tradition of the region as well as the humanity of the characteristics it represents. It is unique by its local craftsmen and the existence and use of original materials. We, therefore, believe that it comprises a rare example of the living heritage, sharing a wide range of tangible and intangible values maintained through the last centuries. As living heritage, it is shared and reproduced within the local communities and largely defines their identity. These World Heritage assets may indeed acquire a dynamic role in the sustainable development of the region, making it a unique example of the management measures that should be employed in order to address a series of challenges apparent in various World Heritage sites.

So, co-authoring the amendment presented by Egypt, we believe the site be inscribed in the current session.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

After having reviewed the nomination file, the Advisory Bodies evaluation, and having a discussion with the Member State, we reached the following conclusions:

- The nomination of Zagori highlights an exceptional cultural landscape in the region as shaped by the interaction of man and nature over the centuries;
- The property constitutes a traditional residential model of Outstanding Universal Value, justifying its inscription under criterion (v);
- The State Party consents to modify the boundaries of the property and the buffer zone according to ICOMOS recommendation, as well as to implement all ICOMOS proposals concerning the future preservation and protection of the site.

Therefore, we strongly support the amendments proposed by Egypt for inscription of the Zagori Cultural Landscape on the World Heritage List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Let me start my intervention by thanking the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body for the comprehensive report that have been submitted to the Committee.

I should also like to thank the State Party of Greece for the tremendous efforts that have been devoted to preparing this information dossier. Also, I would like to thank the State Party for the consideration of the concerned recommendations of the Advisory Bodies to ensure that the property meets the justification of Outstanding Universal Value.

Oman do believe that this property, as amended, would be a great addition to the World Heritage List. So, we support the draft amendment to the draft decision to inscribe the Zagora Cultural Landscape on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (v) as an outstanding example of a traditional settlement that reflects distinct cultural development in Zagori, representative of common legacy of Byzantine and Ottoman vernacular architecture of the large Balkan region.

Furthermore, we are also fully confident that the State Party of Greece to implement all the technical guidance that was provided by the Advisory Body, due to its capability that we have entrusted to it for the management of the World Heritage List sites. We know that the State Party has elaborated special Management Plan to ensure that the proper management of this great property and the utmost protection of the conservation of its OUV. The establishment of an independent department within the organization chart of the Municipality of Zagori is undoubtedly a great action to fulfil the implementation of the Management Plan.

I congratulate the State Party of Greece for this nomination.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We would like to thank the Advisory Bodies for their reports and presentations concerning the Zagori Cultural Landscape nomination, and also the Secretariat for the draft decision.

When we look at the villages of Zagorochoria, we see that they really are an outstanding example of traditional landscape. And the idea to opt for criterion (v), I think, means, unfortunately, that the natural components would have to be dropped. However, we do think that, over time, maybe these could be looked into.

But, for the moment, we support the recommendation of ICOMOS, including inscription of recognizing its OUV under no. (v). The Cultural Landscape of Zagori, we think, truly deserves its place on the World Heritage List, and that is why we would like to support the proposed amendment, which would give rise to an inscription.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to pass the floor to Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have reviewed the nomination file and the ICOMOS evaluation report, and we would like to point out the following:

- ICOMOS suggest that the Outstanding Universal Value of Zagorochoria is demonstrated and, according to ICOMOS report: "Zagorochoria stands out as an outstanding example of a traditional settlement that reflects a distinctive culture developed in Zagori, representative of the common legacy of Byzantine and Ottoman vernacular architecture of the larger Balkan region". So, criterion (v) is, therefore, justified;
- 20 traditional villages meet the requirements of authenticity and integrity as defined by the Operational Guidelines;
- ICOMOS consider that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List and proposed to the State Party a number of recommendations, that have been included in Egypt's proposed amendment.

So, based on the above, we consider that this nomination is mature for inscription, as it meets all requirements according to the Operational Guidelines.

Our Delegation, therefore, supports the amendment put forward by Egypt on the draft decision, and we would like to make a question to ICOMOS, to hear their point of view about retaining the original title of the nomination as a "Cultural Landscape".

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan, you may have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair, for having me the floor.

Japan thanks to the State Party of Greece for nominating this important mixed site. We also thank to the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat for their comprehensive report.

This is a typical case that we have different evaluations on cultural and natural aspects respectively, why we want to see more mixed sites on the World Heritage List. Sometimes, we have to accept the fact that the nomination of mixed property has lots of challenges.

After carefully hearing the rationale explained, Japan support the amendment. We support inscription based upon cultural criterion (v). We understand that when considering inscription of mixed proposal with cultural criteria only, several adjustments are needed.

With regard to this, if you allow me, Chair, we would like to ask the State Party on two points:

- First question is: minor modification of the property area and the buffer zone. We are convinced the State Party will make necessary arrangements rather soon, in line with the opinion of ICOMOS. We would appreciate if the State Party could provide some more details on the timeframe of this modification.
- Second point is about the management. If we understand correctly, there are five focuses in the Management Plan: cultural heritage; architectural heritage; natural heritage; sustainable development; as well as awareness raising and promotion. Among these, we should ask about intention to keep natural aspect in management even after natural criteria are excluded from the Statement of OUV. We would like to have clarification from the State Party on this point because we believe it is still important to keep eyes on natural aspect.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Salaam Aleykum.

After reviewing the nomination file, the additional information as well as the evaluation of Advisory Bodies, we would like to highlight the rich natural environment and interaction of man and nature within the property.

A strong system for the protection and enhancement of natural and geological values is already established, as a part of the nominated property is designated as a UNESCO Global Geopark and as a Natural Park according to the national legislation.

We, therefore, believe that inscription in the World Heritage List will further enhance and protect these values and the creation of synergies for sustainable tourism activities based on the diverse values of the property.

We also agree with Belgium's proposal for an additional mentioning the possible inclusion in the nomination of criterion (x) in the future, after consultation with the Advisory Bodies and the local stakeholders.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much.

The State of Qatar, after having carefully looked through the reports of the Advisory Bodies, ICOMOS and IUCN, we want to thank them for those reports, for having examined this, and also further to our discussions with the State Party and having received a very valuable information on this nomination, we are in a position to support the proposal for inscription of this property.

We feel that it is of great cultural and historical richness, and also its natural components are outstanding as well as the wider Byzantine and Ottoman heritage that can be seen therein. Protection mechanisms seem adequate, and we feel that criterion (v) is satisfied. For all of these reasons, the State of Qatar is in a position to support the proposal to inscribe this property on the World Heritage List.

We wanted to support the proposed amendment by Belgium. We think that this constructive dialogue between the State Party and the Advisory Bodies should continue so that perhaps a criterion (x) could be sought in the future.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa has carefully studied the proposed nomination dossier of the Zagori Cultural Landscape and the valuable recommendations made by the Advisory Body. South Africa wishes to commend both the State Party of Greece and Advisory Bodies for this positive outcome of their engagements. These engagements have demonstrated a harmonious spirit of cooperation between the State Party and the Advisory Body, which we support in all the evaluation conducted. We are encouraged by the support from ICOMOS, which recognizes that the OUV and comparative analysis conducted justifies that this Cultural Landscape be considered under criterion (v). We are also encouraged by the commitment from the State Party to implement all the proposed recommendations and submit a report by 1 December 2024.

Mr. Chairperson,

South Africa knows that the State Party has considered to the scientific recommendations of the Advisory Bodies and has, therefore, considered to study the nature of criteria and to also modify the boundaries of the property and its buffer zone to include Eláti and Skamnéli within the buffer zone.

South Africa, therefore, supports the amendments proposed by the Delegation of Egypt, and that this property be considered for inscription onto the World Heritage List. I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Zambia would like to, first of all, thank ICOMOS and IUCN as Advisory Bodies, and at the same time, the work done by the World Heritage Centre.

However, the State Party of Zambia takes note of the paradox in the recommendations which are coming from the two Advisory Bodies, where, on the one side, one Advisory Body is recommending for a referral, the other is recommending for a deferral. This calls for, maybe, some special considerations in the future in terms of how such evaluations are supposed to be conducted because, in a way, they tend to disadvantage the State Party and, sometimes, it can be demotivating. Saying this, I would like to also observe the fact that when you look at the Cultural Landscape as it has been observed by some of the previous speakers, cultural landscapes are very complicated, and in this case, you are looking at a situation where man and the environment are interacting, and the more we are trying to wait to expand our boundaries in the name of protecting biodiversity, man will also be working on the environment negatively and, at the end of the day, we will have no values to protect.

So, having said this, what I'm trying to say is that the cultural criteria which has already been established by, in this case, ICOMOS should be taken on board as a stepping stone for us to protect the other values which are remaining in this landscape.

And having said this, the State Party of Zambia would want to support the amendment for inscription rather than looking at it from the referral point of view. Possibly, with time, the natural aspects will also be taken on board. We have already noticed that the State Party has taken measures in trying to make sure that some of the issues are addressed. There is a Management Plan which is already taking care of that, and there are also some designations; in this case, we are talking of the Geopark status, which is also taking that aspect of integrating the natural aspects which may have been lost out.

I submit, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[Interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We want to thank the Advisory Bodies for their excellent work, and we want to reiterate, as previous speakers have done from the Distinguished Delegations, that the Cultural Landscape of Zagori is an area with a high concentration of rural and traditional village attributes, with the limestone masonry, the drystone cobbled paths and its bridges, the stone steps dating back to the 17th century, and some of its religious areas as well. We regret that this has not been properly appreciated, because this was what made this cultural and natural landscape unique, with its geological setting and unique biodiversity features. This enabled the property to be listed in UNESCO Global Geoparks network, which means that Belgium's recommendation is a very relevant one, and we'd be interested in seeing that pursued.

Having said that, with the traditional settlement and land use aspects, and the heritage of the wider Balkan regions, with its traditional architectural aspects and its environs, would be a welcome addition to the List because of its OUV under criterion (v).

There is the risk that certain aspects could disappear if they are not protected as has been the case in other parts of the world, and that is why we can fully support the proposed amendment by Egypt so as to inscribe this property, so as to bolster the protection of this outstanding site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thailand wishes to thank the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre for their report, and the State Party of Greece for the nomination dossier.

We have discussed with the State Party, and we are of the view that the State Party has addressed the concern regarding the Management Plan. The Municipality of Zagori will be the main body for the implementation of the Management Plan through an independent department, assisted by the Committee for the Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Landscape. This Committee includes representatives from local stakeholders, cultural and professional associations in the area. Furthermore, five villages of the core zone have also been designated by the Ministry of Culture as historical sites according to the Greek law. This will ensure a stronger protection of the attributes of the site.

In view of the above, and also from what we have heard from the other members of the Committee, Thailand would like to support the inscription of the site Zagori Cultural Landscape and, therefore, the amendment proposed by Egypt.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

After hearing all the comments and interventions from the Committee members, I would like to pass the floor to the State Party to respond to the questions addressed by the Distinguished Delegates of India and Japan.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor.

We would like to answer to the questions of the Distinguished members of this Committee.

In this regard, we would like to underline that Zagori is not just a number of clusters, but it is an integrated system of traditional villages interconnected through a network of stone pathways and arch bridges, as well as various other structures, such as schools, fountains and churches for common use within the community. Contrary to what happened in other places of the same region where the architecture of residences has a largely rural character, in Zagori villages, which over the last centuries developed in an exceptional way as a result of the mobility of their inhabitants and their economic prosperity, as it was mentioned, houses and common use buildings are of extremely high standard for the wider area of this region of Greece. Therefore, we believe that we should retain the original name of the nomination, which is as follows: Zagori Cultural Landscape.

Now, the management plan drafted for this nomination provides for the combined protection of both cultural and natural values, and in this spirit, it will be implemented. Regardless the non-use at this stage of natural criteria. Greece also welcomes the amendment included in this draft decision for considering a possible extension of this nomination so as to justify criterion (x), at a later stage and in close consultation with IUCN and local stakeholders.

Finally, as for ICOMOS proposal to include a minor modification to the boundaries, this very useful proposal is equally accepted. Therefore, we shall modify the boundaries accordingly, submitting the maps illustrating this new minor delineation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Advisory Bodies to respond to some of the questions and follow up on inquiries addressed by India, Italy and Zambia.

We can start with IUCN.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair.

I would like to respond to the point regarding significant natural values, and several Committee members, India, Belgium, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Mexico, and others referred to that fact, and I think the State Party of Greece, the nominating State Party, has also raised this.

I should also, I think, say at the outset, we've been able to engage in some very constructive discussions with Greece, here at the Committee, around exactly this issue, and I think it is important firstly to emphasize that we're saying there is significant biodiversity values. I guess you could say there is a potential for Outstanding Universal Value somewhere in the zone that we're looking at, but it does need to be reflected on further.

I think we also understand that this is an area which is being managed for its cultural and natural values, and there is a very good degree of capacity and focus on nature conservation in the area that is being considered.

So maybe, I just make two comments about areas that, I think, we will be able to address the nature conservation values within the framework of the proposed amended decision:

- The first is that you will adopt a provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value, but every provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value then has a period of reflection with the Advisory Bodies and the State Party concerned about ensuring that it reflects the important values. I think both the application of criterion (v) and the continued indication that this is a cultural landscape will give us the ability to look at the wording of the justification of the criteria and integrity, protection and management. It is unusual that we have a nomination where the criteria that is proposed for inscription is not one of the criteria that is in the nomination. So, I think we might also reflect on the wording of criterion (v) and what that indicates.
- Also, I think it's very welcome and it's good to hear the consensus with the State Party of Greece about the paragraph that, I think, Belgium referred to and other States Parties referred to, on the potential to further study the application of criterion (x), we'll be delighted to do that. But we will note the key point that there needs to be coherence with the landscape and the cultural underpinnings of the landscape.

Lastly, just very briefly, I'd just like to respond to the comment by Zambia and to recognize that there is a broader methodological issue here that we always know we face between IUCN and ICOMOS. We've reflected on this with the Committee over a decade, I think, and we do have proposals, but they are subject to the timeline and budget to introduce some ways that we might better harmonize where we can. But at the moment, we do the best we can with the budget and timeline available.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond, Mr. Chair. I know ICOMOS also has some comments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS.

ICOMOS

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

ICOMOS would like to respond to the question of the Distinguished Delegate of Italy.

The ICOMOS Panel has considered that the key values of the property respond to criterion (v) as an outstanding example of traditional settlements distinctive of a culture developed in Zagori, and the recommendation for changing the name responds to these key values, to reflect them in a more precise way.

However, ICOMOS also considers that the property does not demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural landscape, but nevertheless ICOMOS considers that the property could benefit from a management which takes a landscape approach and where biodiversity values can be taken into account, as it has been until now in Zagori.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there are any more interventions. So, I see none.

Therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.34**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Egypt, co-authored by the Distinguished Delegations of Belgium, Bulgaria, Ethiopia and India. And furthermore, from the floor, we have received confirmations from the Distinguished Delegations of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Nigeria, Oman, Argentina, Italy, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, South Africa, Zambia, Mexico, and Thailand.

The proposed amendment with revised Para 2: "Inscribes Zagori Cultural Landscape, Greece, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (v);".

Revised Para 3: "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:".

Revised Para 4: "Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Include the villages of Skamnéli and Eláti in the buffer zone,".

Points from b) to i) stay as they are, except the deletion of the word "nominated".

Original Para 4 is deleted.

Revised Para 5: "Recommends the State Party to investigate the potential for a future nomination under criterion (x) based on a reconfiguration of the boundaries of the property in order to include the relevant biodiversity related attributes;"

Para 6, "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024 a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session;"

Para 7 is same as original Para 5.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I'd like to invite you to adopt the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraph 1, we don't have any amendment. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree with this proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have an amendment. Do we agree to this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph. 5, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, we have a proposed paragraph. Do we agree with the proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues, let's adopt the draft decision as a whole. And if there are no objections or comments, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.34** adopted as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Greece on behalf of the entire Committee.

Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Greece would like to express its most sincere thanks to the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, the co-authoring Member States of this decision, as well as to all the Distinguished World Heritage Committee members for their precious support and recognition of the exceptional values of Zagori Cultural Landscape. We would equally like to wholeheartedly thank the local authorities, site managers, stakeholders, and local communities for their tremendous efforts and strong commitment to the preparation of this nomination file from the very beginning.

This inscription recognizes the property's integrity, the authenticity, and exceptional values so that Zagori Cultural Landscape transcends the national boundaries and becomes a property of universal value and importance for present and future generations.

Mr. Chair,

The originality of this inscription consists of the fact that, for the first time ever, Greece inscribed on the World Heritage List, a property that is part of our most recent national historic period, a unique example of traditional cultural heritage of our country, Greece. Additionally, Zagori Cultural Landscape represents the efforts of the Greek people to survive under difficult conditions in isolated settlements during the 17th, the 18th and the 19th centuries through trading in Balkans and Europe and the subsequent exchange of cultural trade from one region to the other.

Finally, this inscription is a rare example of living heritage, sharing a wide range of tangible and intangible values, maintained through the last centuries. Therefore, it could serve as a reference case as to how the World Heritage management of mountainous settlements may contribute to achieving sustainable development.

Greece would like to invite you all to visit and admire with your own eyes this unique cultural landscape.

We thank you all for this so broad support to Zagori's inscription.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you and congratulations again.

NATURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE NATUREL (suite)

8B.31 Anticosti (Canada) // Anticosti (Canada)

The Chairperson:

I would like now to invite IUCN to present the nomination of Anticosti (Canada), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the Anticosti nomination. This notification is on page 93 of Document INF.8B4. This notification has some factual error correction that have an impact on the proposed text of the Statement of OUV, and this has been already integrated in the text that will be shown on the screen.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN, you have the floor.

UICN :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le rapport de l'UICN se trouve dans les pages indiquées dans ce diapo, et si je peux avoir le prochain diapo avec la carte, s'il vous plaît.

L'île d'Anticosti est située dans le golfe du Saint-Laurent, au Québec (Canada), et a été proposée au titre du critère (viii).

Le bien et la zone tampon sont situés sur les Nitassinans ou territoires revendiqués par les communautés innues de Ekuanitshit et de Nutashkuan, qui ont toutes deux donné leur consentement à l'inscription du bien. Le bien proposé couvre la quasi-totalité du littoral de l'île, y compris les plateformes, plages et falaises découpées par les vagues ainsi que les chenaux à fort débit des rivières Jupiter et Vauréal.

[Prochaine diapo, s'il vous plaît]

Ces zones d'Anticosti sont une fenêtre sur les changements de la vie et de l'écosystème dans l'histoire de la Terre, exposant les archives fossiles d'Anticosti. Ces archives fossiles sont remarquablement complètes et intactes. Ils témoignent de la première extinction massive enregistrée dans l'histoire de la Terre. Anticosti est un site représentatif, à l'échelle mondiale, de la biodiversité de l'époque géologique de l'Ordovicien, de l'extinction massive à la fin de l'Ordovicien ainsi que du rétablissement consécutif à l'extinction au Silurien inférieur.

[Prochaine diapo, s'il vous plaît]

Le dossier de candidature présente une analyse comparative globale très complète mais concise. Sur la base de 12 critères, Anticosti est classé premier, ce qui en fait la meilleure archive au monde des changements de l'écosystème marin pendant l'intervalle de la limite Ordovicien/Silurien. Les extinctions de la fin de l'Ordovicien, du Dévonien et du Permien n'étant pas encore représentées sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, le bien proposé comblerait une lacune importante sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Anticosti possède le plus grand enregistrement stratigraphique en épaisseur et l'enregistrement paléontologique le plus complet et le mieux préservé, représentant les premières extinctions massives de la vie animale à l'échelle mondiale, il y a 447 à 437 millions d'années.

[Prochaine diapo, s'il vous plaît]

L'UICN considère donc que l'Anticosti constitue un cas convaincant d'importance mondiale au titre du critère (viii). L'intégrité du bien proposé est impeccable ; le site proposé englobant pratiquement toute l'île. Les limites du bien sont bien définies et sont destinées à être ajustées pour tenir compte de l'érosion côtière au fil du temps.

Les menaces qui pèsent sur le bien proposé sont limitées en raison de son éloignement et de son état naturel.

Une protection juridique et des cadres de gestion adéquate sont en place, ciblant spécifiquement le patrimoine géologique d'Anticosti et répondant ainsi aux exigences des Orientations.

90 % du bien proposé pour inscription sont couverts par une réserve de biodiversité proposée, qui devrait être établie cette année. Les autres zones du bien sont couvertes par le parc national d'Anticosti et les réserves écologiques du Pointe-Heath et du Grand-Lac-Salé. L'ensemble de la zone du bien proposé relève de la Loi sur la conservation du patrimoine naturel du Québec et appartient au gouvernement provincial du Québec, qui est chargé de sa protection.

La gestion du bien proposé est supervisée par le ministère de l'Environnement et de Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec, et comprend des objectifs mesurables et des mesures de protection. Un comité communautaire veille à ce que les préoccupations et les connaissances locales et autochtones soient intégrées dans la gestion et la conservation, et des ressources financières importantes ont été allouées par le gouvernement provincial pour soutenir la gestion et la recherche.

[Dernière diapo, s'il vous plaît]

M. le Président,

L'île d'Anticosti répond au critère naturel (viii) ainsi que les conditions d'intégrité pour l'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en raison de ces valeurs géologiques et paléontologiques exceptionnelles. Les conditions de protection et de gestion sont également remplies et, par conséquent, l'UICN recommande que l'île d'Anticosti soit inscrite sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sur la base du critère (viii).

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments concerning this nomination?

So, I see none and, therefore, I invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.31**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for this draft decision.

Thanks.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there are no comments or objections, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.31** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Canada on behalf of the entire Committee.

Canada, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Canada:

[first speaker] Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the Committee for your decision.

Le Canada est ravi d'être ici pour partager ce moment historique pour Anticosti.

Je voudrais également exprimer notre appréciation pour le travail professionnel et méticuleux de l'UICN tout au long de l'évaluation de cette candidature.

Je cède maintenant la parole au représentant du gouvernement du Québec au sein de la Délégation permanente du Canada à l'UNESCO.

[deuxième orateur] Merci beaucoup.

M. le Président,

Le gouvernement du Québec accueille avec immense fierté la décision du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

Le Québec demeurera engagé dans la préservation et la gestion de ce site naturel unique.

Enfin, le gouvernement du Québec félicite celles et ceux qui ont contribué au succès de ce projet et les remercie pour leur dévouement et leur engagement. Je cède maintenant la parole à la représentante de la proposition d'inscription, Mme Meggie Richard, préfète de la municipalité régionale de comté de Minganie, au Québec.

[troisième oratrice] Bonjour. Kwe.

J'ai l'honneur de m'adresser à vous en mon nom et celui de la mairesse de la municipalité de l'île d'Anticosti, Mme Hélène Boulanger.

Nous tenons à remercier du fond du cœur tous ceux et celles qui, menés par notre directeur scientifique, M. André Desrochers, ont imaginé ce projet et travaillé d'arrache-pied pour qu'il devienne réalité.

Notre île et sa communauté basculent aujourd'hui dans une nouvelle ère. L'île d'Anticosti, qui fait partie intégrante du Nitassinan Innu, est la fierté des Anticostiens et de toute la Minganie. Nous pouvons maintenant affirmer qu'elle est le meilleur laboratoire au monde pour l'étude de la première extinction de masse du vivant. La recherche sur Anticosti nous dotera de nouvelles connaissances scientifiques qui nous permettront de mieux comprendre notre évolution sur Terre. Cette reconnaissance s'accompagne de responsabilités en matière de protection et de mise en valeur, et nous voyons dans ces nouvelles missions une opportunité unique d'un développement responsable de ces immenses territoires, et ce, pour les générations à venir.

En terminant, nous tenons à souligner l'exceptionnelle collaboration avec nos partenaires des premiers instants, soit les communautés innues de Ekuanitshit et de Nutashkuan.

Nous remercions également le gouvernement du Québec et du Canada pour leur support indéfectible pendant le processus d'inscription.

Membres du Comité, je vous remercie. [applaudissements]

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

CULTURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

8B.53 ESMA Museum and Site of Memory – Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination (Argentina) // Musée et lieu de Mémoire de l'ESMA - Ancien centre clandestin de détention, de torture et d'extermination (Argentine)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the nomination ESMA Museum and Site of Memory – Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination (Argentina), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of this nomination, and this notification is on page 13 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B4.Add. This notification has some factual corrections that have been already incorporated in the text of the provisional Statement of OUV that we have on our side.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the *Escuela Superior de Mecánica de la Armada* Museum and Site of Memory – Former Clandestine Centre of Detention, Torture and Extermination (Argentina).

The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1.Add on page 36 of the English version and page 16 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

[Next slide, please]

The nominated ESMA Museum and Site of Memory is located in the former Officers' Quarters within the complex of the Former Navy School of Mechanics in Buenos Aires. During the civil-military dictatorship (1976-1983), the Officers' Quarters building at ESMA was the Argentina Navy's principal secret detention centre for holding captive, interrogating, torturing, and eventually killing armed and non-armed opponents who had been abducted in Buenos Aires. This was part of a national strategy to destroy the armed and nonviolent opposition to the military regime.

The property has been nominated for inclusion in the World Heritage List as the most prominent symbol of state-led terrorism and, at the same time, of the value of ascertaining the facts and seeking justice for those crimes as a basis to build a shared understanding of the abyss reached during the dictatorships in Argentina and the Southern Cone of America and a memory of the victims.

The comparative analysis has proved that, for the scale, complexity, and transnational and coordinated nature of the events that took place at the nominated property, the influence of the global historic and geopolitical setting on the events happening in Argentina and in the American Southern Cone along with the global resonance of these events make them of outstanding universal significance and that the nominated property is directly and tangibly associated with these events, to the point that it is protected as judicial evidence in the trials against the crimes occurred there.

[Next slide, please]

The proposed boundaries include the immediate configuration of the nominated property. The nominated area includes important views, both internal and external.

The conditions of integrity and authenticity of the attributes supporting the proposed justification for inscription are met, although an expansion of the buffer zone towards the north-western side of the nominated property would be needed to guarantee adequate protection from potential inappropriate development.

The buffer zone covers the entirety of the ESMA ensemble, which is protected as National Historic Site. Throughout the evaluation process, there have been exchanges on the buffer zone. However, ICOMOS still considers that expanding it on the north-western side would be necessary, even though the protection measures to be put in place should not be the same as those established for the ESMA ensemble.

[The next one, please]

The legal protection system and the management arrangements and plans are overall adequate to guarantee that the nominated property continues to convey its value and sustain its attributes. However, ICOMOS has identified areas where improvement should be sought, particularly with regard to the presentation of the historical – political context that led to the dictatorship and to the engagement of all sectors of Argentinian society in the interpretation strategy for the property.

[The next slide, please]

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property: of the two criteria initially proposed, ICOMOS considers that only criterion (vi) is relevant and justified for the nominated property.

[The next one, please]

The State Party of Argentina deserves being commended for bringing forward this complex nomination but much more for the exceptional and painstaking process of ascertaining the truth of the facts, the responsibilities, and seeking justice for crimes committed during the military dictatorship against armed and non-armed opponents and dissidents, a process which continues today.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that ESMA Museum and Sites of Memory (Argentina) be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (vi). ICOMOS has also included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property.

[The next slide, please]

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS, for this presentation.

I would like to see if there are any comments concerning this nomination.

I'll start with Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Because this is the first Site of Memory file to be inscribed, I would like to make a small remark.

The Site of Memory files are a new category, which was approved back in January this year, in the [18th] extraordinary session of this Committee. In fact, this extraordinary session adopted the report of the Working Group on this particular topic, which was agreed after considerable debate. The decision, based on the Working Group report, provides Guiding Principles and mechanisms in case of contestation. Actually, there are five guiding principles:

- The first was authenticity of the physical site and the link to the associated memories;
- Secondly, inclusive and effective participation of all potentially affected stakeholders;
- Thirdly, the interpretation strategy;
- Fourthly, the education element; and
- Finally, the reconciliation programme.

It is our pleasure and satisfaction to see the inscription of ESMA as the first inscription under this category because this file is justifiable on all five Guiding Principles.

Another very important consideration in this regard is whether or not there is any contestation because, if there is any contestation, the inscription of a file could create or increase the divisions and conflicts. As we understand it, there is no contestation both within and outside of the State Party of Argentina. On the contrary, we see the shared sense of solidarity in many parts of Ibero-America.

So, we believe that ESMA is one of the most suitable files under this category for inscription, in terms both of Guiding Principles and of the absence of contestation and, therefore, this case will provide a good example for the future nominations.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency. Belgium.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président,

La Belgique ne va pas revenir sur la présentation que nous venons d'entendre de la part de ICOMOS, ni insister sur les nombreuses qualités du site d'ESMA.

En fait, nous voudrions souligner l'importance du moment que nous nous apprêtons à vivre. En effet, lors de la 42^e session, notre Comité s'interrogeait sur la compatibilité de ces sites de mémoire avec l'esprit de la Convention. Un travail intense a été mené depuis lors, avec des rapports des Organisations consultatives et des études d'experts. Finalement, un groupe de travail ouvert, brillamment présidé par la Déléguée permanente de Sainte-Lucie, et auquel a participé un grand nombre d'États parties dont la Belgique, s'est penché sur cette question. Les conclusions de ce groupe de travail ont été présentées lors de la 18^e session extraordinaire de notre Comité au début de cette année, et notre Comité a ainsi estimé que les sites de mémoire liés à des conflits récents peuvent, comme tout autre site, désormais être inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, dans la mesure où ils présentent une valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

M. le Président,

La Belgique regrette que ces trois dossiers de sites de mémoire n'aient pu être examinés au cours de la même session, tel qu'initialement prévu. Néanmoins, le site que nous nous apprêtons à inscrire sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sera le premier à être examiné depuis cette décision. Il fera référence, et nous souhaitons que le dossier du Musée et du lieu de Mémoire de l'ESMA - Ancien centre clandestin de détention, de torture et d'extermination marque un jalon dans la jurisprudence du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

En cela, la Belgique adresse d'ores et déjà ses sincères félicitations à l'Argentine.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[Interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Julio Cortazar, who actually took part as a translator at UNESCO, said that justice could only be achieved taking into consideration the living heritage of those who are no longer with us. So, one by one, you need to go through the facts until you reach the truth even though for many years it had been hidden. Therefore, what we can do in the

international levels with cases like this, I think, lends even more weight to the historical moment we are about to this. It's with dignity, it's about liberty, and it's about the future.

Inscription of the ESMA Museum in the Latin American context will resound as it reaches out to other nations, builds bridges, and will stand as a testimony to the importance of providing justice to all of the different families who suffered the injustices and forced disappearances, loss of human dignity, loss of life because of state terrorism, and their clampdown on dissidents.

Our congratulations to the Republic of Argentina for nominating this site.

I don't think there is any controversy surrounding this, but every single one of these Sites of Memories, as is the case with the ESMA Museum, point to the mistakes that were made in the Latin American context, particularly when it came to military juntas in the 20th century. I remember that we should never forget that what we go through will only make us stronger.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there are any more interventions.

So, I see none and I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the raft Decision **45 COM 8B.53**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.53**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

So, there are no objections or comments.

I would like to tell you that I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.53** adopted. [gavel] [applause]

Congratulations to Argentina on behalf of the entire Committee.

Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina: [interpretation from Spanish]

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you very much to the Member States of this Committee, the World Heritage Committee, to ICOMOS for its professionalism and for all of the different fora of dialogue, and the World Heritage Centre, and the Secretariat.

I am full of emotion as I say that the ESMA Museum and Site of Memory is inscribed.

Thank you, thank you, thank you very, very much. Thank you.

It's an honour to transmit to you our Chairman's message, the President Alberto Fernandez, who couldn't actually be here for this historic moment but who sends us his video message.

Thank you, thank you very much.

The President of the Republic of Argentina: [video] [interpretation from Spanish]

Good afternoon to one and all.

My first words have to be words of gratitude to all of the Member States of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO.

Today, you have taken a major step forward. You have turned the Navy School of Mechanics into a Site of Memory, and you have turned it into World Heritage of Humanity. In truth, memory does need to be maintained so that these negative experiences never again occur.

The Navy School of Mechanics, I think, conveyed the absolute worst aspects of state-sponsored terrorism. Argentinian families experienced a persecution. Anyone who opposed the military dictatorship was persecuted. Some were persecuted, some were detained, almost all were tortured, others ended up going into exile, many were murdered, and many disappeared from the face of the earth forever, right over there in that Navy School of Mechanics. The Government of Argentina at the time, the military Government had its torture centre, where horrors

took place. It was there that men and women went through, it was there that many of them were transported into death flights and flung from the planes into the River Plate. And right up until today, we're still looking for their remains.

State terrorism showed the Argentinian people, mothers, grandmothers, the horrors that it could inflict. These mothers and grandmothers who were looking for nephews, sons, husbands. It was an emblematic struggle, a struggle that was spearheaded by women who never shied away from saying that you need to stand up to dictatorships like this, which was the worst that Argentina ever faced.

And now, we are celebrating 40 years since the return of democracy, and I can't express to you all how good it makes me feel to know that we are living in democratic times, and that the ESMA Museum is now a Site of Memory so that no one in Argentina can ever deny or forget the horrors that took place there. In truth, those mothers, those grandmothers were never out for vengeance ; what they taught us was that we must never forget. They taught us to seek the truth, they taught us to seek justice. And that is what we are doing, nothing more.

For the struggles of so many people, for the struggles of those mothers and grandmothers, for the struggles of the human rights organizations and associations, I wanted to extend my thanks for the decision that you have taken.

I wanted to thank, in particular, the Ambassador of Argentina to UNESCO, Marcela Losardo, who has worked tirelessly to make this happen, and that this has now become a reality at the very point in time in which we are celebrating 40 years of the return to democracy in Argentina, this will stand out.

The memory of Argentina is important. Memory stops us from repeating past mistakes. Building on our memories, we can move towards a better future. That building over there where thousands and thousands of Argentinians went through, where so many horrors, death, torture, and abuses took place, I think, can now serve as a lesson to move towards a better society.

Thank you very much, and, please, rest assured that you have done your bit to ensure justice because by preserving memory, we make a better world.

Thank you very much. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations to Argentina again.

NATURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE NATUREL (suite)

8B.26 Nyungwe National Park (Rwanda) // Parc national de Nyungwe (Rwanda)

The Chairperson:

So, dear colleagues, since we are quite advancing in our schedule and after consultation of the State Party of Rwanda, we will now move to another examination.

I invite IUCN to present the nomination of Nyungwe National Park (Rwanda), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of this nomination, and this is to be found on page 98 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN, I give you the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Could we go to the next slide, please]

Nyungwe National Park is located in the very biodiverse Albertine Rift Ecoregion and nominated under criteria (ix) and (x).

The nominated property is composed of three nominated component parts – one principal block of more than 100,000 ha and two small forest patches of 430 and almost 18 ha.

With over 5,800 plant species, Nyungwe accounts for roughly 14% of all vascular plant species in Africa. The park is also home to an impressive array of fauna, including 404 mammal species and more than 1,000 bird species. Nyungwe is emblematic of the Albertine Rift's complex landscape, boasting intact mountain forests and a highly diverse mosaic of vegetation.

[Next slide, please]

While the park clearly has the potential to meet criterion (x), thanks to its rich biodiversity and substantial populations of globally threatened species, the case for criterion (ix) has been challenged by IUCN expert reviewers. Notably, the absence of keystone species such as the African Savanna Elephant, Buffalo, Giant Forest Hog, and Leopard has led to an incomplete representation of the nominated property's ecosystem.

[Next slide, please]

Nyungwe National Park has been under formal protection since 1933 and is legally owned by the State. IUCN evaluation underscores the need to strengthen the legal definition of the buffer zone to enhance its protective function, especially following the expiration of the Management Plan. A Long-Term Sustainability Strategy is expected to guide the implementation of the Park's Business Plan and the development of a future Management Plan.

Whilst the Long-Term Sustainability Strategy provides a commendable vision for the nominated property, the IUCN World Heritage Panel noted that it does not replace the expired Management Plan and it is not specified how the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property should be preserved.

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IUCN considers that the nominated property is currently not meeting management requirements in line with Paragraph 108 of the Operational Guidelines, which requires each nominated property to have an appropriate management plan which must specify how the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property should be preserved.

Several potential threats, such as roads traversing the park and illegal mining, have been identified. Efforts on the part of the State Party to mitigate these threats are evident, including plans to regulate traffic and restore areas impacted by mining. Additionally, reintroduction projects for locally extinct fauna are under consideration, necessitating careful planning and evaluation.

The nominated property's boundaries are considered appropriate, although some improvements are recommended. These include extending the buffer zone and enhancing connectivity between the three different component parts to enhance its long-term integrity.

[Next slide, please]

In conclusion, IUCN sees a strong potential for Nyungwe National Park to be globally significant under criterion (x). The recommended referral would enable the completion of the new Management Plan for the nominated property according to the nominated property's OUV, and to guide the management of the buffer zone.

IUCN would just like to add that we welcome the continued dialogue with the State Party, including at this present session. On 4 September 2023, IUCN received the updated Management Plan for Nyungwe National Park to cover the period 2023-2032. This could not be taken into account for IUCN evaluation, but we positively note the State Party's swift response that has led to the finalization of the management plan.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there are any comments from the floor concerning this nomination, and I will start with Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Delegation of Egypt has examined with great interest the report of the Advisory Body on the nomination of Nyungwe National Park of Rwanda on the World Heritage List, and wishes to react and propose an amendment to the proposed decision.

The nominated property was initially proposed to be inscribed under criterion (ix) and (x). The Advisory Body, IUCN, has concluded that criterion (ix) was not met and attached conditions to the inscription under criterion (x) to refer the nomination to the State Party. While the State Party was advised to take back the proposition on criterion (ix) for an extended documentation, we wish to comment on the arguments set out by the IUCN to refer the nomination.

Allow us, Mr. Chairman, to note and bring to your attention that an updated Management Plan has been approved to cover the period 2023-2032, and covers, among other aspects, the management of the buffer zone and the planned creation of corridors joining the component parties of the property.

Regarding the buffer zone in particular, we are informed by the State Party that areas around the property are covered by planted forests and tea, playing a buffer role. During the mapping exercise, which has led to the gazettment of Nyungwe as National Park in 2005, only new planted forests were mapped as they were more likely to be affected by external interventions. Tea has been in the area for more than 50 years, playing a buffer role, and currently more than 10,000 ha of tea make a buffer, and plantations are increasing to last longer. There is no legal issue in this National Land Use and Development Master Plan 2022-2050, and Rwanda provides 101,000 m of buffer along the boundaries of each protected area.

Regarding the international road crossing the property, we note with appreciation the process undertaken by the State Party to create alternative routes in the periphery; and this has reduced by two thirds the traffic using this road in existence since the years 1940s. Also, installation of speed cameras has significantly reduced speed-induced accidents on the road, which remains necessary to link the southwest to the rest of the country.

Mr. Chairman, members of this Committee,

In view of the above and in consideration of the uncontested Outstanding Universal Value of the property, the Delegation of Egypt recommends the Nyungwe National Park be inscribed on the World Heritage List under the criterion (x).

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Delegation of Ethiopia appreciates the importance of the nominated property, which represents the second largest area of mountain forest in the Albertine Rift Ecoregion.

It is in this regard that we wish to extend on the issue of connectivity of the component parts of the nominated property, which include the main Nyungwe Forest, making 99.6% of the property, Cyamudongo and Gisakura Forests. The State Party has informed us that while the physical distance between Gisakura and the main forest is less than 500 m, the State Party has planned to develop a corridor between Cyamudongo Forest and the main forest. We understand that this development is not a one-day or one-year activity, and commend the State Party to have it in their long-time plans.

The nominated property, a National Park whose gazettment has considered the three parts for management purpose, and this demonstrates the interest of the State Party in conserving natural features. We are confident that this interest is going to be enhanced through the nomination.

Mr. Chair, members of the Committee,

The Delegation of Ethiopia supports the statement presented by the State Party of Egypt to inscribe Nyungwe National Park on the World Heritage List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We have not been discussing... We have not shut off discussion on how to raise the level of geographical representation of properties on the UNESCO World Heritage List. We do not encourage the Committee to be emotional about the subject, but we can see nomination files such as a Nyungwe National Park with proven quality, and brought it to the point as an opportunity to see a possible way forward.

Having said this, our Delegation has learnt of the efforts taken by the State Party to preserve Nyungwe National Park, whose boundaries have remained in fact for the last 30 years. Despite the size of the country and its high population density, the Republic of Rwanda has dedicated 90% of its territory to natural conservation, and the nominated property makes nearly 4% of the total territory. This is a glimpse of the importance that national conservation takes in the country's national priorities.

The property indeed contributes to the development of adjacent communities. For instance, development of tea production along the boundaries of the property plays a natural role, but also ensures sustainable development that justifies support for the adjacent communities. We have got the information that tea is ranked at the first cash crop in Rwanda. This is a proven way to reduce human/wildlife conflicts.

In the light of the above and other reasons time will not permit to state, Nigeria supports the amendments submitted by the State Party of Egypt and will be happy to see the Nyungwe National Park being inscribed as Rwanda's first site on the World Heritage List at this session.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I would like to express our appreciation to IUCN for high quality work in this regard.

In this particular case, Japan would like to support the inscription of Nyungwe National Park to the List of World Heritage and, therefore, support the amendment proposed by Egypt, for the following reasons:

- First of all, this particular National Park is a wonderful example of biodiversity;
- Secondly, the IUCN recognizes the OUV under criterion (x); and
- Thirdly, the State Party, Rwanda, has responded very positively to the concerns expressed by ICOMOS. The particular example of this is that Rwanda has just submitted its revised Management Plan. I understand that this was provided this month, and that this clearly shows that the State Party of Rwanda is trying to respond to the concerns that was expressed by ICOMOS.

There are other issues:

- On the issue of the tea field, we do understand the meaning of this particular tea fields for the State Party of Rwanda, and I am sure that they are trying to take all necessary measures;
- The same applies to a road which exists in this particular area, in this National Park, and this again is a very necessary road connection for the area. Obviously, several measures have been taken to mitigate the impact from this particular road.

In addition to this, as I explained earlier, under Item 5C, Priority Africa, Japan has been supporting the UNESCO capacity-building programme, designed to support the African States Parties without yet any inscription to formulate their nomination, and I am very, very happy to note that this inscription of the Rwandan National Park is the first successful example of this particular programme.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Nous saluons les efforts du Secrétariat et des Organes consultatifs concernant cette candidature.

Le bien sous examen représente un site important pour la conservation des forêts pluviales d'Afrique centrale en raison de ses dimensions, et il possède une flore très riche composée de 1 468 espèces de plantes vasculaires, et abrite une des communautés de primates de forêts humides de montagne les plus riches en espèces en Afrique. Il remplit objectivement le critère (x) relatif à la biodiversité et aux espèces menacées.

Pour ce qui concerne la gestion de ce parc, le Mali note que l'État partie du Rwanda, à travers le ministère des Ressources naturelles et le Conseil de développement du Rwanda, a signé un accord de gestion à long terme pour la zone tampon avec une entreprise forestière appliquant des normes durables et socialement responsables. Aussi, un plan d'activité détaillé et complet pour 2022-2026 a été mis en place et les dépenses financières prévues pour le bien proposé vont de 2,8 à 3,9 millions de dollars EU par an. Il s'agit là d'efforts considérables qui doivent être pris en compte par le Comité.

Par conséquent, nous appuyons les amendements proposés par l'Égypte et appelons les membres du Comité à inscrire ce site naturel exceptionnel sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Italy would like to thank the Advisory Body for its accurate evaluation.

We note with satisfaction that, with regards to the nominated property, IUCN recognized the Outstanding Universal Value for criterion (x). Indeed, this nominated property shows a remarkable biodiversity with a wide variety of flora and fauna, and represent a key site for biodiversity conservation in the Albertine Rift Region.

IUCN also considers that the boundaries are appropriate with regards to the provisions of the Operational Guidelines.

The buffer zone and its integrated Management Plan have been the object of a very constructive and cooperative discussions between the State Party and the Advisory Body, with solutions in line with the Operational guidelines.

So, Mr. Chair, we congratulate the State Party for the sincere and concrete efforts it is dedicating to the protection of African biodiversity.

For these reasons, we share the spirit of the amendment proposed by Egypt, and we believe that the nomination proposal deserves to be included in the World Heritage List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran. The Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to thank the IUCN and the Secretariat of the World Heritage Centre.

Oman joins other voices that preceded us in commending the exceptional characteristics of biodiversity.

The IUCN has recommended inscription based on criterion (x). The expert's report confirms that most of the criteria have been met in accordance with the Guidelines. The IUCN proposed a boundary modification, and we support the amendment proposed by Egypt to not modify the boundaries of the buffer zone and to replace this with the proposal by Egypt and we support inscription.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

South Africa commends the IUCN for the comprehensive report presented to the Committee and the nomination of this outstanding and biologically important property by the State Party of the Republic of Rwanda.

The IUCN report highlights a variety of vegetation types, including the Kamiranzou swamp, which is reported to be the largest peat bog in Africa. The report also highlights very high levels of endemism and of biodiversity, both in the Albertine Rift Region and Rwanda, with globally threatened species including critically endangered and vulnerable species on this site.

The nomination of this property is further testament to Africa's rich natural heritage. IUCN further recognizes this nominated property, in the thematic studies, as a possible priority for new nomination and its contribution to the Global Strategy as being critical. South Africa, therefore, appreciates the confirmation by IUCN that the site is of global significance, particularly under criterion (x).

Chairperson,

South Africa notes the appreciation by IUCN of the level of detail of the Management Plan of 2012-2022 and its successful implementation, and has no doubt that the State Party of Rwanda will also successfully implement the General Management Plan of 2023-2032. This includes other issues raised by IUCN, for example, disaster risk management, visitor and interpretation strategy as indicated in the draft decision. The State Party of Rwanda is committed to implement the recommendations with the support of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

South Africa, therefore, supports the draft decision submitted by Egypt for inscription of the site on the World Heritage List, and further proposed that a paragraph requesting the State Party of Rwanda to report by 1 December 2024 on progress in implementation of the issues raised in the draft decision should be inserted.

I thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair, for giving India the floor.

India has examined the nomination dossier submitted by the State Party along with the additional information provided. We have also heard the news of IUCN for referral.

Our examination indicates that proposed inscription of the nomination is remarkable. The Nyungwe National Park covers an area of 101,967 ha. It is totally uninhabited and is covered 95% intact. Its buffer zone covers an area of 10,085 ha. As per the recommendation of Advisory Body, the buffer zone of the nominated property is aligned and to enhance the connectivity between the component parts. IUCN has also indicated that the property has their OUV. We note that Rwandan farmers practice intensive and permanent agriculture. Hence, it was impossible to create a wider buffer zone without harming the farmers or degrading the forest. IUCN has just informed that the State Party has implemented the updated General Management Plan 23-2032, that would cover the query of Advisory Body. Regarding traffic on roads crossing the nominated property is reduced following the upgrade of an alternative road to the north of nominated property. The property needs to be protected for future generation in a way to protect natural richness of this outstanding property.

India compliments Rwanda for submitting the dossier and supports the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar*.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Shukran, Said Rais.

The State of Qatar appreciates the report and evaluation presented by the Advisory Body.

The National Park in Rwanda supports a wide variety of forest types as well as non-forest montane environments. On the side of ecosystem, the National Park also preserves 101 species of mammals, including 20 endemic of the Albertine Rift, two species endemic to Rwanda, and 14 endangered species.

We believe that nominated property aligned with the criteria (x).

Mr. Chair,

The State Party has implemented national measures to ensure the proper management of the site and to effective management of tourism.

Therefore, Mr. Chair, the State of Qatar support the draft amendment as proposed by Egypt.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much.

I'd like to extend my thanks for the report that was tabled and support the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Considering the fact that Rwanda just got elected to be on the World Heritage Committee for the first time, and also for the first time, it has submitted two nomination dossiers at just one... That is a submission that already should

show the commitment by the State Party of Rwanda to ensuring that the Outstanding Universal Value for the various sites that they have submitted are protected.

Then secondly, let me also comment on the aspect of the boundary modification and the buffer zone. It is not always a must that each and every protected area should have a buffer zone, but where applicable, a buffer zone should be applied.

Thirdly, I would like to also speak to the fact of the expired Management Plan. We are even lucky that we have a site which has got a Management Plan, and the mere fact that there is an expired Management Plan doesn't mean that all the aspects of the Management Plan are expired. There could be a certain percentage or a larger percentage of the Management Plan which would be applicable. So, the State Party should not be punished, and indeed the site should not be punished by being given a referral status.

In short, the State Party of Zambia is solidly behind all the States Parties that are supporting the aspect of the amendment of the decision into an inscription.

I submit, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mexico would like to support the proposed amendment by Egypt. We'd like to support South Africa's proposal and that the World Heritage Centre should be given an update from the State Party concerning the implementation of its recommendations, and we can go ahead with inscription on the World Heritage List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you, Chair.

We carefully listened to the report and the interventions by members of the Committee, and we would like to support the amendment proposed by Egypt.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more interventions except for Argentina.

Argentina, would you like to add anything? So, there's nothing then? That's good.

So, dear colleagues, I would like to invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.26**, but before doing so, I'd like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Egypt, co-authored by the Distinguished Delegations of Ethiopia and South Africa. From the floor, we have received endorsement from Committee members: Nigeria, Japan, Mali, Italy, Oman, South Africa, India, Qatar, Argentina, Zambia, Mexico and Russian Federation.

The proposed amendment with revised Para 2: "Inscribes Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (x);".

Para 3: "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:".

Revised Para 4: "Recommends the State Party to give consideration to the following:

- a) Implement the provisions of the Law Governing National Parks and Nature Reserves with regards to the management of buffer zones, with a special focus on agreements with Tea estates owners in the buffer zone,".
- b) Point b) remains same except deletion of the word "nominated".

c) "Fully implement the updated General Management Plan (2023-2032);".

And, as suggested by the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa and supported by Mexico, for Para 5: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024 a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

I would like to add our name to the supporter of this amendment which was presented by Egypt.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Thailand would like to add our name to the list of co-authors, please.

Shukran jazeelan.

The Delegation of Italy:

Afwan jazeelan.

So, I see no more interventions... Belgium.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous souhaiterons également être inclus par les souteneurs de l'amendement, et on en profite pour déjà féliciter le Rwanda pour leur première inscription.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium.

I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

For the First Paragraph, we don't have any amendment. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues, I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole, and if there are no objections or comments, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.26** adopted as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Rwanda on behalf of the entire Committee for its first inscription on the World Heritage List. Congratulations.

Rwanda, you have the floor.

La Délégation de Rwanda :

M. le Président, Mmes et MM. Les membres du Comité, Mmes et MM. Les Chefs et membres des Délégations,

Merci au Gouvernement du Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour l'organisation sans faille de cette 45^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

Nous souhaitons remercier l'Organe d'évaluation avec lequel nous avons beaucoup travaillé et qui a œuvré à l'aboutissement de ce dossier.

Nos remerciements les plus sincères à l'ensemble des membres du Comité ayant soutenu le projet d'amendement porté par l'Égypte, un pays frère que nous tenons à chaleureusement remercier. Cette nomination a bénéficié du soutien financier du Gouvernement japonais, dans le cadre de son programme avec le Centre du patrimoine mondial pour soutenir les pays africains non représentés sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, que nous remercions. Enfin, le Rwanda souhaite remercier le Fonds pour le patrimoine mondial africain pour leur accompagnement et les efforts en matière de préservation et de protection du patrimoine culturel et naturel de l'Afrique. Leur travail joue un rôle crucial dans la sauvegarde de la riche histoire et de la biodiversité du continent.

M. le Président,

Le Gouvernement du Rwanda accueille avec une grande satisfaction la décision d'inscrire le Parc National de Nyungwe sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Cette inscription n'est pas seulement une contribution à la préservation du patrimoine naturel au Rwanda, mais elle revêt également une signification particulière pour le peuple rwandais, dont c'est le premier site inscrit sur cette liste universelle.

Créée en tant que réserve naturelle en 1933, la forêt naturelle de Nyungwe, qui est devenue un parc national en 2005 pour une protection renforcée, est le plus grand bloc de forêt naturelle intacte de la région. Château d'eau du Rwanda, source de plus de 70 % de l'eau qui traverse le pays, abritant plus d'une dizaine d'espèces de primates, 322 espèces d'oiseaux, 200 orchidées identifiées et près de 300 espèces de papillons, dont un certain nombre sont endémiques à ce parc, Nyungwe contribue également au développement de l'économie nationale et locale grâce aux retombées de l'écotourisme.

M. le Président,

Le Rwanda s'engage à suivre scrupuleusement le contenu du plan de gestion et à mettre en œuvre tout ce qui peut contribuer à préserver la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du site. L'inscription de Nyungwe fait partie d'une série de programmes du Gouvernement du Rwanda visant au développement durable et à la préservation du patrimoine naturel et culturel pour le bénéfice des générations futures.

Merci beaucoup.

Thank you very much, *Shukran jazeelan*. [message in the State Party local language]

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan and congratulations again for this big achievement. Well done, Rwanda.

So, I'd like to pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre for some general announcements before we close the session.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This is just to inform everyone that we will have a side event, starting at 6:30, in Hegra Room, which is the Advisory Body space, organized by FFI, IUCN, and UNESCO. It's titled: "Emergency preparedness and response in natural World Heritage sites".

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'd also like to recall that the Bureau meeting will be, at the Bureau Room at 9:30, and see you tomorrow for more nominations. [gavel]

The meeting rose at 5:59 pm. // La séance a été levée à 17h59.

TENTH DAY
Wednesday, 20 September 2023
EIGHTEENTH PLENARY MEETING
10:19 am – 1:03 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

DIXIÈME JOUR
Mercredi 20 septembre 2023
DIX-HUITIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h19 – 13h03
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

The Chairperson:

Good morning, dear colleagues.

So, as indicated during the tenth meeting of the Bureau this morning, today we will have another five nomination files to be examined. The list can be found on the updated calendar posted by the Secretariat on the World Heritage Centre's webpage for this session.

The nominations submitted by the States Parties as follow:

- A joint nomination by Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan;
- Followed by Saudi Arabia;
- Tajikistan;
- Rwanda; and
- A joint nomination formed by Belgium and France;
- To be followed by 22 minor boundary modifications and provisional SOUVs.

I would also like to inform you that the Working Group on the budget, which was established last Monday, has now completed its work under the Chairperson of Ms. Al-Ghafri, Oman, and will therefore not meet today.

Furthermore, I also would like to share with you the information I provided to the Bureau about the timetable for the remaining days of work of the Committee.

As you have noticed, it is highly likely that we are going to complete Item 8B related to the nominations this morning, as they're in advance on our adopted timetable. Consequently, in order not to waste time, we have worked with the Secretariat on possible adjustments to the timetable to bring some Agenda items forward.

I am pleased to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to elaborate on the changes.

You may have the floor, Mr. Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Good morning to everyone.

As indicated by Mr. Chairperson, we expect, after lunchtime, to start with Item 8C, which will be the item on the update of the World Heritage List and of the List of World Heritage in Danger as it has been customary.

After this item, we will go back to the Item 8, which has been left open as you know, to close this item and adopt the decision.

And once this Item 8 is concluded, we will go back to Item 7 on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties in order to close this item and adopt the decision.

Once this has been done, we will move to the items related to the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting and the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting. So, we will start with the follow-up on the implementation of the Action Plans for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Africa and the Arab regions, which is Item 10C. Remember that these two Periodic Reporting Cycles Action Plans were adopted at the last session of the World Heritage Committee.

And then, once this has been done, we will then move to the Progress report on the implementation of the Action Plans for the Second Cycle of the Periodic Reporting in the other regions; this is Item 10D.

We expect to conclude the day with the Progress report on the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the other regions, which is Item 10E.

So that's for today.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, dear Director.

Are there any comments concerning this update?

So, if you're in agreement with this, I will ask the Secretariat to circulate this adjustment to our timetable and update on the World Heritage Centre webpage.

Thank you very much.

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

2023 CYCLE (Ct'd) // CYCLE 2023 (suite)

The Chairperson:

Now, we will resume to the examination of nomination properties.

NATURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE NATUREL (suite)

8B.29 Cold Winter Deserts of Turan (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) // Déserts turaniens à hiver froid (Kazakhstan, Turkménistan, Ouzbékistan)

The Chairperson:

I now invite IUCN to present the transnational nomination Cold Winter Deserts of Turan (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Concerning the evaluation of the Cold Winter Desert of Turan, we received a factual error notification, which is on page 8 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B.Add, and this notification has also some factual corrections that have an impact on the text of the related Statement of OUV, and these corrections have been already integrated into our version.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair and good morning.

The Cold Winter Deserts of Turan are a serial property shared by Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

[Next slide, please]

The site is proposed to be composed of 15 component parts totalling a vast area of more than 3,3 million ha with buffer zones of more than 600,000 ha. The Cold Winter Deserts of Turan are nominated under criteria (ix) and (x).

[Next slide, please]

At the outset, IUCN notes that five of the 15 nominated component parts overlap with the former extent of the Aral Sea. IUCN's evaluation concluded that these component parts would not warrant consideration for inscription under natural criteria as they are no longer exhibiting the original natural characteristics.

This is in line with the relevant assessment of the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems, which considers the Aral Sea ecosystem to have collapsed. The changes that occurred to the Aral Sea are widely recognized as a major environmental and ecological crisis, with impacts also to the surrounding areas through soil contamination and salination as well as regional climatic changes, along with a dramatic loss of plants, fish, and invertebrate fauna. Therefore, the nominated component parts located in areas formerly of the Aral Sea clearly do not meet integrity requirements.

IUCN's remaining remarks relate to the ten component parts recommended by IUCN for inscription.

Under criterion (ix), the nominated property exemplifies the evolution and adaptation of terrestrial ecosystems to extreme climatic conditions.

This nomination represents temperate deserts, the only biome without representation on the World Heritage List. The property would thus fill a significant gap on the World Heritage List for Central Asian deserts.

It would represent most of the ecological-physiographic vegetation types in the Turan deserts. The nomination includes the full range of morphological, physiological and behavioural adaptation strategies to Turan deserts.

Given this wide range, the ten recommended component parts would serve as hubs for migratory species. While ungulate populations have previously faced declines, the property holds potential for species dispersal across the region, enhancing connectivity and migratory routes.

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Under criterion (x), the nominated property serves as a diversity hotspot for desert-adapted species, including globally threatened mammals. It plays a vital role in bird migratory routes, underscoring its global importance. Covering almost 3.3 million ha, the property is larger than comparable desert sites. Several component parts alone are very significant in size and stand out with their high degree of intactness.

The boundaries of the ten component parts recommended for inscription encompass intact examples of each of the ecological-physiographic vegetation types as well as the main desert zones of Central Asia within legally protected areas with a high degree of integrity due to their remote location.

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The nominated component parts are strictly protected under relevant legal frameworks within the three nominating States Parties as State Nature Reserves, Nature Sanctuaries, or within a National Park. All nominated component parts meet protection requirements.

Management across the nominated property is diverse due to varying legal protection and management systems in each of the three countries. However, each component part benefits from clear and well-defined management plans.

The transnational management is established by a Memorandum of Understanding. In addition, there are project activities supporting capacity-building and knowledge sharing.

The overall threat level is considered low. Threats to the nominated property include grazing and linear infrastructure development. Mitigation measures and approaches to improve connectivity exist, and further progress has been reported by the States Parties in the factual error letter.

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Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, the States Parties of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have nominated a highly significant transnational, serial property.

The ten component parts IUCN recommends for inscription provide a compelling demonstration of OUV under criteria (ix) and (x), meeting also the integrity and protection requirements of the Convention. Together, these ten components would cover a vast area of 3.1 million ha, and thus filling a significant gap on the World Heritage List.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, IUCN, for this presentation.

I would like to see if there are any comments concerning this nomination.

Dawlat Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you, Chair, and good morning. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

Mr. Chair,

Qatar welcomes, of course, technical efforts of IUCN and Qatar welcomes the joint nomination of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan on Turanian Deserts.

We also note that IUCN supports the nomination and recommends inscription in the draft decision, however, leaving some component parts of two protected areas aside.

We have carefully considered the nomination and came to the conclusion that the desert part of Kazakhstan, Barsakelmes and Kaskakulan components, and missing parts of Uzbekistan Saigachy-Duana and Saigachy-Zhideyli components should not be excluded from the nomination. Those components are an integral part of the nomination and convey the Outstanding Universal Value of Turanian Deserts. The component of Northern Ustyurt cluster in Uzbekistan are part of the Saigachy Complex Landscape Reserve proposed for inscription and should be kept together, as they basically represent one whole and indivisible territory.

However, we do agree with the exclusion of the Delta component, a part of *[inaudible]* Nature Reserve, as it is mainly representing wetland and, in our view, does not correspond to the overall OUV.

State of Qatar acknowledges that Governments of the region are investing their full efforts in the mitigation of the consequences of the hard ecological background associated with the Aral Sea dryness. However, the protected area proposed for this nomination served as havens for desert flora and fauna long before the desiccation of the sea.

Barsakelmes Nature Reserve is protected and managed in the strictest possible manner for almost a century, with stable and large population, evidenced by the recent monitoring survey.

Mr. Chair,

We strongly believe that, with exception of Delta component part, that Turanian Deserts should remain as it was envisaged by the States Parties which submitted this nomination.

The resilience and adaptation of deserts to the same climatic conditions is evidenced by all the components of the nomination, but even more by the territories which not only survived the dramatic changes in their surrounding ecosystems, but flourish and successfully sustain the precious life they harbour.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Mali, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Nous tenons à saluer le travail de l'Organe consultatif ainsi que celui du Centre du patrimoine mondial relativement à ce site proposé pour inscription afin qu'il figure sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Nous avons noté l'inclusion des trois éléments de la réserve naturelle d'état de Barsakelmes SNR ainsi que l'argument de l'UICN selon lequel il convient que le statut de protection et la gestion du SNR répondent aux critères des Orientations. Nous notons de même les informations fournies par les États parties et spécifiant le fait que la mer d'Aral constitue un écosystème désertique depuis des millénaires. Ces îles sont une représentation unique des déserts turaniens, qui ont conservé la biodiversité caractéristique des déserts froids hivernaux, notamment des plantes endémiques, des oiseaux menacés et des espèces d'ongulés importantes pour l'ensemble de la région. Ces écosystèmes désertiques de Barsakelmes SNR restent en grande partie intacts, malgré la réduction de la mer d'Aral et la désertification des anciens fonds marins. Quant aux habitants, ils n'ont pas perdu leur intégrité.

Aussi, appuyons-nous l'inclusion de la SNR Barsakelmes sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en tant que partie du bien, Déserts froids d'hiver de Turan.

Nous invitons toutefois les États parties à fournir plus de détails sur cette inscription afin que le Comité soit mieux édifié.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving India the floor on Agenda Item 45 [COM] 8B.[29], Cold Winter Deserts of Turan, (Kazakhstan, [Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan]). The nomination was presented under criteria (viii) and (x). It is a transnational nomination of the States Parties of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan.

The States Parties met us with their experts and held detailed discussions with us regarding the 15 component parts, with more than 600,000 acres of land area, but only ten are proposed to be inscribed by the Advisory Body, IUCN. Hence the need for the amendment. They explained various points and gave clarifications on the justification to add the other four as well, two from Kazakhstan and two from Uzbekistan. I congratulate their Ambassadors and Delegations for their hard work and efforts in explaining the position for the amendment.

We would like to support the authors of the amendment concerning the inclusion of Barsakelmes and Kaskakulan components in the State Party of Kazakhstan, and Saigachy-Duana and Saigachy-Zhideyli in the State Party of Uzbekistan.

We would like to draw the attention of the Committee that these component parts are reflected in the WWF 200 Priority Ecoregions as Ecoregion 112 Central Asian Deserts, and the detailed map clearly covers the area in question. Moreover, we also noted that Barsakelmes Nature Reserve is a strict nature reserve, which corresponds to IUCN category Ia, which offers the highest level of protection for this area. Its long-standing history of sustaining desert flora and fauna are well known, and we are pleased to learn from the States Parties that the fauna on this territory is carefully monitored and has a tendency to increase. Please understand, this is one of the most difficult places in the world, which perhaps the highest temperature variation from plus 50°C to minus 50°C.

Concerning the component parts Saigachy-Duana and Saigachy-Zhideyli, which were excluded in the draft amendment, we would still like to ask a question to the nominating States Parties, if these component parts of Saigachy Reserve can be separated in a way proposed by the draft decision in its original state.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation: *[interpretation from Russian]*

Thank you.

Distinguished Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee.,

The Barsakelmes State Nature Reserve, its name can be translated as "If you go there, you will not come back", and it's wonderful that three Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, are once again bringing the world's attention to this Nature Reserve, and I hope that all of us will be able to return there. The Barsakelmes State Nature Reserve is well known for an entire series of projects aiming to restore the population of ungulate species. It's important to note that the natural and scientific basis on which this nature reserve was founded in 1939 was motivated by the unique value of Central Asian deserts, and the location of this protected territory was carefully selected among other similar territories. And we are very happy to hear from our colleagues from Kazakhstan that the value of the Barsakelmes Nature Reserve has not decreased with time, especially given some of the environmental changes due to the drying of the Aral Sea. Just like before, the nature reserve is home to desert plant ecosystems and also to very important species of desert animals, such as the Kulan and the Goitered Gazelle.

As for the Saigachy Complex Landscape Reserve in Uzbekistan, we believe that it's important to maintain the wholeness of this special protected natural area as one World Heritage site because, in terms of ecosystems, it is one ecosystem, and it was divided into four parts for administrative reasons, whereas the buffer zone is one zone and cannot be divided for the entire reserve. Moreover, in the draft decision, there were some component parts that were removed, and they are the sites of watering holes which are so important to maintaining ungulate species populations.

Given the above, we would like to support the amendment proposed by the Distinguished Delegation of Qatar and other countries that are members of the Committee, so we would like to join them as a co-author.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good morning to everyone. Let's hope also today we have a smooth and successful day.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to thank the States Parties, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and the Advisory Bodies for their excellent collaboration.

As stated in the IUCN report, the nominated property meets the requirement of the Operational Guidelines in all of the nominated components, in addition to protection and management requirement, and is listed on the World Heritage site for the criteria (ix) and (x). The nominated property is requested as a transnational serial shared by the three States Parties, and comprises 14 components parts distributed across a wide area of Central Asia temperate zone between the Caspian Sea and the Turan high country system. The site holds remarkable significance due to its unique characteristics and ecological importance for the biodiversity. Despite its harsh

conditions, the Cold Winter Deserts of Turan supports a surprising area of planet migrating birds and animal life. It serves as a critical habitat for numerous species that have been adopted to survive in extreme cold, including rare and endangered ones. In addition, the desert extreme cold temperature and sparse vegetation provide a unique natural laboratory for studying cold weather and adaptation, climate change, and their impact on ecosystem. The desert also historically and culturally impacts the indigenous communities and local inhabitants, who have developed sustainable practices to live in harmony with the challenging environment.

Furthermore, the Cold Winter Deserts hold tremendous potential for scientific discovery, offering opportunity for ecological, archaeology, botany, and other scientific disciplines. To study its geological formation, scientific culture remains unique, and plant life and animal adaptation. Understanding and promoting the importance of the Cold Winter Deserts of Turan, including the Saigachy-Duana and Saigachy border, can help inspire efforts to preserve and protect this exceptional ecosystem for the benefit of the future generation and the overall health of the planet.

The dedication and commitment of the three States Parties to safeguard the OUV of the valuable site are truly commendable and underlining the significance of the property. Its protection is essential for maintaining global diversity and identity.

Therefore, we do support the draft amendment by the State Party of Qatar to inscribe the property on Heritage List, which also includes the two sites that is added.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving Nigeria the floor.

The initial submission of the States Parties to this transboundary property of Cold Winter Deserts of Turan comprised of 14 component parts. We appreciate the work done by the Evaluating Body that led to the draft decision of inscribing the property, but not as a whole, but only ten out of the 14 properties were approved. The exclusion of Barsakelmes Island, Kaskakulan, Saigachy-Duana, and Saigachy-Zhideyli, we understand, is founded on the ground that the Barsakelmes, which is the location of the nominated components, is the Aral Sea region, known for its desiccation as an ecological tragedy, which effects are being mitigated against by the Party involved.

However, based on a non-paper received and discussions with the submitting Parties, we have satisfactory responses to all four concerns raised by IUCN.

As a co-sponsor, we submit to the statement in the DR that the priority management objective for all 14 component parts is to ensure the ecosystem integrity of desert landscapes, including their biological diversity of plants and animals.

While we, therefore, urge the States Parties to take account of the recommendations that will enhance both the already approved and yet to be approved components, Nigeria, therefore, encourages the inscription of the description of the totality of the component parts, as it will ensure a coherent management and may foster an improvement on the issues identified towards better and common preservation of the property.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

Nigeria, the mic.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good morning to you and Distinguished Delegates.

Mr. Chairperson,

South Africa would like to applaud the work done by the States Parties of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan in preparing the dossier for this nomination. We also want to pass our appreciation on the support provided by the Advisory Body during this process.

South Africa knows the responses provided by the States Parties on concerns raised by IUCN in the technical evaluation report dated April 2023. But these concerns cannot prevent the inscription of the site, and this is confirmed by the Advisory Body recommendation.

We welcome the amendments of the draft decision to reflect 14 component parts, as opposed to ten, and the amendment on the hectarage size for both the property and the buffer zone, respectively.

Mr. Chairperson,

South Africa is confident that, given the work already being done by the States Parties in conserving these 14 component parts prior to this nomination, increasing connectivity between the component parts of the property and the wider ecosystem will be achieved without any difficulties.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairperson, the success in the management of the Cold Winter Deserts of Turan (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) is dependent on a functional, vibrant, funded and fully capacitated Joint Steering Committee. South Africa accepts the draft decision in which the Joint Steering Committee should ensure the strengthening of the transitional and transboundary exchange of research, monitoring, and any other heritage site management related data.

Having said this, Chairperson, we would request the State Party to be afforded an opportunity to respond on the exclusion of the two component parts as raised by the IUCN.

The South African Delegation, therefore, supports the proposed amendment by Qatar, and thus far, supports the inscription of this site on the basis of criteria (ix) and criteria (x).

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Salaam Aleykum.

Saudi Arabia would like to support the amendment presented by Qatar, aimed at adding components to the nomination by Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

We think these territories are important to other components of the property and complement the other components chosen for the nomination. The resilience of these components of Turanian deserts to the harsh climate is a testament to their unique biodiversity and attribute, meticulously conserved and protected with time. We recognize the intrinsic relationship and resilience in the face of environmental challenges and reaffirm the States Parties commitment to preserve these assets for future generations.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Belgica.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There is no doubt that Belgium supports the inscription of the transnational serial property of the Cold Winter Deserts of Turan (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) for the mentioned ten component parts in the draft decision, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (xi) and (x).

We would like to congratulate Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan on the inscription of the transnational serial property and encourage the States Parties to increase the connectivity between the component parts of the property, especially by removing large barriers for mammal migration. And in addition, we would be glad to share our experiences on the management of serial transnational properties since we have some experience in that item.

Regarding the amendment of Qatar that proposes to add four out of five referred component parts, we would like to recall the advice of the Advisory Body that states that is quite critical, and we would like to say that the component parts of the Barsakelmes cluster, component 4 and 5 in Kazakhstan, and the proposed component parts 13 and 14 in Uzbekistan, that for those parts, the Advisory Body states that it's impossible to meet any integrity requirements, as they are located within areas that were heavily affected by the drying of the Aral Sea. Regarding this amendment, and taking into account the advice of the Advisory Body, we have two questions for the Advisory Body:

- First question would be: What the added value of these four component parts would be to the OUV of the nominated property?
- The second question would be: Taking into account the explanation that was given by the Advisory Body why the component parts 4, 5, 13, and 14 are not meeting the requirements for integrity, we would like to know whether the Advisory Body sees any difference regarding integrity between the so-called Barsakelmes cluster, the 4 and 5, on one hand, and the component parts 13 and 14, on the other hand.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Let us first sincerely congratulate the proponent States Parties for the submission of such an excellent nomination as reflected in the recommendation for inscription.

As regards the proposed amendment, we consider that the States Parties have provided sufficient justification for the inclusion of the additional components, which would indeed be in full accordance with the other component parts.

Furthermore, as these additional components are located in an area where harsh environmental changes took place, they can indeed demonstrate the resilience and natural evolution of this kind of ecosystem, and we believe that this is the essence of the OUV expressed in this nomination.

Therefore, we would like to support the amendments proposed by the State of Qatar.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Thailand would also like to extend our appreciation for the work of the IUCN on the review and assessment of the nomination file of the Cold Winter Deserts of Turan as well as on the outcomes of the few missions to the nominated property.

We would also like to commend the States Parties of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan for their commitment and excellent work done with the nomination of this transboundary nomination.

The Cold Winter Deserts of Turan represents an outstanding example of ongoing ecological and biological processes of evaluation and development of terrestrial ecosystems in extreme climate conditions of the Turan deserts.

We welcome the IUCN recommendation to inscribe the nominated property. However, my Delegation acknowledges that there are some concerns, as suggested by the IUCN, to exclude the components of Barsakelmes State Nature Reserve from the nominated property. Although the IUCN agrees that the protection, status and management of the Barsakelmes State Nature Reserve meet the criteria of the Operational Guidelines, that remains questioned about the integrity of the property and its intactness.

Mr. Chairperson,

Upon studying the documents provided by the State Party and consultation with our experts, we are satisfied to learn that the desert ecosystem of Barsakelmes State Nature Reserve remains largely intact, despite the reduction of Aral Sea and the desertification of the former seabed. The area is still home to the same desert plant and animal species. Despite of some impacts caused by the desiccation of the Aral Sea, the habitats of Barsakelmes State Nature Reserve did not lose their intactness. On the contrary, they demonstrate resilience and adaptability of the changing environment in extreme climate conditions.

Therefore, my Delegation would also like to join other Committee members in supporting the draft amendment proposed by Qatar.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and good morning to all colleagues.

Our Delegation would like to commend the Advisory Bodies as well as the States Parties for their detailed information provided on the transnational serial nomination of the Cold Winter Deserts of Turan.

As demonstrated in the nomination file and the evaluation report, this property represents an exceptional case of desert ecosystems, their evolution, functions, and natural dynamics, as well as of diverse flora and fauna that has adapted to the harsh climatic conditions prevailing at the region.

The component parts comprising the property include examples of the full range of morphological elements and adaptation behaviours, and complement each other in terms of biodiversity and ecological processes.

After examining the amendment presented by Qatar, we believe that certain points may need further clarification. Under this perspective, we would like to address the following questions to the State Party:

- First, why is it deemed as important to include the proposed two components to the nomination property? And as already asked by Belgium, what is their added value for the dossier and how do they additionally contribute to the justification of the Universal Outstanding Value of the property?
- Second, if this amendment is adopted by the Committee, is there provision taken to implement an effective management and monitoring plan for the whole property?

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Dear Committee members,

We appreciate the efforts of the States Parties and the Advisory Body in preparing this nomination file, and we support the inscription of the transnational property of Cold Winter Deserts of Turan to the World Heritage List.

We have examined the documentation and also, we have consulted with the States Parties on the draft decision and the excluded sites from the original nomination.

The States provided convincing arguments that four of the excluded parts, although affected by the processes after the drying of the Aral Sea, still include the representative types of temperate, cold winter desert ecosystems. In this sense, they meet criteria (ix) and (x), as they provide examples of important ecological processes and the conservation of significant biodiversity. On the one hand, the sites include climatic communities characteristic of this type of vegetation, but on the other hand, there is also a succession of communities for the formation of the temperate cold winter deserts. A large number of plant species and ungulates, typical of these deserts, are also represented. All the sites are legally protected at national level and properly managed.

Therefore, we would like to co-author the proposed amendment. We welcome the intention of the States Parties to include these four more components on their original nomination.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Firstly, Zambia would like to appreciate the works done by the Advisory Bodies, I mean the Advisory Body, in this case, IUCN.

We also appreciate the serial transnational nomination, which the three States Parties have indulged in, and we also appreciate the fact that IUCN has established the Outstanding Universal Value of these properties.

However, I would like to pose the question to the Advisory Body, because it looks like there is a trend where, after establishing an Outstanding Universal Value of a property, there is a special recommendation to increase the boundary and, on the other hand, they come up with a resolution to say you reduce the elements. To some of us, States Parties, it is coming as a contradiction because there is a deliberate approach by the Advisory Bodies to come up with a punitive measure to the States Parties.

If anything should be taken as a plus that the three States Parties have come together to protect the property as a transnational property in the spirit of UNESCO, which promotes peace amongst the various players. So, even as the States Parties has taken this up, the three States Parties have taken this approach.

As the State Party of Zambia, we would like to support and, indeed, commend the three States Parties for having come up with this approach and, to this effect, we would like to recommend the step taken by the State Party of Qatar in having an amendment to this draft resolution.

I submit, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, I would like to pass the floor to the States Parties, Uzbekistan followed by Kazakhstan, to respond to the questions addressed by the Committee members from Mali, India, South Africa, and Greece.

Uzbekistan, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Uzbekistan:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Distinguished members of the Committee,

We express our gratitude for today's discussion of our nomination. Since this is a joint nomination, I will be answering the questions for both States Parties of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

We strongly believe that the Outstanding Universal Value of the Barsakelmes and Kaskakulan components in Kazakhstan, and Saigachy-Duana and Saigachy-Zhideyli components in Uzbekistan is in full accordance with the other component parts of this nomination. Moreover, these territories, as they are situated in the area where harsh ecological changes took place quite recently, demonstrate the additional resilience of this type of ecosystems to the severe environmental conditions. And this is exactly the Outstanding Universal Value we are trying to convey in this nomination.

As for the Saigachy Complex Landscape Reserve, this IUCN category Ib protected area is divided into component parts due to administrative reasons and not based on the ecosystem difference. In this respect, the whole territory is uniform. The excluded components of Saigachy Landscape Reserve have utmost importance for the desert ecosystem of the whole Saigachy cluster, as they contain watering sites for the animals this territory successfully sustains, thus adding significantly to the Outstanding Universal Value of the overall site.

Concerning the joint management plan for the overall property mentioned by the State Party of the Hellenic Republic, this would be the first task of the Steering Committee that will be established on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the three countries upon the inscription of the site.

I also would like to mention that all of these territories are strictly protected natural areas with sound scientific justification for their inclusion.

We sincerely hope that this transnational nomination is inscribed as intended by our Member States to tell the complete story of the Turanian deserts.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to IUCN to respond to some comments and inquiries addressed by Belgium and Greece.

IUCN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, IUCN would like to express its appreciation to the three nominating States Parties for the very effective dialogue we've had throughout the evaluation process, including the technical exchanges we've had during the present session, and we are very grateful for the questions posed to us by the Distinguished Committee members.

Regarding the question posed by Belgium, firstly, in terms of the added value of the four component parts. Starting with IUCN's regional thematic study for Central Asia from 2019, in this study, it was considered that the area in question here would be part of a different terrestrial realm so that, from a conceptual point of view, these components would not necessarily need to be included in this series. Then, given the vast areas that even the ten remaining components would be covering, I would like to note that the components, here in question now, would not make a very significant difference in terms of the coverage regarding the area of the nominated property.

Regarding the second question from Belgium on the differences between the four component parts that are now the subject of the Committee's discussion. If I start with component parts 13 and 14, these component parts sit adjacent to the current extent of the Aral Sea and at a short distance of component part 11, which covers most of the relevant areas here, even though we, of course, note the intervention by the Distinguished Delegate from Kazakhstan on the role of component parts 13 and 14 as water source for key mammal species, but their difference compared to Barsakelmes Island, for instance, is that, in the case of Barsakelmes Island, the component part includes areas that cover the former seabed of the Aral Sea, and that's also the case for the Kaskakulan component

part. Given that the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems assessed these areas as collapsed, an ecosystem that no longer exists, it was the IUCN Panel's position, with a high level of confidence, that these areas do not meet the integrity requirements.

Then, regarding the question from the Distinguished Delegate from Zambia, please allow me to refer to the Panel's approach taken in the case of this nomination, rather than deferring the entire site because of concerns for five component parts, the approach taken by the World Heritage Panel was to not hold back all the other ten component parts, where no concerns have been identified, and enable a swift inscription of this property, which would still cover a very large area and not a significantly smaller area and which would still cover the key attributes of OUV in the view of IUCN's World Heritage Panel. IUCN stands ready for further dialogue and exchanges on this matter.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, IUCN, for the clarifications.

I would like to see if there are any comments.

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

We, actually, didn't make any intervention earlier because we're not quite sure. Let me be honest, we're not quite sure about this.

Now, just points raised by the IUCN are, at least, that two nominated properties used to be the bed, the bottom of the Aral Sea. The argument from the IUCN essentially is that the ecosystem has already collapsed on those islands. But again, here we understand most of the Committee members are in agreement with the Member States concerned, nominating States, on this issue.

So, against this background, could I just ask that specific question about the two properties which used to be the seabed to the nominating Parties? What they think about the observations given by the IUCN are essential, the point is whether the ecosystem has already completely collapsed and, therefore, not eligible for inscription.

That particular question, I would like to see a response from the nominating Parties.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

Do we have any other comments?

So, I'll pass the floor back to Uzbekistan.

The Observer Delegation of Uzbekistan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for this specific question, and I will have a very specific answer.

All the territories in question, the four components that we want to be inscribed along with the other components of the site, were never under the water of the Aral Sea.

They were the islands, in the case of Kazakhstan properties. So, these were two islands. They were serving as desert and had their desert functions for millennia now, and they were chosen for the nature reserve because they were above the water, because the decision was taken when the water in the sea was still there.

As for the Saigachy part in Uzbekistan, this area was also above the water for millennia because of the geographical position. This territory ends with a cliff, and this cliff then goes into the water. So, the area proposed, it ends on the border of the cliff, so it was never under the water as well.

Also, I would just like to say, to mention that the added value is not the area above of the components, but their Outstanding Universal Value, which is present in all the components in question.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any more comments from Uzbekistan? Turkmenistan or Kazakhstan?

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much and sorry to come back.

In light of the explanations from the nominated Party, we do understand the observations made by the IUCN, but at same time, I think there is a certain merit in the replies from the nominating bodies. And in this particular case, although I have to be honest, we don't know so much about the places, honestly, but nevertheless, we have recognized a very strong commitment of those nominating Parties for the protection of those properties.

And in light of this consensus which is emerging and in light of the strong commitments from nominating Parties, we would like to support these amendments. But having said that, we do appreciate the IUCN's observations on this item.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

After listening to IUCN, to the State Party and given the commitment expressed by the State Party, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would like to support the amendments presented by Qatar.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks a lot for the clarifications from the Advisory Body and the States Parties.

We feel that there is a consensus emerging, so we won't stand in the way of that, but it might be useful to, for consideration, to add a clarification in the decision regarding the functions of these islands in the formal Aral Sea. So, that might be something to think about in the way that they don't represent the ecosystem of the Aral Sea as such, but that they have a function for species conservation and connectivity.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

It would be appreciated if you can let us know in which paragraph you would like to insert and integrate this comment.

Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

After having listened to the discussions, as well as the clarification provided by the States Parties, and the responses provided by IUCN, Mexico wishes to be added to the list of countries supporting the amendment put forward by Qatar.

And we would also like to add a final paragraph requesting the States Parties to hand over to the World Heritage Centre a report on the state of conservation of the property for examination by the World Heritage Committee in December 2024.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Our Delegation was a co-author for the amendment proposed by the Delegation of Qatar, and we would like to thank the States Parties for the clarification provided.

Following the comment of Belgium, we may propose an addition to the draft decision, in the brief sentences of the Outstanding Universal Value, to clarify the concerns of the IUCN. We may provide a text when the draft decision is open.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

After listening to the answers of the State Party and the additional explanations by the Advisory Body, we would also like to be added to the supporting countries of this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

After having listened to the interesting discussion, and the questions and answers, we would also like to be added to the proposal alongside Mexico and its proposal for the last paragraph.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor back to IUCN to provide some clarifications.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair.

I think just to, perhaps, comment, and I'm wondering whether the suggestions from Egypt and Belgium may help address the point.

I think the challenge, here, is really there's a question of scale, and in particular, if we think what criterion (ix) stands for on the World Heritage List when we're dealing with the Aral Sea. I think, in the debate, it was described as an ecological tragedy. It's very problematic, I think, to inscribe areas in the Aral Sea without acknowledging that there is a great difficulty in recognizing that whole area as corresponding to the ecosystem requirements and ecosystem integrity for the List. I think the intervention from Kazakhstan really makes the point clear. There is a current value of the former islands for species conservation, but they are former islands, they've completely transformed their character as a result of what has happened.

So perhaps, as the decision unfolds, we could also comment, if this is a suggested text, to try to deal with that issue because we can see there's a consensus, which IUCN fully recognizes about the great merits of this as a transnational proposal, as we've supported substantively in our evaluation. And I think if we can find a solution to how those four component parts are approached within the decision, perhaps we can assist the Committee as the debate moves on.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there are no more comments, I would like to invite my dear colleagues to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.29**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Qatar, which is co-authored by the Distinguished Delegations of Nigeria, Mali, Oman, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Zambia, and Egypt. Furthermore, from the floor, we have received confirmation for these amendments from the Delegations of India, South Africa, Italy, Bulgaria, Japan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and also from Mexico, Belgium, Egypt, and Greece, mentioning certain further amendments.

So, starting the proposed amendment from Para 2: "Inscribes the Cold Winter Deserts of Turan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, comprising the following component parts: Altyn-Emel East Altyn-Emel Central, Altyn-Emel West Barsakelmes Island, Kaskakulan, Bereketli Garagum, Gaplankyr, Repetek, Yeradzhi, Saigachy, Saigachy-Beleuli, Saigachy-Duana, Saigachy-Zhideyli and Southern Ustyurt, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ix) and (x);".

Para 3: "Adopts the following Statement of Outstanding Universal value:". We have incorporated the changes including four components. So, it shows as "14 components" and also the change in the area and names wherever required. The Distinguished Delegations of Belgium and Egypt suggested that they may provide some changes in this, with support from IUCN.

Para 4: a), b), and c) are retained as they are except for the change in the number from ten to 14 components in point c).

And addition of Para 5 as suggested by Mexico and Greece: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024 a report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

Just one correction, we would like to also add Argentina to the Delegations supporting the amendment. Mexico and Greece out here, and Argentina on the top for the overall amendment.

The Chairperson:

Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

May we add the text right now in Paragraph 3 or when we reach it?

The Chairperson:

No, we can add it now.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Okay, Thank you.

So, in the brief sentences before the last phrase, yes before, yes, here, we proposed adding: "It should be noted that the component parts located in the Aral Sea region represent the desert ecosystem and not the wetland ecosystem of the Aral Sea itself". No, no: "and not the wetland ecosystem of the Aral Sea itself as they were present before the desiccation of the sea". No: "the desiccation of the sea and fully reflect the biodiversity values", "fully reflect the biodiversity values of the Turanian deserts", "of the Turanian, Turanian deserts. *full stop*."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Giving this recent update, I would like to pass the floor to the...

The Delegation of Egypt:

Sorry, there is just a minor amendment: "before the desiccation", not "desertification".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Egypt.

So, I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat to clarify if this new proposed paragraph match the remaining of the text.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

Just to recall the Committee members that whenever there are changes, substantial changes to the text of the proposed Statement of OUV, which could not be, let's say, evaluated on the spot by the Advisory Body, we are going to adopt the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value as a provisional text. So, I think it should be "provisional".

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Alessandro.

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

I think we're okay with the proposal.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, are there any more comments?

The Rapporteur:

Mr. Chair,

Just in the Para 6, I wanted to make a correction... In Para 5 since it's transnational, so it would be "States Parties".

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair, for giving the floor.

If we could scroll a little back. If you could continue, please. I think it is the Paragraph..., the start of the Paragraph 3. Yes, yes, please. If we are taking a call to inscribe the property, I just want the Secretariat to clarify whether we "take note" or we "adopt the following Statement", because our understanding is that the statement has to be adopted and not taken note of.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Alessandro.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Well, this is the standard phrase when a provisional Statement is... Actually, we "take note" to "adopt" the final statement, maybe next year when this will be reviewed because, for the time being, this is only provisional. This is why we are used to say "takes note". And as a matter of fact, later on, when we will finish with Item 8B, we will adopt a series of provisional Statements of Outstanding Universal Value that are being actually reworked with the States Parties.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there are no more comments or interventions, I would like to invite you to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

For the First Paragraph, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 2, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this proposed paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this proposal? I see no...

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

I need clarification because now, we are "taking note", it is not "adopted".

Again, I can understand what the Secretariat is saying, but to leave this, it means that next year, next Committee, to be adopted. We need clarification.

And I don't know from Egypt also, whether this is now essential to put what inserted, which is going to delay the adoption of this article.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Alessandro.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Just to clarify, the property is inscribed on the World Heritage List. There is no doubt about it.

What is not adopted now, at this moment in time, is the text of the Statement of OUV as it is. It's just we "take note" because it is going to, maybe, have some minor changes that the State Party is going to work with the Advisory Body and, maybe, represent the finalized text for final adoption next year if it is ready next year. But this is something that has already happened for all those properties that are being inscribed at this session, where the recommendation was not for inscription.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Alessandro.

Egypt, does this reflect your intervention? And are you okay with this text?

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Well, if our additional text will delay the adoption of the OUV Statement, we are ready to withdraw it.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

I thank the Omani Ambassador for his queries, and I also thank the Egyptian Delegation for their views.

My question again is directed to the World Heritage Secretariat and Mr. Balsamo.

In this session, we have seen many items that were not originally listed for inscription. They have been listed for referral, some have been listed for deferral, and one particular item was listed for non-inscription. There have been amendments of substantial nature presented for almost all of them.

My question is: What is the position of the World Heritage Secretariat on all those items that have been pushed for inscription? I understand they have been inscribed, but given your explanation, what you have just said before the World Heritage Committee has raised a question in my mind. I want to know: Are those also "taking note" or have the decisions been "adopted", Mr. Balsamo?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency. Balsamo.

The Secretariat:

Thank you.

There is no doubt about inscription, this is under point 2 of the decisions, all decisions that we have concerning nominations. So, no doubt about the inscription.

What we, maybe, are taking on hold, if you can say like that, is just the text of the related Statement of OUV, and this is a common practice for all, as you mentioned, all those nominations that were not originally recommended for inscription and that becomes inscription at the Committee session. And since many years now, the practice is to only "take note" of the provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value because this text has not been worked with the relevant Advisory Body, so it's just a way to give the chance to the State Party to work along with the Advisory Body along the following years, a text that then can be finally adopted.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Balsamo. I would like to pass the floor to IUCN for additional clarifications.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair.

Firstly, I think to comment on the amendment that Egypt introduced, and I think it speaks to exactly the issue that we've been trying to resolve. So, I find it an extremely helpful addition.

The normal practice, I think, when there is a site where elements that have not been recommended by the Advisory Body are included in the decision as for the previous referrals and deferrals, is this standard text, to consider a provisional Statement. And then essentially, we always work with the State Party concerned to produce a final Statement that everybody is comfortable, reflects OUV. So, the text at the top of this is very normal.

But if there's a choice between adopting with Egypt's text or removing Egypt's text, I think it's a much better decision to include the text that Egypt has proposed, because it does resolve, at least in part, the problem of perceiving an inscription under the ecosystem criteria in the Aral Sea region, which, I think, many observers outside of the hall here will find a very questionable decision unless we can make clear that this is an inscription focused on current biodiversity values but not trying to represent the Aral Sea ecosystem. So, I very much welcome Egypt's intervention and I think it's an extremely helpful text.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I'll get back to Egypt but before, Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'm consulting with my experts, here. We are very much satisfied with the answer from the Secretariat and from IUCN. I raised the question, but we are satisfied, unless there are other Committee members, they want to have any question.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to have a view of the Legal Advisor on this point, on the issue of utilizing of the two words "adoption" and "takes note", and I'll be happy if the Legal Advisor can be given the floor.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

We would like to add that we want to support the Advisory Body in including this part and reviewing the Outstanding Universal Value together with the States Parties in order to include this discussion that we were having. So, we would like to keep it in the decision.

Thanks.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium. Egypt, an opinion on this?

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Thank the IUCN for their comment.

Well, we would like to keep it and adopt the OUV Statement as it is. So, we add the text that we proposed and adopt the Outstanding Universal Value Statement, like the rest of other draft decisions over the past days.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, I pass the floor to the Legal Advisor.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good morning to you and to the members of the Committee.

Mr. Chair,

In response to the question from the Distinguished Delegate of India, there is, of course, a difference between "adopting" and "taking note". "Adopting" is the Committee making the decision and making its own statement. "Taking note" is simply what it is, taking note of it but without making it its own.

It should be recalled that the practice of having a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value was not originally used by the Committee. It's actually a relatively recent practice, if I am not wrong, which was decided in 2005 and implemented since 2007, and I would draw the attention to the Committee to the fact that there is still, as of today, a number of properties that are inscribed in the List without yet having a Statement of [Outstanding] Universal Value. And in that regard, I would draw your attention to the document of this session, Document WHC/23/45.COM/8E, in which the Committee is invited to adopt retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value. So, it would not be an anomaly to have a property inscribed without yet having the adoption of the Statement of [Outstanding] Universal Value.

Of course, this is without prejudice to what the Committee would decide as to whether to adopt the Statement of [Outstanding] Universal Value as is or leave as per the practice that was described by Mr. Balsamo, the matter to a later stage, "taking note" at the current moment.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much to the Legal Advisor. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We would just like to support the amendment proposed by Egypt and Belgium.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do you have any additional comments?

So, for the Paragraph 3, we have a proposed paragraph. Do we agree with this proposal?

The Rapporteur:

I think, Mr. Chair, if I may intervene, we need to change it to "Adopt the following Statement". And, in bracket, (as mentioned by the Distinguished Delegations of Egypt and Italy).

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Rapporteur:

I think we need to remove the term "provisional".

The Chairperson:

So, Egypt, does this reflect your intervention?

The Delegation of Egypt:

Yes, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I see no objections or no comments regarding the proposed text...

Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

I just wanted to have a clarification. This would mean that we can adopt an OUV even if all of the sites haven't been included.

I'm not sure if the Advisory Bodies could, perhaps, provide further information on this, or perhaps the Legal Advisor.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. IUCN.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair, and thanks to the question from Mexico.

I think the difference is if you adopt the statement, then the statement is fixed here. We're dealing with addition of four component parts, and I think, the challenge that has been faced with trying to reconcile those four component parts with the stated OUV, the clarification from Egypt covers that.

The normal practice would be to "take note of a provisional Statement" because that allows us the opportunity for a year of dialogue with the State Party to make sure that everything is harmonized within the decision. So, you know, that would be a normal practice, and I don't think, it takes anything away from the inscription that you're contemplating.

But that's the difference. If you adopt it now, then it's fixed as it is on screen, and any further dialogue will not impact how it's noted on the World Heritage List. So, you know, dialogue is always better in the sense that a year of just making sure that things are not problematic would give us an option. But I think we're in your hands. The reality is, I think, the amendment from Egypt that has now been supported by Belgium and Italy is a very important component of any statement the Committee adopts.

So, thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, IUCN. India.

The Delegation of India:

[first speaker] Thank you, Chair.

I would like to request you give the floor to the States Parties of Belgium and Italy so that we could hear their views on whether they want "adopt" or "takes note" in this para.

And I give the floor to my expert because he also has his views.

[second speaker] Thank you, Chair.

I think if we scroll down a bit where that brief intervention has been, here please, the brief intervention by Egypt, Belgium, and Italy, whether we are "taking note" or we are "adopting", I think the statement can simply start from "The component parts" rather than "It should be noted that". That bit perhaps can be deleted from this text. Rest of course reads fine.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much.

My main concern is if we say "adopt" and then we are adding something that is controversial until it is cleared by the Advisory Body. I think we don't want to have a precedent in this.

I'm so sorry, I want to be with the Member States, but also, we have a Convention, and we don't want to go on that step. Let's find a solution. I don't know how we can exempt what is now, if we can adopt the whole thing except the paragraph inserted by Egypt and seconded by Belgium and Italy.

I don't know how to do it, but we don't want to have something that, later on, will be counted on us.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So maybe, we'll have some suggestions from the Secretariat or IUCN, but before, I would like to ask Belgium to respond to India's inquiries.

The Delegation of Belgium:

We are in favour of the "takes note", so that we can fully incorporate the discussion that we were having, and that makes sense to take a little bit more time to work on the OUV Statement.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Italy, "takes note" or "adopt"?

The Delegation of Belgium:

Sorry, Chair. We were in favour of "takes note".

The Chairperson:

Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

We could also leave with "adopt", but, yes, we have a preference also for "taking note".

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Qatar.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

On a bien suivi les discussions.

Pour bien comprendre la différence entre « adopte » et « prend note », nous voulons clarifier que « prend note », vraiment, c'est le sens et c'est terme le plus logique.

Tout d'abord, ce qu'a bien expliqué l'ambassadeur d'Oman, c'est qu'il ne faut pas aller jusqu'à créer un cas précédent, et c'est la raison pourquoi l'État du Qatar soutient vraiment la proposition de *Belgium* et Italie, de garder

vraiment le « prend note » pour bien donner aux États parties le temps de nous fournir le plus détaillé des informations par rapport à la valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We would also prefer "takes note" to "adopt".

Thank you.

"Takes note".

The Chairperson:

So, I'd like to hear from the Legal Advisor about it.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

I would like, maybe, to make a comment that might be helpful to understand the significance or the value of the decision that you are making.

By providing, in the prior paragraph, that it inscribes the site on the List, the Committee is already stating that the site has Outstanding Universal Value. Legally speaking, that is what inscription means pursuant to Article 11, Paragraph 2 of the Convention.

So, the decision that you are making today by inscribing is that the site as described in Paragraph 2 has Outstanding Universal Value. The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is an illustration of the reasons why this is so. And the practice, as described by Mr. Balsamo, is to "adopt" the statement when it has already been reviewed, and only "take note" of it when there have been substantive changes during the session.

I should point out that you have already done so several times in the current session. It hasn't been noticed, maybe, but you have done so several times at the current session. Each time that a recommendation of deferral or referral was transformed into one of inscription, you have "taken note" of the provisional Statement of Outstanding [Universal] Value and without raising any problem.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much to the Legal Advisor, and also given the fact that the clarifications from IUCN, from the Secretariat, and also from the Committee members like Oman, about the differences between "adopt" and "takes note", I'll get back to you Egypt, if you would like to keep the original text or not, but before, I will give the floor to India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair,

I just want to take this opportunity to thank the Legal Advisor as I always do. He puts everything in so clear perspective, and that is the beauty of the law. That is the beauty of canon, which I had mentioned a day earlier. Law is something that has been accepted, there is a precedence, there is a history to it, there is a convention to it. And how you interpret the law, how you interpret the canon helps you to take things forward. And for that reason, I really appreciate, and I hope you can see it's not just a choice between two words, "takes notes" or "adopts", but it is the complete law, the rules and regulations and the precedents that define it. So, I thank you, Mr. Legal Advisor, for showing us the way forward.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

Egypt, are you okay with keeping the original text?

The Delegation of Egypt:

Yes, Mr. Chair, thank you.

I would like to thank the Legal Advisor for the clarification.

We will go with the consensus and follow the "takes note" reference.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Egypt and to you all.

So, having said that, do we agree with the proposed Paragraph no. 3? Are there any objections or comments? So, I see none. Therefore, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposed paragraph. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections or comments. Therefore, the Paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. So, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues,

I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole. And if there are no comments or objections, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.29** adopted as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to the States Parties of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on behalf of the entire Committee.

You may have the floor, Kazakhstan, first for a two-minute brief statement.

The Observer Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Dear Mr. Chair, Distinguished Excellencies, dear colleagues,

The Delegation of Kazakhstan congratulates you, Mr. Chair, on your competent leadership of the current session and conveys sincere thanks to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its generous hospitality and excellent organization of the event.

We are extremely honoured that the deserts of Central Asia are now globally recognized by UNESCO.

We are gladly and grateful to the members of the World Heritage Committee and the experts of the International Union for Conservation of Nature as well as to our national experts for their efforts, of all those involved in the process of preparing this transnational nomination, with a special gratitude for the Central Asian Desert Initiative for the coordination.

We hope that the new international status of Altyn-Emel and Barsakelmes will draw additional attention to the importance of continuing in-depth scientific research of the effective measures of the protection of desert ecosystems in Kazakhstan.

Finally, I would like to congratulate our brotherly neighbour countries, Turkmen and Uzbekistan with our joint nomination.

Thank you very much, *[message in the State Party local language][applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Turkmenistan.

The Observer Delegation of Turkmenistan:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Distinguished Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to begin my speech by expressing our deep appreciation to the Esteemed members of the Committee for their invaluable support in adopting the amendment to the World Heritage Committee's decision, which allowed for the inscription of proposed components of our joint nomination, Cold Winter Deserts of Turan, in the World Heritage List.

I would like to extend special thanks to all international and national experts who actively contributed to the preparation of this nomination.

The Cold Winter Deserts of Turan represent a model of continuous ecological and biological processes that determine the adaptation and the survival of diverse flora and fauna, as well as animals, in changing extreme environmental conditions in the Cold Winter Deserts of Turan.

I would like to assure that our countries have agreed on transnational management and conservation mechanisms for the nominated areas as well as established systems for monitoring and regular data exchange. In conclusion, I would like to thank the World Heritage Committee once again on behalf of the people and the Government of Turkmenistan for the inscription of our joint nomination in the World Heritage List.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again. Uzbekistan.

The Observer Delegation of Uzbekistan:

Hello,

I want to thank on behalf of the Government of Uzbekistan. I am joining my colleagues to thank World Heritage Centre and IUCN for favourable consideration of our nomination. I express my sincere gratitude to all members of the World Heritage Committee for their support to our proposal on additional components. Especially, we greatly appreciate the commitment of the State of Qatar, who took the lead as well as all co-authors of this nomination.

It's very important that all parts of the file are now complete, and entire ecosystem will only benefit from that. We are fully committed to working closely with UNESCO and its Advisory Bodies to safeguard and promote this exceptional transboundary natural heritage.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again to all States Parties concerned and involved in this nomination.

8B.28 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid (Saudi Arabia) // 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid (Arabie saoudite)

The Chairperson:

So, dear colleagues, the next item is a site nominated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for inscription on the World Heritage List.

In conformity with the Rule 15.3 of the Rules of Procedures of the Committee, I shall abstain from exercising my functions of Chairperson for this specific item relating to a site situated on a territory of the State Party which I am a national. Therefore, pursuant to Rule 14.2 of the Rules of Procedure, I will ask Ms. Flora Mokgohloa, Chief of the Delegation of South Africa to the World Heritage Committee, as a Vice-Chairperson, to come to the podium and lead the Committee through this Agenda item.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you very much to Chairperson of the extended 45th session and good morning, dear colleagues.

I now invite IUCN to present the nomination of 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid (Saudi Arabia), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson.

We have received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid, and this notification is to be found on page 101 of both the English and French version of the Document INF.8B4, and this notification has some factual corrections that have an impact on the text of the Statement of OUV which is proposed, and this correction has already been integrated into our text.

Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Balsamo. IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chairperson.

IUCN's evaluation of this property can be found on the pages indicated on the slide before you.

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The nominated property, 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid, covers a vast area of more than 1.27 million ha.

It has been nominated under criteria (vii), (ix), and (x). It boasts a spectacular hyper-arid desert landscape and a wide range of wildlife habitats.

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It contains one of the world's largest longitudinal sand-dune systems.

'Uruq Bani Ma'arid encompasses the western edge of the greatest expanse of windblown sand on Earth, Ar-Rub' al-Khali, as well as the southern end of the thousand-kilometre-long Tuwayq limestone escarpment with its vegetated wadis, gravel plains, salt flats, and inter-dune corridors.

The application of criterion (vii) is justified as the nominated property stands out at the global level as one of the world's most beautiful and varied desert landscapes. The vast and undisturbed sand sea is part of the third-largest desert on Earth and of the Earth's largest unbroken expanse of sand.

The nominated property is distinguished by the widespread presence of *zibars*, which are particularly well-developed in the nominated area. These are features that are generally of low relief, without well-formed slip faces, and composed of coarse and relatively poorly sorted sand.

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Regarding criteria (ix) and (x), 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid is also home to several plants and a number of endemic and globally threatened species, and a diversity of mammal species, including three reintroduced globally threatened antelopes. The nominated property is presented as the only place in the world where the Arabian Oryx has been successfully reintroduced into their natural habitats after decades of extinction in the wild. This population is completely free ranging in an area exhibiting a high degree of ecological integrity.

In IUCN's view, the doubtless importance of these keystone species as well as the endemic and threatened species would best be recognized under an inscription under criterion (ix) alone rather than both criterion (ix) and (x), as part of an intact and vast desert ecosystem. The IUCN World Heritage Panel noted that the nominated property shows a similar level of biodiversity as existing World Heritage properties in the same biorealm, currently a species count of 500 species for the vast area, which is relatively low even for a desert environment.

However, this would be an excellent starting point to address a significant gap on the World Heritage List under criterion (ix), as it would be the only property to represent the Arabian Desert Udvardy Province. The large size of the nominated property ensures that all ecological processes can evolve without disturbance due to the lack of pressures, such as overgrazing and hunting.

This allows a close-to-natural appreciation of the relatively young hyper-arid ecosystem of Ar-Rub'al-Khali, which evolved over successive waves of aridity and humidity since the Late Quaternary period. Adaptation to the hostile environment can be observed, including species intercepting water from fog.

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Regarding the integrity, protection, and management of the nominated property, IUCN considers that all of the requirements of the Operational Guidelines are met. We note a number of threats that may have the potential to affect the Outstanding Universal Value, but we can see and acknowledge the State Party's commitment and actions to address them, which was also demonstrated in supplementary information that's provided, and it also includes an extensive range of community-based programmes.

IUCN, therefore, recommends that the Committee inscribe 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (vii) and (ix), and to ensure that the property maintains its integrity, a number of recommendations are included in the draft decision, which can be found on...

[Final slide]

which can be found in Document 8B as shown on this slide.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Balsamo, for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination from the room. I see none.

Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.28**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.28**.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.28** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Thank you very much.

Let me congratulate the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property, which is the first natural heritage site for fauna and flora.

Saudi Arabia, you have the floor for a brief two-minute statement.

Thank you.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

[first speaker] Thank you, Chair.

In the name of God, the merciful, good afternoon.

I am very honoured to represent my country at this historic moment as we are hosting in our capital city the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, and I am delighted to share with our Delegations and members of the Committee this historic moment.

We thank UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies.

This is the first natural heritage site in Saudi Arabia to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, in addition to six sites which are already on the World Heritage List, including ad-Dir'iyah neighbourhood, which is the cradle of the modern Saudi Arabian state.

This is in line with our Vision 2030, which is based on our civilization and a thousand-year-old history.

I therefore thank His Saint God and His Majesty the King because they are helping us to protect our natural treasures.

Thank you, and I now give the floor to Dr Mohammad Qurban, Executive Director of the National Centre for Wildlife.

[second speaker] Thank you in the name of God the Merciful.

Chair, members of the Committee,

I'm very pleased on behalf of our centre to be here today, to celebrate together the inscription of the site 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid on the World Heritage List of UNESCO as a natural heritage site. This is the first natural site in Saudi Arabia to be added to the List. It's an extremely vast site in the midst of the Ar-Rub'al-Khali. It is rich in terms of its biodiversity and its ecological system. It is also linked to a heritage which has been enriched through local traditions, and it's a testament to the interaction between humans and nature. We are immensely proud of this, and it would not have been possible without the support of the Government and the Saudi authorities. It demonstrates our commitment to protect our heritage in line with our Vision 2030.

During the preparation of this nomination file, we worked closely with Advisory Bodies and national and international experts. We thank you all for your collaboration and your support, which have enabled us to better protect our World Heritage.

Let me reaffirm our commitment to protect the site of 'Uruq Bani Ma'arid by adopting the best possible practices in this field in order to transmit this heritage to future generations.

Thank you, and I now give the floor to the Executive Chair of the Heritage Authority. *[applause]*

[third speaker] Thank you very much.

Chairs, the World Heritage Centre, the IUCN,

I wish to express my delight and joy in taking part in this historic moment with you. We are currently working to develop our heritage alongside other areas in line with our Vision 2030. We've been working with our colleagues from the National Centre for Wildlife in order to protect our heritage for all of humankind, be it natural or cultural heritage.

We're delighted to have hosted you here, and we're also very pleased with this nomination file, which was prepared with a great deal of professionalism in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies and our national experts.

We thank all of the stakeholders involved for their contributions, including UNESCO and the IUCN, and we will continue to work within the Ministry of Culture to protect and preserve our natural and cultural heritage and to make it an example contributing to the wealth of heritage worldwide. The authorities of Saudi Arabia are fully supporting us in this effort.

I would like to thank the members of the National Commission at UNESCO, the colleagues at the Ministry of Culture and the National Centre for Wildlife. Let me assure you, this is just the beginning. We will continue to pursue our efforts.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Vice-Chairperson:

Congratulations once more to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I now hand back the Chair.

Thank you.

8B.30 Tugay Forests of the Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve (Tajikistan) // Forêts de tugay de la Réserve naturelle de Tigrovaya Balka (Tadjikistan)

The Chairperson:

Congratulations again to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

So, dear colleagues, I now invite IUCN to present the nomination of the Tugay Forests of the Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve (Tajikistan).

IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Tugay forests of the Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve are nominated under natural criterion (ix)

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The nominated property covers an area of more than 49,000 ha, with a buffer zone of more than 17,000 ha. Tugay Forests are one of Central Asia's unique aquatic ecosystems. These forests present distinct structural and dynamic attributes compared to its surrounding environment. The nomination is put forward under biodiversity criteria (ix) and (x).

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The Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve falls within the Global 200 Priority Ecoregion of the Middle Asian Montane Woodlands and Steppes. While this ecoregion is represented on the World Heritage List by Xinjiang Tianshan and Western Tien Shan, the nominated property exhibits distinct features and potentially contains the largest and most intact Tugay forest massif in Central Asia.

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The Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve houses the largest population of native Bactrian Deer. However, in terms of criterion (x), IUCN notes that whilst the nominated property is undoubtedly vital for the conservation of mammal, bird, and amphibian species, it does not appear to significantly stand out from other World Heritage properties in the biodiversity hotspot of the Mountains of Central Asia and related biorealms. The number of threatened species may be significant, but the available documentation does not adequately demonstrate the property's status as the most important and significant habitat for the conservation of threatened species.

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While the nominated property exhibits exceptional size in its riparian woodlands, the impact of upstream reservoirs and water withdrawal on these ecosystems is important. The most significant and enduring threat is the altered hydrological regime of the Vakhsh River caused by dams and water diversion for irrigation. This has resulted in the loss of natural summer floods, which are vital for the ecosystem. Direct threats within the property such as grazing, external threats such as irrigation pose high risks to the Tugay forest ecosystem.

In this regard, IUCN welcomes reports in supplementary information provided by the State Party confirming an improvement of the hydrological regime and of the reserve since 2016 as well as a 50% reduction in water consumption for irrigation since 2016.

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Regarding the protection of the nominated property, it deserves to be noted that the Tigrovaya Balka Reserve was already established back in 1938. The boundaries of the reserve have experienced changes over the years. Currently, they do maintain an adequate level of integrity, whilst the buffer zone enhances its protection from external threats. With its strict protection regime, the nominated property adheres to IUCN Protected Area Category Ia.

The management of the Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve is conducted in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Specially Protected Natural Territories of 2014. With a well-structured staff and robust management plan, the reserve is adequately managed and funded from the state budget.

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In conclusion, the Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve's Tugay Forests demonstrate global significance under criterion (ix) but not under criterion (x). The property's integrity, protection, and management are in line with the Operational Guidelines. However, ensuring the long-term maintenance of its natural values requires continued action to maintain the natural hydrological regime.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, IUCN.

I would like to see if there is any comment from the floor. So, I see none.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.30**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.30**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt and I declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.30** adopted. *[gavel]*
[applause]

Congratulations to Tajikistan on behalf of the entire Committee.

Tajikistan, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Tajikistan:

[first speaker] *Salaam Aleykum, Shukran Said Rais.*

Excellencies, dear participants,

It's a great honour and privilege to be a part of this truly joyful and memorable occasion when a natural site nomination of Tajikistan is inscribed on the World Heritage List with the support of the members of the Committee.

The inscription of Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve on UNESCO World Heritage List, once again, confirms the great value and uniqueness of this reserve.

We are very grateful to the Evaluation Body of the Committee for the successful, accomplished work regarding the inscription of our nomination.

With that, I pass the mic to the Chairman of the Committee for Environmental Protection of Tajikistan.

[second speaker] Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for excellent organization of the session and warm hospitality. I am pleased to have the opportunity to address all of you, on behalf of the Government of Tajikistan, and express our appreciation to the Chair and the Committee for support to include the Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve to UNESCO World Heritage List.

We would like to express our gratitude to the IUCN for their close cooperation throughout the process.

We are committed to continue our efforts to effective conservation and management of the Tugay Forest in the Tiger Gorge Reserve. We are pleased to see our efforts recognized. The inscription of Tugay Forest of Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve to the World Heritage List. Tiger Gorge Reserve is the only corner in Earth where Desert Tiger Complex is preserved. It has an amazing variety of landscapes with coexisting jungles, sandy and saline semideserts, piedmont semi savannas, and various wetlands, which has an Outstanding Universal Value.

Before I conclude, let me reiterate that Tigrovaya Balka Nature Reserve, included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, will significantly increase effective protection and management, inspire success in promoting sustainability of this unique area for generations to come.

I wish all delegates a successful 45th session of the Committee and I thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations once again.

CULTURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

8B.51 Memorial sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero (Rwanda) // Sites mémoriaux du génocide : Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi et Bisesero (Rwanda)

The Chairperson:

I would like now to invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Memorial sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero (Rwanda), but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat.

Mr. Balsamo, please.

Le Secrétariat :

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

En ce qui concerne l'évaluation de la proposition d'inscription des Sites mémoriaux du génocide : Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi et Bisesero, nous avons reçu une notification d'erreurs factuelles, qui se trouve à la page 15 du Document INF.8B4.Add de la version française et de la version anglaise, et dans cette notification, il n'y a pas de correction à faire.

C'est tout, merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS, you may have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Merci, M. le Président.

Il s'agit de la présentation de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS des Sites mémoriaux du Génocide : Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi et Bisesero (Rwanda). Le rapport de l'ICOMOS se trouve dans le Document INF.8B1.Add à la page 1 de la version en anglais et à la page 1 de la version en français.

Pour cette proposition d'inscription, l'ICOMOS a reçu une lettre d'erreurs factuelles.

[Diapositive suivante]

Le bien proposé pour inscription comprend quatre sites mémoriaux où sont commémorées les victimes du Génocide contre les Tutsi au Rwanda, qui s'est déroulé entre les mois d'avril et juillet 1994 et a entraîné la mort de plus d'un million de victimes. Deux des éléments constitutifs sont des lieux de massacre : une église catholique construite sur la colline de Nyamata en 1980 dans la province de l'Est, et une école technique qui était en construction depuis 1990 sur la colline de Murambi dans la province du Sud. La colline de Gisozi, dans la ville de Kigali, abrite le mémorial du génocide de Kigali construit en 1999, où plus de 250 000 victimes ont été enterrées, tandis que la colline de Bisesero dans la province de l'Ouest abrite un mémorial construit en 1998 en mémoire de la lutte de ceux qui ont résisté à leurs agresseurs pendant plus de deux mois avant d'être exterminés.

[Diapositive suivante]

Les éléments constitutifs se situent dans quatre régions différentes du Rwanda, et chaque site mémoriel se trouve sur une colline représentative. Ces éléments constitutifs couvrent différents types de lieux où les massacres furent commis : un lieu de culte, un lieu public, et une forêt. Le site mémoriel à Gisozi est représentatif des lieux où les massacres furent commis dans la totalité de la capitale de Kigali.

[Diapositive suivante]

Les quatre sites mémoriaux sont enregistrés à l'Inventaire national du patrimoine culturel élaboré en 2004. Une désignation pour les quatre sites mémoriaux dans la Liste du patrimoine national issue par le ministère de la Culture, est en cours d'adoption, sur la base de la loi de la préservation du patrimoine culturel et des connaissances traditionnelles.

Dès la soumission de la proposition d'inscription par l'État partie, l'institution qui était responsable des quatre sites mémoriaux, la Commission nationale pour la lutte contre le génocide, fut remplacée par le ministère de l'Unité Nationale et l'Implication Civile.

[Diapositive suivante]

Voici un résumé de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS sur la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien proposé pour inscription.

L'ICOMOS comprend que, s'agissant d'un événement récent, ses conséquences et son influence sont encore à l'œuvre, et observe qu'une réflexion sur ses impacts historiques requiert une vision à plus long terme. À la lumière des exigences de la Convention du patrimoine mondial, des Orientations devant guider la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial et des Principes directeurs pour la préparation des propositions d'inscription concernant les sites de mémoire associés à des conflits récents, une contextualisation plus approfondie des événements est nécessaire afin de justifier l'approche en série, la sélection des quatre sites mémoriaux constitutifs présentés dans le dossier de proposition d'inscription ainsi que le critère (vi).

Malgré les clarifications fournies par l'État partie durant le processus d'évaluation, les circonstances du génocide ne sont expliquées uniquement que par rapport aux quatre collines proposées pour inscription où les sites mémoriaux ont été érigés.

L'ICOMOS considère qu'une compréhension plus large des événements, à la fois en termes d'antécédents historiques et d'impacts territoriaux et des conséquences du génocide et de leur influence au niveau régional et mondial est nécessaire.

Cette compréhension plus large du contexte et de l'histoire devrait éclairer l'interprétation et la présentation du bien en série proposé pour inscription en tenant compte d'une pluralité de voix et de la façon dont chaque élément constitutif reflète l'histoire complète des événements.

[Diapositive suivante]

Pour conclure, l'ICOMOS recommande que l'examen de la proposition d'inscription des Sites mémoriaux du Génocide : Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi et Bisesero (Rwanda) soit différé afin de permettre à l'État partie, avec l'aide de l'ICOMOS et du Centre du patrimoine mondial, si nécessaire, de :

[Diapositive suivante]

- fournir un cadre historique et géoculturel plus large pour permettre une meilleure compréhension du contexte du génocide et de ses impacts et conséquences aux niveaux régional et mondial, afin d'encadrer et de renforcer une justification de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle qui soutiendrait une approche en série, et une justification de la sélection des éléments constitutifs qui permettrait une compréhension complète des événements ;
- fournir davantage de détails et de documentation sur la manière dont les récits de l'événement, émanant de toutes les Parties, ont été recueillis, et sur la manière dont ils contribuent au processus de réconciliation en cours et à long terme ;

[Diapositive suivante]

- élaborer un plan d'interprétation et de présentation pour les éléments constitutifs, qui intègre une pluralité de voix, avec l'explication de la façon dont chaque élément constitutif reflète l'histoire complète des événements et de leur signification actuelle.

L'ICOMOS a inclus des recommandations complémentaires dans le projet de décision afin de renforcer la conservation du bien à long terme.

L'ICOMOS considère que le dossier de proposition d'inscription révisé devrait être considéré par une mission sur le site.

[Diapositive suivante]

Merci pour votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS, for this presentation.

I would like to see if there are any comments concerning this nomination.

South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving us the opportunity to present this nomination dossier.

South Africa wishes to recall Decision **44 COM 8**, which established an Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory Associated with Recent Conflicts. The mandate of the OEWG was to broaden the scope of reflection and to accommodate other positions on these sites. Extensive debates were held in the meetings of the group, and we wish to commend Ms. Vera Lacoëuilhe from the Permanent Delegation of Saint Lucia, who, through her able Chairmanship and skilful negotiation, was able to conduct the proceedings of these very difficult discussions in a constructive manner to propose consensus language. South Africa participated actively in the Open-ended Working Group, which concluded overwhelmingly that dossiers presented by States Parties to the Committee should be considered on a case-by-case basis, with each dossier presenting its own merits for inscription. We were, therefore, pleased that the 18th extraordinary session resolved to lift the moratorium on such sites, and decided that nominations of Sites of Memory Associated with Recent Conflicts will be processed under the procedures and criteria applied at the time of their submission. The Committee should recall that the dossier was submitted in January 2019, and therefore, we wish to remind the Committee that the Guiding Principles agreed upon cannot be applied retrospectively to evaluate this nomination dossier, but only for future dossiers submitted under criterion (vi).

South Africa carefully considered the technical evaluation report and commends ICOMOS for the detailed and clear analysis of the dossier. In this regard, we would like to indicate that we concur with ICOMOS that criterion (vi) is sufficient to justify the OUV of the genocide sites. South Africa knows that ICOMOS has recommended that the nomination be deferred in order to allow the State Party of Rwanda to provide more information.

We understand that since the submission of the dossier, there has been constant engagement between the State Party of Rwanda, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, even up to here at the extended 45th session, and that information has been provided.

We have accordingly proposed some amendments to the draft decision to allow for inclusion of the necessary information in order to assist the Committee to move from a deferral to an inscription.

South Africa, therefore, requests the members of the Committee to accept the additional information provided by the State Party to inscribe this property at this session.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, we request that you grant the State Party of Rwanda the opportunity to provide clarity and any other elements that the Committee members might have.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Chair.

Chair,

Egypt stands firmly beside Rwanda in its quest to inscribe the Genocide Memorial sites on the World Heritage List under criteria (vi).

These sites serve as a powerful reminder of a painful chapter of our shared history, echoing the values of remembrance, reconciliation, and peace. These sites don't merely preserve the past, they embody it, ensuring that the lessons learned remain engraved in all our collective memory. They are living beacons of hope for a world thirsting for understanding and unity.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Rwanda for this submission, illuminating the harrowing genocidal process and the historical context. Rwanda's unwavering commitment to preserving the lessons learned from these sites for future generations is both commendable and inspiring.

Moreover, we appreciate the rigorous protection and management measures put in place, safeguarding the integrity and authenticity of these sites.

Chair,

In these sites, we bear witness to a painful history. Yet, they also stand as a beacon of hope, illuminating the path towards a world that is more peaceful and tolerant. Let us remember that these sites are not mere reminders of our past. They are powerful calls for a future filled with compassion and understanding. They are classrooms where the lessons of history are thought, where reconciliation is cultivated, and where the seeds of peace and unity are sown. Let us recognize the profound universal value they embody, and let us not postpone this recognition any further.

The time to honour the memory of the victims is now, and we must inscribe these sites on the World Heritage List without delay.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

M. le Président,

La Belgique et ses Gouvernements de Wallonie, de Bruxelles et de Flandre se réjouissent de ce nouvel examen des dossiers de mémoire, le second dans ce Comité, le fruit de plusieurs années d'un conséquent travail de réflexion parmi tous les États parties à la Convention. L'analyse de trois sites de mémoire importants, situés sur trois continents différents, est un aboutissement qui marquera ce Comité de Riyad.

Les sites de Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi et Bisesero, présentés par la République du Rwanda, nous rappellent l'importance cruciale du recueillement, de la paix et de la réconciliation.

Nous soutenons leur inscription aujourd'hui et nous accueillons favorablement l'amendement déposé par l'Afrique du Sud. À ce titre, la Belgique apprécie bien sûr de voir un nouveau site africain ajouté à la Liste du patrimoine mondial. L'espoir que la Belgique nourrit à travers cette inscription a parfaitement été résumé par Mme la Directrice générale en ouverture de ce 45^e Comité. Je la cite : « Les témoins passent, mais les sites resteront et continueront de parler aux générations en gardien vigilant de la mémoire et de la conscience collective. Ces sites qui portent les stigmates de l'histoire sont à la fois des lieux de recueillement et de vérité indispensables à la justice. Ils doivent pouvoir, en étant préservés et rendus accessibles au public, jouer un rôle d'éducation, de transmission pour faire le lien entre le passé et le présent et construire la conscience universelle de l'humanité. » Fin de citation.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I would like to commend the strength work conducted by the State Party of Rwanda as well as the Evaluation Bodies for this project.

The Site of Memory is a newly introduced category in the world of World Heritage, and therefore, we need to have a meaningful discussion on the three sites within this category, including Memorial sites of the Genocide from the State Party of Rwanda.

Now, we do understand that the decisions concerning the new category of Sites of Memory do not really apply to the already submitted items as the Distinguished Representative of South Africa mentioned, yes, that is actually true. But nevertheless, what we agreed on in the extraordinary Committee meeting, back in January, has a relevance in this particular case. In case of this particular file, we fully understand the historic significance of this site for the State Party and its people, particularly as a symbol of reconciliation. We understand that, although the genocide did take place indeed, a reconciliation process has been ongoing without any event of retaliation until now. These elements of historical significance and reconciliation are particularly important in the category of the Sites of Memory.

Also, we understand that there has been no contestation within the State Party as well as from other States Parties. If there is a contestation on files like this, a site inscription on the Site of Memory property could trigger further division and conflicts.

On this understanding, Japan is generally in favour of the inscription of this site. However, further discussions on technical issues seem necessary so that we can be more confident about this inscription.

In this context, we would like to ask three questions to the State Party of Rwanda:

- First, is it correct to understand that there is no existing contestation inside or outside of the State Party regarding this file?
- Secondly, there seems to be a considerable divergence in views between the State Party of Rwanda and ICOMOS on how criterion (vi) is justified in this particular case. We would first like to ask the State Party to respond to the concrete concerns raised by ICOMOS;
- Thirdly, in the view of ICOMOS, Gisozi and Bisesero sites are less authentic than the other two sites. Does the State Party agree or disagree with ICOMOS on this particular point?

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The State Party of Ethiopia appreciates the efforts made by the State Party and the Evaluation Body for their collaboration to inscribe the site on the World Heritage List under criterion (vi).

These sites serve as important places of remembrance and education about the tragic events which occurred during that period.

Ethiopia wishes to address the question of protection and management requirements. The State Party has informed us that it had responded positively to the concerns of the Evaluation Body by updating a management plan that covers the period 2024-2028.

Concerning the preservation of the Outstanding Universal Value, the State Party has taken numerous actions by providing adequate resources for the management of the nominated property and according to the management strategy.

Ethiopia also finds that the Rwanda Memorial sites fully meet the requirements of criterion (vi), under which the site is proposed for inscription.

In addition, the State Party has informed us that a ministerial cabinet approved on 11 September the order relating to the classification of Tangible Cultural Heritage and its use, which includes the four Memorial sites of Genocide proposed in the nomination file. This shows again the will of the State Party of Rwanda to consider the Evaluation Body's recommendations.

In this particular case, I would like to bring to the attention of Committee members, the UN Charter and the very purpose of the establishment of the United Nations, to which UNESCO and the World Heritage Centre belong. In its preamble, the UN Charter states: "WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime, has brought untold sorrow to mankind." One way of saving the coming generation from tragic conflict is to include sites of memories of conflict to the World Heritage List.

To this end, the inscription of the Genocide Memorial Sites nominated by the State Party of Rwanda have a paramount significance. We, therefore, support the amendment proposed by the State Party of South Africa, and we wish the nominated property to be inscribed in the World Heritage List in this session.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

We thank the Advisory Bodies for the presentation of the report on the nomination of Memorial sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero. We also thank the Secretariat for the draft decision.

We consider that, although the attributes are not mentioned in the dossier, they are provided in the additional information provided in June 2023.

As for the management and conservation plan, we commend the additional information provided in June, which states that the plan for 2022 has been implemented as well as the development of a plan up until 2027.

The process of reconciliation is an important issue in the country despite it being recent history. Rwanda has undertaken significant efforts to educate about its parts, and this is a good example for a number of countries. Argentina inscribed a site just yesterday, and we believe that it's an important step towards the principle of "Never again". Local communities should take ownership of these sites and contribute to the preservation of memory as a whole. Heritage plays a key role in the conservation of memory to overcome traumatic events for different victims of these atrocities. We believe that we must address the past before moving into the future. It's not possible to think of a culture for sustainable development worldwide without taking these steps.

We believe that recognizing memorial sites is essential, and this is why we support the proposal to inscribe Memorial sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi, Bisesero in Rwanda on the World Heritage List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

To begin, Nigeria congratulates the State Party of Rwanda for submitting this nomination dossier. We thank the Evaluation Body for the excellent work and recommendations that led to improvement through Rwanda's rapid responses to date.

We understand that around 90% of the required adjustments are addressed, while the State Party improves on the rest.

Mr. Chair,

Sites of Memory are important parts of human history. They are significant and socially transformative moments; happy, sad, pleasant, unpleasant. We shaped our societies, and above all, memory sites of this sort, when inscribed, will carry a message of "Never again". This message of "Never again" is, in part, what Nigeria wishes to underscore secondly with the amendment submitted by South Africa to the draft decision on this item.

It is well known that Rwanda's memorial sites reflect the country's recent history, linked to the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994. They bear witness to this history and symbolize the desecration of human dignity, where man was seen as ferocious towards his fellow man. The nominated site, where the victims are decently buried, is a place of gathering and dialogue to consolidate the gains of peace.

Our Delegation is no doubt in favour of the inscription of the four Genocide Memorial sites, as presented by the State Party of Rwanda. But in the spirit of "Never again", we will need the clarification and, thus, a question to the State Party as to how will the nominated site contribute and will continue to contribute to the reconciliation process in Rwanda.

I thank you again, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Mr. Chairperson,

The Oman Delegation wants to express its gratitude and recognition for the State Party's diligent work in preparing this nominated serial property.

After carefully studying the submitted documents, we are confident that the Genocide Memorial sites: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi, Bisesero, I hope that I pronounce them correctly, nominated for consideration, meet the essential attributes reflecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The authenticity and integrity of the property as well as its protection and management plan are deemed satisfactory.

The Oman Delegation also observed and appreciated the State Party's constructive approach and willingness to cooperate with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in safeguarding and conserving the components that convey the envisioned OUV. It is worth noting that the State Party has provided supplementary information that effectively addresses the recommendations put forth by ICOMOS, offering clarifications and responses as requested.

Moreover, the State Party acknowledges that, while the nomination already contains contextual and historical information concerning the genocide, their commitment remains steadfast in fostering further cooperation to deepen the understanding of the historical context. They place a strong emphasis on forging partnership with experienced international institutions specializing in the conservation of genocide-related elements and the ongoing collection of materials related to the victims.

Furthermore, the State Party has recently submitted a new management plan for the period 2024-2028, which was submitted just recently. This recommendation has been incorporated into the new management plan, and the State Party is fully committed to its implementation.

They are also actively working on finalizing documentation to establish a baseline for the conservation, management and monitoring of the elements comprising the serial property.

It is evident that the State Party remains resolute in its dedication to carrying out all recommendations provided by the Evaluation Party.

Therefore, we support the amended draft decision proposed by South Africa to inscribe the Genocide Memorial sites: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi, Bisesero (Rwanda) on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (vi).

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Les Sites mémoriaux du génocide rwandais ont une portée hautement symbolique.

Nous remercions l'État partie et le peuple rwandais pour cette proposition d'inscription bien élaborée.

Je voudrais rappeler que si nous en sommes là aujourd'hui, c'est aussi grâce au travail solidaire et consensuel des Délégations permanentes et des experts ayant permis de lever le moratoire de Manama. Nous saluons cet esprit de solidarité et de consensus qui a voulu que les sites mémoriaux en général soient examinés de manière solennelle sur leur seule capacité à démontrer leur VUE et leur conformité à la mission, aux objectifs de l'UNESCO et de ceux de la Convention du patrimoine mondial. C'est effectivement de ces objectifs et de cette mission qu'il s'agit lorsque nous évoquons les Sites mémoriaux du génocide rwandais. Ils renferment en eux des valeurs de commémoration, de compassion, de respect de la vie humaine, d'unité, de réconciliation, de tolérance, d'éducation à une culture de la paix, de résilience, d'espoir et d'un avenir meilleur ainsi que de prévention des atrocités futures.

En outre, il ressort du dossier que l'intégrité et l'authenticité de ces sites sont préservées. Les délimitations, notamment des zones tampons, sont protégées par des arrêtés ministériels situés dans le dossier.

Leur état de conservation nous paraît satisfaisant.

Nous notons également que le premier plan de gestion et de conservation quinquennal 2018-2022 a expiré, et nous encourageons le Rwanda à relancer ce plan, dont l'actualisation est en cours.

Au vu de ces éléments, nous appuyons l'inscription de ces sites sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial et demandons également aux autres membres du Comité de bien vouloir en faire autant.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar*.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Advisory Bodies for their efforts and their collaboration with the State Party.

The State Party has made significant efforts to address all issues and answer all questions from the Advisory Bodies. We have seen this today; the result is clear.

We thank the Working Group and its productive work, which has allowed us to look at these memorial sites. This required great effort on their part.

Qatar, after having reviewed the details of the report presented by the Advisory Bodies, notes that these historical events have taught us some important lessons. Unfortunately, it took for tragedy to happen in Rwanda. The people of Rwanda were able to overcome these very difficult events and now share these lessons with all of humanity; the value of reconciliation after suffering peace, which needs to be our ultimate goal. The importance of peace is not limited to the Convention, but also relate to the values of UNESCO and all of humanity.

Chair,

This suffering in and of itself is a symbol of the Outstanding Value of the site. And so, we support the draft amendment to inscribe this Site of Memory.

Thank you Chair.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving India the floor on the Agenda Item 45 COM 8B.51, Memorial sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero, (Rwanda), which got a deferral recommendation by the Advisory Body, but the amendment is for inscription.

It is a Site of Memory, a new category. The nomination was presented under criteria (vi). However, we cannot overlook the fact that all African members have co-authored the nomination. There is a part of Africa in the heart of

every Indian, and there is an Indian in every part of Africa. Mahatma Gandhi said: "I was born in India but made in Africa." Hence, India stands in solidarity with African nations.

Criterion (vi) is met as the OUV of the four sites is of global significance. On the question of integrity, all elements are present within the boundaries. Rwanda has established a legislation protecting the memorial sites and their buffer zones. The condition of authenticity is met. Testimonies were gathered to understand the historical context. From the amendments presented by South Africa, we understand that the protection of the sites falls under the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement in the State Party of Rwanda, in accordance with the relevant Prime Ministerial order. Hence, the condition of protection and management requirements are met.

But going beyond the technicalities of the 1972 Convention, what is the message that we want to send to the young people watching this broadcast? If you drop a glass on the floor, it shatters into many pieces. But once broken, if you take all the pieces of the broken glass and try to join it, it is quite difficult. But eventually, you can succeed in joining pieces of glass together. But how can you join back the broken pieces of human lives devastated by such horrors? Strange is this world that we live in, but when we see the innocence in the eyes of a child, we feel that there is still hope for humanity. Try not to divide, but to unite humanity as one family. "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*", India's universal unification message through the ages. Universal brotherhood, fraternity, and knowledge are the ideals to aspire for.

Hence, we join the consensus of other nations to support the amendment for inscription so that the future generations do not forget, and humanity never again faces such horrors.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation would like to commend the Advisory Body for a very well structured and detailed report as well as for its substantial contribution in this complex and long debate on Site of Memory nominations. We also commend the State Party for presenting this highly symbolic for the whole humanity nomination.

Our Delegation has systematically attended the debate on the inscription of Sites of Memory on the World Heritage List, and participated at the meetings of the relevant Working Group, the conclusions of which are reflected in the Guiding Principles adopted by the World Heritage Committee in its 18th extraordinary session.

We consider that the four components included in the nomination adequately represent the material evidence of the genocide against the Tutsi, whose impact was felt far beyond national borders. The related sites and edifices in Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi, and Bisesero are selected and justified for inscription by the State Party, are significant memory sites and places for reconciliation, remembrance and peaceful reflection.

Furthermore, the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide, established by the UN General Assembly, reflects the global influence of the genocide and its educational and reconciliatory role in promoting a culture of peace and dialogue.

In view of the above, and taking into account both the tangible and intangible attributes of the nominated property, we strongly support the proposed amendment by South Africa for inscribing Genocide Memorial sites of Rwanda on the basis of criterion (vi), which, following the inscription of ESMA Museum in Argentina, shall further enrich the World Heritage List with an important new category of sites.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We've read with great attention the important nomination file of Genocide Memorial sites presented by Rwanda, and we thank also the Advisory Body for its careful evaluation.

We noted that these memorial sites contain not only the graves but also gardens of memory, memorial plaques with the names of the victims as well as its material evidence.

Mr. Chair,

We warmly commend Rwanda's significant commitment to preserving the site for present and future generations, especially as a symbol of reconciliation. As already stressed by several Distinguished Delegates, it should also be

a powerful reminder for some events never to happen again, and therefore it can be a concrete instrument for the promotion of peace. This is in line with the mandate of UNESCO and with the nature and essence that memory sites should embody.

We support the amendment proposed by South Africa for the inscription of the property.

At the same time, we believe it would be important to give the floor to the State Party to describe how the inclusivity of the nomination has been assured.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Italy.

So, since the morning session came to an end, we will resume the discussion after lunch break.

But before, I would like to ask Mr. Director of the World Heritage Centre to list this list of speakers to... When we resume the session, we start with them.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Les membres du Comité suivants ont demandé à prendre la parole sur ce point de l'agenda, et donc interviendront dans l'ordre suivant en début d'après-midi, à 15 h. Il s'agit de :

- la Zambie ;
- Saint-Vincent-et-[les]-Grenadines ; et
- Bulgarie.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and see you at the afternoon session. *[gavel]*

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

This is just to let you know there is no side event.

Enjoy your lunch.

The meeting rose at 1:03 pm. // La séance a été levée à 13h03.

TENTH DAY
Wednesday, 20 September 2023
NINETEENTH PLENARY MEETING
3:09 pm – 6:17 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

DIXIÈME JOUR
Mercredi 20 septembre 2023
DIX-NEUVIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h09 – 18h17
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

2023 CYCLE (Ct'd) // CYCLE 2023 (suite)

CULTURAL HERITAGE (Ct'd) // PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

8B.51 Memorial sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero (Rwanda) (Ct'd) // Sites mémoriaux du génocide : Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi et Bisesero (Rwanda) (suite)

The Chairperson:

Welcome back, dear colleagues.

So, we will resume our discussion, and I would like to hand the floor to Zambia.

Zambia please.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Zambia, as one of the leading brands of peace and democracy in Africa, strongly supports the inscription of Rwanda's Genocide Memorial sites.

Given their singularity and outstanding global symbolism, we believe that this nomination is congruent with the principles outlined in UNESCO 1972 Convention, which recognizes the importance of preserving cultural heritage sites of Outstanding Universal Value.

Mr. Chairman,

Indeed, the choice to nominate these four sites among hundreds of other sites is a decision taken by the Rwandan people. As it is stipulated in the Convention's Operational Guidelines, the selection of sites for inclusion on the World Heritage List should reflect their Outstanding Universal Value and meet specific criteria.

Mr. Chairman,

In this case, the Rwandan Government, motivated and guided by the by law, that is, Statutory Instrument no. 15 of 2016, has carefully identified these memorial sites based on their historical and cultural significance.

Mr. Chairman,

These four nominated sites are drawn from eight sites at national level, demonstrating Rwanda's commitment to preserving and commemorating the tragic events of its history. This selection process aligns with the Operational Guidelines, that emphasize the importance of ensuring that nominated properties meet condition of authenticity and integrity. Each of these sites represents a unique aspect of genocide as recognized by law, with the Nyamata symbolizing victims killed in religious institutions, Murambi representing those killings in public places, Gisozi embodying victims killed on various barriers across the country, and Bisesero highlighting the courage and resistance displayed by those who fought their lives.

In terms of support for inscription, Mr. Chairman, therefore, as the information on the history is contained in the nomination dossier as well as in the note on factual errors, the Zambian Delegation supports the amendment proposed by the State Party of South Africa to inscribe this property on the World Heritage List.

We believe that this nomination not only aligns with the principles of the World Heritage Convention and Operational Guidelines but also contributes to the global recognition of the significance of these memorial sites in preserving the memory of the genocide against the Tutsi and promoting tolerance and understanding.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we support this inscription of the Memorial sites of the Genocide of Rwanda, the Zambian Delegation would also like to remind the international community of one of the decisions regarding the outcomes of the Open-ended Working Group on the Sites of Memory Associated with Recent Conflicts, as per Decision **18 EXT.COM 4** whereby the Committee "Encourages States Parties and Advisory Bodies in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre to

seek to address the skills gaps and strengthen their competencies, as well as those of managers, communities and local communities in order to address the particular challenges of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts, including the preparation of nominations and future interpretation of these sites", let us use this historic moment marked by the inscription of the first site inscribed on Africa under the new category of sites of memory as an opportunity to strengthen the capacities of African States Parties in addressing the challenges of safeguarding these sites for the benefit of the present and future generations.

I submit, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chairman,

Firstly, thanks to the Advisory Body for the report and assessment.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has examined the relevant documents covering the nomination of the Memorial sites of the Genocide of Rwanda. We acknowledge the scope and scale of the tragic event which occurred in 1994, and while many of the conditions are not fully satisfied, the State Party has given the undertaking that they will be addressed and certainly accelerated if the site is inscribed.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has listened to the discussion and there are two areas of interest:

- How does the State Party plan to address the conservation and protection of the sites?
- What are the plans as it relates to ensuring reconciliation between the peoples of Rwanda, particularly through truth building, interpretation, and educational activities?

We hope that these can be addressed in the coming period and included in the report on the state of conservation of the property and on the implementation of the recommendations to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee by December 2024.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines nevertheless supports the amendments submitted by South Africa for inscription of the Memorial sites of Genocide of Rwanda.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

For the sake of time, we will make a brief statement.

Bulgaria commends the Advisory Body and the State Party for the continuous work on the nomination file.

Bulgaria joins the consensus and wants to be added as a co-sponsor of the proposed amendments to inscribe the site on the World Heritage List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do we have any more interventions or comments?

So now, I would like to pass the floor to the State Party to respond to the questions addressed by Japan, Nigeria, Italy, and also inquiries by Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

M. le Président, Excellences et membres du Comité,

Je remercie les États parties qui soutiennent ce dossier et je réponds aux questions du Japon, Nigeria, Italie, Saint-Vincent-et-[les]-Grenadines.

Pour la première question posée par l'État partie du Japon, qui est aussi la même que celle du Nigeria, je voudrais assurer qu'aucune contestation sur l'inscription des sites n'existe ni à l'extérieur ni à l'intérieur du Rwanda. Le choix de l'inscription au niveau national est une volonté politique de la population du Rwanda tout entière, exprimée

pendant les consultations populaires et consacrée dans des dispositions constitutionnelles, légales et réglementaires. Cette population, sans aucune distinction, se recueille sur les sites de mémoire au long de l'année, avec une particularité entre avril et juillet, qui correspond à la période du génocide en 1994. À travers ces sites, tous les Rwandais, jeunes et adultes, y compris les bourreaux repentis et les victimes, les justes, les expatriés et amis du Rwanda commémorent et font ensemble le chemin de l'unité, la résilience et la réconciliation. À l'étranger, la diaspora regroupera tous les Rwandais et diverses associations. Les Nations Unies et l'UNESCO et autres institutions internationales organisent chaque année des commémorations du génocide, et les citoyens de ces pays s'unissent pour la mémoire et la réconciliation. Des plaques et endroits commémoratifs ont été érigés dans plusieurs pays comme la France, l'Italie, Belgique, Suisse, Angleterre, États-Unis, Éthiopie, Canada et autres, en reconnaissance au génocide des Tutsi, et sont l'expression de la mémoire et de la réconciliation. Cette inscription est historique.

En ce qui concerne les divergences entre le Rwanda et l'ICOMOS, excusez-moi, M. le Président, sur la manière dont le critère (vi) est justifié, nous signalons qu'elles n'existent plus. Ces sites sont reconnus comme des hauts lieux de mémoire et de prévention en contribuant à lutter contre les idéologies extrémistes. Ils constituent une valeur universelle exceptionnelle à travers la transmission de l'histoire aux générations présentes et futures, et symbolisent le triomphe de la paix et de la tolérance à perpétuer dans le temps.

Sur la question considérant les sites de Gisozi et Bisesero comme étant moins authentiques, le Rwanda considère que leur authenticité est justifiée. En effet, si les bâtiments conservant les preuves matérielles des massacres commis sur ces sites sont postérieurs au génocide, les valeurs exprimées à travers les attributs finaux de ces sites existaient bel et bien au moment du génocide en 1994. Néanmoins, le Rwanda a pris en considération les recommandations de l'ICOMOS et, suivant ses recommandations, mon Gouvernement s'engage à mener un travail plus approfondi de cartographie des attributs clés des composantes et des sites de Gisozi et de Bisesero afin d'atteindre les objectifs de conservation et de gestion, et nous collaborons régulièrement avec ICOMOS pour bénéficier de ses conseils avisés.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments or concerns regarding this intervention?

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

In light of the clarifications from the State Party of Rwanda, we support this inscription, and we want to put our name in as one of those coauthors.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Chair.

Having also listened to the response of the State Party of Rwanda to our question, and after considering that the site is adequately protected and its conservation ensured, this first proposed site within the framework of sites of memory linked to the recent conflicts in Africa has the full support of my Delegation, and to this end, we support the amendment as proposed by South Africa.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We've been listening to the discussion very carefully in the various interventions made by the States Parties as well as the answers just given by the submitting State Party, and we think that we are now in a position to support this proposed amendment by South Africa.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Chair.

We too, having listened to the rationale and explanation of the State Party, we can support the amendments by South Africa as well.

I think this is an important site to be inscribed, as it promotes peace and reconciliation.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I see no more comments, and therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.51**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa, which was coauthored by the Distinguished Delegations of Ethiopia, Mali, Egypt, Nigeria, and Zambia. Further from the floor, we have received endorsement for this from the Distinguished Delegations of Belgium, Argentina, Oman, Qatar, India, Greece, Italy, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Bulgaria, Japan, Mexico, and Thailand, and Nigeria confirmed again, it was already the coauthor.

The proposed amendment.

Revised Para 2: "Inscribes Memorial Sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero, Rwanda, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (vi);".

Revised Para 3: "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:".

Para 4: "Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Mapping the key attributes at the component parts of Gisozi and Bisesero in order to define and support the conservation and management strategies at these two serial components,
- b) Documenting all key attributes for all four component parts of the serial property and preparing a baseline for its conservation, management, and monitoring,
- c) Providing updated information as regards the designation of the component parts as national cultural Heritage,
- d) Providing the updated management plan including disaster risk management protocols and a visitor and interpretation strategy that is participatory and inclusive of all relevant actors,".
- e) Only the word "nominated" is deleted, it remains same; and
- f) Remains same as original.

Revised Para 5: "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024 a report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Salaam Aleykum.

We would like to add our names to support this decision.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

So, I see no more comment, and therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

So, for the First Paragraph, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposal.

Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair.

December 2024, is it 47th or 46th session? Just to check.

Thank you.

The Rapporteur:

It would be 47th session. That would be in 2025 if you submit in December, on 1 December 2024, the next session that is examined would be around June/July 2025.

The Chairperson:

Are there any comments or objections? I see none.

The paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues,

I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

And if there are no comments, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.51** adopted as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Congratulations to Rwanda. Congratulations to Rwanda on behalf of the entire Committee.

You may have the floor.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

M. le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Au nom de ma Délégation, je voudrais remercier les États parties qui nous ont soutenus, conseillés et accompagnés depuis le début de ce dossier jusqu'à son aboutissement en ce jour du 20 septembre 2023, où les Sites mémoriaux de Gisozi, Nyamata, Murambi et Bisesero, représentant la spécificité du génocide commis contre les Tutsis, vient d'être inscrit dans le patrimoine mondial.

Je remercie également le Centre du patrimoine mondial et le Fonds africain du patrimoine mondial, qui nous ont soutenus. Je remercie également l'État d'Afrique du Sud, qui a présenté l'amendement à ce sommet ainsi que tous les coauteurs qui l'ont appuyé.

En inscrivant ce site, vous venez de rendre une décision historique, qui porte une valeur universelle exceptionnelle, de protéger la vie en tout temps et en tout lieu.

Cette décision, qui va dans la continuité de la résolution 955 du Conseil de sécurité du 8 novembre 1994, qui, après avoir reconnu qu'il y avait eu un génocide contre les Tutsis au Rwanda, a établi le Tribunal pénal international pour le Rwanda, chargé de juger les principaux auteurs de ce crime et de participer, à travers la justice, à la réconciliation nationale au Rwanda. C'est aussi une continuité de différentes décisions des Nations Unies, notamment la résolution de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies de 2018 consacrant la date du 7 avril de chaque année comme une journée internationale de réflexion sur le génocide perpétré contre les Tutsis au Rwanda. Depuis plusieurs années déjà, M. le Président, l'UNESCO commémore ce génocide et le 7 avril de chaque année. Il ne restait donc que l'inscription dans le patrimoine mondial des sites représentant ce génocide, ce qui vient d'être fait ce 20 septembre 2023.

Cette inscription est historique, car elle est la première en Afrique qui marque l'entrée des sites de mémoire sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, car jusqu'aujourd'hui, le continent africain n'avait aucun site de mémoire inscrit.

Nous saluons le Comité du patrimoine mondial, qui vient de rendre une décision de rappeler que la vie humaine a une valeur bien plus profonde que celle des bâtiments architecturaux, des animaux ou des chefs d'œuvres portant une valeur universelle réalisée par l'homme. Cette inscription signale que la vie de la personne humaine qui réalise des œuvres que le Comité protège doit être sauvegardée en premier et de façon irrévocable.

Les sites de Gisozi, Nyamata, Murambi et Bisesero qui viennent d'être inscrits, depuis 2012, sont des symboles de mémoire et de réconciliation, car le Gouvernement qui a ensanglanté le Rwanda en 1994 ne pensait jamais que les victimes allaient obtenir justice et que le pays allait revivre avec un peuple uni et réconcilié. Ce site joue un rôle clé dans ce processus et l'inscription contribuera à faire avancer encore davantage le Rwanda vers la résilience et la réconciliation pour les générations présentes et futures, pour que l'on n'oublie pas ce génocide et pour que de telles atrocités ne se reproduisent plus jamais au Rwanda ou ailleurs.

Je conclus en signalant que l'inscription de ce site vient à point nommé, car le Rwanda est en pleine préparation de la 30^e commémoration du génocide qui débutera le 7 avril 2024, et cette inscription marque encore une fois la victoire de la vérité historique sur la cruauté du génocide et de son négationnisme.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président. *[applaudissements]*

The Chairperson:

Congratulations again.

8B.52 Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front) (Belgium, France) // Sites funéraires et mémoriels de la Première Guerre mondiale (Front Ouest) (Belgique, France)

The Chairperson:

So now, I invite ICOMOS to present the transnational nomination of the Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front) (Belgium and France).

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Merci, M. le Président.

Cette présentation porte sur l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS des Sites funéraires et mémoriels de la Première Guerre mondiale (Front Ouest) (Belgique, France). L'évaluation de l'ICOMOS se trouve dans le Document INF.8B1 à la page 15 de la version anglaise et à la page 29 de la version française.

La présente proposition d'inscription a été évaluée par l'ICOMOS en 2018. Toutefois, à cette époque, en raison de questions fondamentales posées par cette proposition d'inscription, le Comité du patrimoine mondial a décidé d'ajourner l'examen de ce bien « jusqu'à ce qu'une réflexion globale ait eu lieu et que le Comité en ait débattu [...] et décidé si et comment des sites associés à des conflits récents et à d'autres mémoires négatives et controversées pourraient se rapporter à l'objet et au champ de la Convention du patrimoine mondial ». Cette réflexion a conduit à l'adoption par le Comité du patrimoine mondial des Principes directeurs pour la préparation des propositions d'inscription concernant les sites de mémoire associés à des conflits récents.

La proposition d'inscription conserve la même configuration en termes d'éléments constitutifs, la même justification de l'inscription et les mêmes critères que la proposition évaluée en 2018. En conséquence, l'ICOMOS a poursuivi la révision de son évaluation à la lumière des informations complémentaires fournies par les États parties et des Principes directeurs approuvés en janvier 2023.

[La prochaine, s'il vous plaît]

Les Sites funéraires et mémoriels de la Première Guerre mondiale (Front Ouest) est un bien en série transnational comprenant 139 sites situés entre le nord de la Belgique et l'est de la France, le long du Front Ouest de la Première Guerre mondiale où la guerre fut menée entre l'Allemagne et les forces alliées de 1914 à 1918.

Les éléments constitutifs proposés pour inscription varient par leur échelle, allant de grandes nécropoles conservant les dépouilles de dizaines de milliers de soldats de plusieurs nationalités à des petits cimetières plus simples ainsi que des monuments commémoratifs. Les éléments constitutifs du bien comprennent différents types de nécropoles – militaires, cimetières de champs de bataille, cimetières d'hôpitaux et cimetières où les dépouilles furent regroupées plus tard – souvent associées à des monuments commémoratifs.

Les Principes directeurs, avec les informations complémentaires fournies par les États parties, ont permis à l'ICOMOS de comprendre comment le manque de clarté dans la définition du bien proposé pour inscription pourrait être résolu et dans quelles conditions un ensemble d'éléments constitutifs proposés pour inscription pourrait être

considéré comme un reflet matériel d'un événement ayant une signification universelle exceptionnelle et d'une période significative de l'histoire humaine ainsi que comme une réponse à un tel événement.

En 2018, l'ICOMOS a considéré que la justification des trois critères sélectionnés ((iii), (iv) et (vi)) n'était pas démontrée. Toutefois, les critères (iv) et (vi) auraient pu être justifiés. Les Principes directeurs, les informations complémentaires fournies par les États parties et une plus ample réflexion sur cette proposition d'inscription ont conduit l'ICOMOS à mettre l'accent sur des arguments pouvant potentiellement démontrer les critères (iv) et (vi), considérés conjointement, mais par des arguments différents de ceux proposés par les États parties.

[Diapo suivante, s'il vous plaît]

En 2018 L'ICOMOS a exprimé des réserves fondamentales sur la manière dont la série proposée pour inscription avait été conçue et sur les arguments proposés pour justifier l'inscription. Les Principes directeurs, la réflexion de l'ICOMOS et une analyse approfondie du dossier ont permis de préciser ce qui pourrait être une définition plus claire de la série et des raisons potentielles de son éligibilité à une inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

En 2018, l'ICOMOS considérait que, d'une manière générale, l'intégrité et l'authenticité de la série proposée pour inscription n'étaient pas démontrées.

Les informations et explications complémentaires fournies en 2023 par les États parties et l'analyse de l'ICOMOS ont aidé l'ICOMOS à identifier les éléments constitutifs de la série proposée qui devraient être retirés du bien en série proposé pour inscription, car ils ne contribuent pas à exprimer la valeur universelle exceptionnelle potentielle. Ces éléments sont les suivants :

- éléments constitutifs qui ne reflètent que des valeurs nationales ;
- éléments constitutifs qui ont été créés pour des événements autres que la Première Guerre mondiale, qui sont associés à ces autres événements et pour lesquels le message est flou par rapport à la justification de l'inscription ;
- éléments constitutifs qui offrent un message semblable à celui d'autres éléments constitutifs mais dont les qualités par rapport aux attributs proposés sont mineures ou absentes et ne contribuent donc pas à exprimer les attributs soutenant la justification de l'inscription.

Par ailleurs, la définition donnée par Les Principes directeurs de ce qu'il faut entendre par « site de mémoire » dans le cadre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial a aidé à éclaircir celle de la série proposée pour inscription et soutient un recentrage sur les sites funéraires, car ils contiennent un témoignage matériel de l'événement qui est commémoré. Ce qui a conduit à proposer l'exclusion des mémoriaux délibérément construits pour commémorer les morts au combat de la Première Guerre mondiale, qui ne sont pas inclus ou pas clairement reliés à des cimetières et à leur conception.

Les problèmes concernant l'authenticité d'éléments constitutifs individuels en termes de capacité à transmettre les attributs soutenant la justification de l'inscription sont parallèles à ceux de l'intégrité et peuvent être réglés en retirant les éléments constitutifs identifiés dans l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS.

Enfin, un certain nombre d'ajustements des limites de quelques éléments constitutifs proposés pour inscription et retenus dans la série réduite suggérée par l'ICOMOS ont été identifiés par l'ICOMOS comme étant nécessaires pour en assurer l'intégrité et l'authenticité du bien.

[Diapo suivante, s'il vous plaît]

La protection juridique des éléments constitutifs proposés pour inscription s'est considérablement améliorée et, au moment de l'approbation de l'ICOMOS, seuls quelques éléments constitutifs en France attendaient encore de bénéficier d'une désignation de protection au titre du patrimoine. Il importera de finaliser ce processus pour tous les éléments constitutifs retenus dans la série proposée pour inscription.

De son côté, la coordination de la gestion transnationale ne semble pas avoir progressé depuis 2018 et a besoin d'être renforcée de manière significative et rendue opérationnelle. Il convient d'accueillir favorablement et d'encourager l'information selon laquelle, en France, la signature d'un accord-cadre rassemblant tous les acteurs responsables, issus des institutions nationales, gestionnaires de sites et représentants d'administrations locales, est prévue afin de renforcer la coordination et la collaboration sur des projets et des axes de gestion essentiels.

Une approche commune pour la conservation et de l'entretien fait toujours défaut et les approches mises en œuvre à ce stade restent fragmentées. Cela se traduit par un état de conservation inégal des éléments constitutifs proposés pour inscription et des activités d'entretien qui, souvent, ne sont pas fondées sur la prise en compte des valeurs patrimoniales de ces sites constitutifs.

Une stratégie d'interprétation et de présentation coordonnée et partagée pour l'ensemble de la série et pour chaque élément constitutif proposé pour inscription, ainsi que pour son importance et sa signification par rapport à une compréhension globale des répercussions de la Première Guerre mondiale, nécessite d'être élaborée et mise en œuvre de toute urgence.

[Diapo suivante, s'il vous plaît]

En conclusion, l'ICOMOS considère que, les critères justifiant la valeur universelle exceptionnelle proposée n'ayant pas été démontrés à ce stade, les attributs de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle ne peuvent être confirmés et l'intégrité, telle que définie dans les Orientations devant guider la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial, n'est pas démontrée à ce stade, mais pourrait l'être par une série réduite excluant les éléments constitutifs mentionnés dans l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS et sur la base d'une justification révisée de l'inscription et d'une formulation révisée des critères (iv) et (vi). L'ICOMOS considère qu'une série réduite et recentrée comme suggérée sera suffisante pour transmettre la valeur universelle exceptionnelle proposée.

Voici un résumé de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS de la valeur universelle exceptionnel proposée pour le bien.

[Diapo suivante s'il vous plaît]

En conclusion l'ICOMOS recommande que la proposition d'inscription des Sites funéraires et mémoriels de la Première Guerre mondiale (Front Ouest) (Belgique, France) soit renvoyée [aux] États parties pour les raisons principales suivantes :

- réduire la sélection des éléments constitutifs de la série proposée pour inscription pour se concentrer sur les sites funéraires ;
- exclure :
 - les éléments constitutifs qui ne reflètent que des valeurs nationales,
 - les éléments qui ont été créés à l'occasion d'événements autres que la Première Guerre mondiale,
 - les éléments qui ne contribuent pas à la justification de l'inscription, et
les éléments qui présentent moins d'attributs ou qui ne remplissent pas les conditions d'authenticité et d'intégrité ;
- recentrer la justification de l'inscription selon les formulations révisées pour les critères (iv) et (vi) ;

[La prochaine, s'il vous plaît]

protéger tous les éléments constitutifs au titre des désignations nationales conformément à la législation en vigueur sur le patrimoine et ajuster les limites des éléments constitutifs proposés pour inscription ;

- signer et mettre en œuvre l'accord-cadre, préparé par l'État partie de la France, parmi tous les acteurs concernés par la gestion de la section française du bien en série proposé pour inscription ;

[La prochaine, s'il vous plaît]

- adopter une approche commune de conservation et de gestion qui préserve la spécificité de chaque élément constitutif et renforce leur capacité à transmettre la valeur universelle exceptionnelle proposée du bien en série proposé pour inscription ;
- renforcer la coordination et la coopération transnationales en matière de gestion ;
- élaborer une stratégie commune d'interprétation transnationale pour le bien en série.

L'ICOMOS a inclus davantage de recommandations dans le projet de décision afin d'aider à la conservation à long terme du bien.

[Diapo suivante, s'il vous plaît]

Merci pour votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for this presentation.

I would like to see if there are any comments concerning this nomination.

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

We request you give us the floor after the amendments are presented. The State Party who is presenting the amendment may kindly be given the floor before us. And then you can give us...

The Chairperson:

South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson, for providing South Africa the opportunity to comment on this nomination.

We may all recall that when Belgium and France submitted the nomination of the Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front) in 2017, it led to the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory of Recent Conflicts. This nomination, therefore, provided us with the opportunity to engage in a comprehensive reflection about sites of memory and their place on the World Heritage List.

In our estimation, Mr. Chair, this nomination can be considered as an outstanding example of a World Heritage property based on the preservation of our collective memory, on reconciliation and promoting peace attributes representing the overarching purpose and spirit of UNESCO as well as values that are very close to us as South Africans.

We, therefore, support the inscription of this site.

Mr. Chair,

Further that the victims, who are an integral part of this nomination, originated from more than 130 countries and were buried on Belgium and French soil, more importantly, the nomination dossier demonstrates how these victims have all been equally honoured respecting their religion, culture, and origin, regardless of rank or affiliation. This is of particular significance to South Africa as one of our memorial sites, Delville Wood, is included in the dossier. This is where an African soldier, Mr. Beleza Myengwa, is buried, representing all members of the South African Native Labour Corps who participated in the war, but who were not recognized as active soldiers at the time. He is a symbol of reconciliation and nation building, as his presence acknowledges their contribution during the war.

Mr. Chair,

South Africa has, therefore, carefully looked at ICOMOS analysis as well as the counterarguments put forward by the two States Parties. We have also taken note of the concerns raised by ICOMOS, notably regarding the focus of the nomination and the composition of the series. In this regard, we are glad to see ICOMOS recognizes the Outstanding Universal Value of the proposed property, acknowledging its historical and commemorative significance.

Whilst the First World War undoubtedly had a global impact on all the nations, we agree with the position of Belgium and France that the lessons learned from the First World War cannot purely be limited to the military aspect of the war. Instead, we consider that the Outstanding Universal Value rests in the manner and dignity in which the victims of the war were treated as well as the commemorative landscape that was created afterwards. As such, South Africa feels that the positive message of reconciliation and peace that this property represents is fully consistent with UNESCO's mandate.

We have, therefore, presented an amendment to inscribe the nomination as it was originally submitted in 2013.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

So, India, would you like to take the floor, now?

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving the floor to India on the Agenda Item 42 COM 8B.52, Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front) (Belgium and France), which has got a referral recommendation by the Expert Body, but we have amendments presented for inscription.

I thank the World Heritage Secretariat and the Advisory Body for their work, and request inscription with continuation of discussion between the States Parties and ICOMOS.

These sites are a testament to the sacrifice of over 75,000 Indian soldiers, who edged an indelible mark on history as they defended present-day Belgium, France, and Western Europe, along with nationals of more than 130 countries during the First World War.

Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, on 11 April 2015, at the Neuve-Chapelle Indian Memorial in France, while paying his respects, said: "I am honoured to pay homage to the Indian soldiers here at the Indian Memorial at Neuve Chapelle. Our soldiers who fought in foreign lands in the Great War have won the admiration of the world for dedication, loyalty, courage, and sacrifice. I salute them."

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) ensures those who died in service or as a result of conflict are commemorated so that they and the human cost of war are remembered, and their stories kept alive.

We coauthor and support the South African amendment.

In light of the success of the discussions held in the Working Group last year, we firmly believe that these sites, with their historical significance, are ready for inscription onto the World Heritage List. The Outstanding Universal Value they embody is not only evident, but serves as a reminder for future generations, reminding us of the

importance of preserving our shared heritage and the stories that bind us together. Let us continue to work together in safeguarding our shared heritage for the benefit of all.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mine is just a simple clarification from the Advisory Body.

I've seen that the site has qualified on comparative analysis, and is it on protection? When you look at most of the sites which are referred, in most cases, they are sites which must have passed most of those elements. So, I'm wondering as to why the Advisory Body has pushed the site for referral when we know that when a site is pushed for referral, it means it has qualified on a number of aspects.

Having said this, we take note as a State Party of Zambia of the fact that the State Party was the proponent of this site or in this case the country which submitted this nomination, was one of the pioneer sites in terms of trying to champion the cause for nominating sites on memory.

So that being the case, as a State Party of Zambia, we are inclined to supporting those who are pushing for the inscription of this site.

I submit, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Egypt.

La Délégation de l'Égypte :

Merci, M. le Président.

M. le Président,

Permettez-moi tout d'abord d'exprimer la sincère appréciation de l'Égypte pour le message de paix et de réconciliation au cœur de cette nomination.

Nous sommes particulièrement impressionnés par l'inclusion méticuleuse de plusieurs religions et cultures, comme en témoigne la grande diversité de tombes et de monuments mettant à l'honneur les soldats du monde entier. Ce remarquable ensemble de sites témoigne d'un profond respect pour l'origine culturelle et la religion de chaque victime. Ces éléments dépeignent collectivement une représentation précise de la diversité des victimes de la Première Guerre mondiale. Sur le front occidental, des défunts de 130 nationalités sont inhumés et honorés. Il ne s'agit donc pas seulement d'un patrimoine belge ou français, il s'agit d'un patrimoine partagé par les 130 pays dont les soldats reposent en ces lieux.

Ces sites, M. le Président, ne sont pas là pour mettre en lumière l'art de la guerre, mais plutôt pour refléter la réconciliation dans sa dimension universelle. Ils sont le témoin d'un événement historique dont les conséquences continuent d'influencer de nombreux pays et de populations jusqu'à nos jours.

Dans ce sens, nous souhaitons joindre la voix de l'Égypte à celle de nos collègues qui ont soutenu l'amendement présenté sur cette décision.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks ICOMOS and the State Party for their work on this nomination.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, whose nationals served and perished in both World War I and World War II, has examined this submission with great interest and in considerable detail.

This transnational property has a collection of 139 sites comprising military battlefields, burial grounds, hospital cemeteries, and grouped burial sites. Somewhere amongst these subterranean collections is an identified Vincentian soldier, a Mr. Brown from Chateaubelair, a rural village on the west coast of Saint Vincent, and there

may well be others not so far identified. The potentialities remain important for future generations of displaced descendants of these citizen soldiers.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines notes the work done over time by various professionals in establishing designs and layouts of these sites. It reflects the significance of the conflict and the desire to honour and remember in perpetuity all those soldiers and civilians who perished as they came from all over the world. This establishes, at the outset the universal importance of the collective sites and their outstanding significance and tremendous value over time. We can reflect on the ceremonies held to commemorate the dead from as early as the 1920s up to 2018. There are challenges, yes, but such can be expected with trying to manage such a large area. This, however, does not diminish the OUV of the sites even as sites of memory.

For this reason, the suggestion to exclude the monuments from the collection is neither credible nor justified. All must be included to make the story complete. As a matter of fact, we can argue that the exclusion effectively reduces the OUV and insists on a coloniality of mindset which has no place in this consideration. The many repeated visits by family members and visitors alike bring closure and peace within a holistic environment of honour and memory to those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The State Party has provided justification for the site to be inscribed as an outstanding reflection of the global scope, scale, and devastation of war and the human loss, just to borrow a few words there.

The State Party is asked to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024 a report on the implementation of the outlined recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Centre at its 47th session. We anticipate receiving this report.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, however, supports the amendment to the draft decision as presented by South Africa and the inscription of the Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front) (Belgium and France) on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi).

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

First of all, like others, we would like to express our appreciation to both the States Parties of Belgium and France as well as the Evaluation Body for their work on this complicated and challenging file.

We do recognize the historical meaning of global significance in this particular property, which consists of 139 components paying tribute to the sacrifices of soldiers from all over the world.

Japan is generally in favour of the inscription of this particular property. Now, there are some differences in views regarding the coverage of the components. In our impression, the Evaluation Body attaches importance to more focused and better-defined scope of the components in this property. But on the other hand, the States Parties of Belgium and France attach importance to more comprehensive commemoration of the sacrifices from all over the world.

Now, I have heard statements from South Africa, India, Egypt, and Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines, whose citizens were actually involved in this property. So, we do believe that the comprehensive commemoration of all the sacrifices in the world is a very important element in this particular property.

Nevertheless, I would like to ask the State Party of Belgium to express their views about the points expressed by ICOMOS in this regard.

At the same time, another important issue from our perspective is that we understand that there is no contestation against inscription of this particular property, but I would like to ask for a confirmation on this issue from the State Party of Belgium.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Oman Delegation acknowledges considerable efforts being made by the two States Parties in the preparation of this serial nomination.

We also recognize the importance of this nomination that reflects the memory and high degree of respect of the nations and peoples of both States Parties.

Mr. Chairperson,

We believe that this nominated property has the potential to justify the Outstanding Universal Value under criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi). Therefore, we support the amended draft decision proposed by South Africa that recommends the inscription of the Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front), (Belgium and France) on the World Heritage List on the basis of these three criteria.

Moreover, we would like to thank ICOMOS and all Advisory Bodies for their important recommendations in regard to this nominated property. However, we believe that it would be logical to keep the total number of sites as it is, that is 139 sites. This is in order to rebound the amount and diversity of victims from around the world in terms of religion, culture and origin.

Oman also encouraged the two States Parties to continue their efforts in protecting the OUV of the nominated serial property and to work together in order to conduct the proposed periodical evaluation of the state of conservation of this nominated property.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

L'ICOMOS reconnaît la VUE des sites proposés et souligne leur importance historique et commémorative. Il semble, sauf erreur de notre part, que l'angle choisi dans le dossier de candidature pour la VUE est bien le respect fondamental de chaque individu, victime des combats civils et militaires. Dès lors, la VUE réside dans le respect profond envers chaque victime, quelle que soit son origine, et ainsi le paysage commémoratif revêt une importance universelle exceptionnelle. C'est dire que la tradition vivante de la pratique commémorative mentionnée dans le critère (iii) est une part indissociable de cet héritage.

Concernant la gestion et la protection des sites, nous pensons que la dynamique d'une inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial renforcera la coordination et la protection y relatives en consolidant les liens entre les initiatives de conservation et la collaboration encore plus active entre les acteurs locaux engagés fondamentalement dans les actions de conservation des différentes composantes du bien.

Au regard de ces éléments, tout en saluant le rapport d'évaluation de l'ICOMOS et en encourageant les États parties, qui s'engagent à poursuivre leurs efforts, nous appuyons les amendements proposés par l'Afrique du Sud pour l'inscription du bien.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor on this item of historical recognition.

On behalf of Nigeria, I wish to express our support for the South African amendment, echoing the sentiments of our Esteemed colleagues who have already spoken in this sense.

The inclusion of memory sites on the World Heritage List marks the beginning of a new chapter for our Convention. This significant milestone owes its establishment to the remarkable efforts of the Open-ended Working Group, whose diligent work culminated into the adoption of the guidelines last January. Although it was decided then that the Guiding Principles do not apply to the current nomination under examination, we acknowledge Belgium and France active participation in the drafting and look forward to seeing the Belgian and French nomination on the World Heritage List.

Having said that, we would like to ask the following questions to the submitting Party regarding the interpretation strategy that is developed regarding these sites:

- First, how do we avoid potential distortion of memories, and how do we foster deeper comprehension on the complex history surrounding the First World War?
- Second, could the State Party provide further details on how the narratives related to the formerly colonized nations be integrated in the interpretation of the site?

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the for giving me the floor.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chairperson.

For the first time in years, this Committee is accumulating three significant memory sites for inscription on the World Heritage List, yesterday and today.

The decision to inscribe Rwanda and Argentina memorial sites marks the culmination of inclusive dialogue among all States Parties to the Convention. We all agree and share the same objective of addressing the complexity of our common history as a mean to promote peace and reconciliation, among others.

The proposed inscription of the Funerary and memory site of the First World War, submitted by Belgium and France in 2017, has initiated comprehensive reflections about site of memories and its place on the World Heritage List.

Victims originating from more than 130 countries are an integral part of this nomination.

Chair,

The amendment presented by South Africa took into account the recommendation made by ICOMOS.

Together, let us work towards a future where the conservation of World Heritage sites can also stand as a testament to our commitment to peace, reconciliation, and the preservation of our collective memories.

Chair,

Rwanda Delegation supports the inscription of this site and wishes to coauthor the amendment presented by the State Party of South Africa.

Shukran jazeelan, Said Rais.

The Chairperson:

Afwan jazeelan. Italy.

La Délégation de l'Italie :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous souhaiterions rappeler encore une fois que les sites de mémoire associés à des conflits récents doivent être jugés par rapport à la valeur universelle exceptionnelle, comme tous les autres sites. Également, comme a bien été souligné dans les résultats du groupe de travail à composition non limitée sur les sites de mémoire associés à des conflits récents, et comme ce Comité vient de le rappeler dans le cas du Rwanda, l'inscription de tels sites devrait servir la mission de l'UNESCO de consolidation de la paix.

Par rapport aux Sites funéraires et mémorial de la Première Guerre mondiale (Front Ouest), proposés par la Belgique et la France, nous considérons que ICOMOS, même si avec une perspective différente de celle des proposants, reconnaît en effet une valeur universelle exceptionnelle, soulignant notamment l'importance historique et commémorative. Quant à la mission de l'UNESCO de consolidation de la paix, nous considérons qu'il s'agit ici d'un site qui peut représenter de façon excellente l'esprit de dialogue entre les cultures et les religions à travers un paysage mémoriel qui va au-delà des frontières temporelles et géographiques.

C'est aussi la raison pour laquelle nous partageons la volonté des proposants de ne pas réduire de manière importante le nombre de sites inclus. Nous considérons que la sélection proposée est bien justifiée dans l'approche de la proposition d'inscription et, de notre côté, nous saluons le fait qu'il y ait aussi un cimetière italien à côté de 130 autres nationalités, dans ses dimensions réellement universelles.

M. le Président,

L'Italie soutient donc l'amendement présenté pour l'inscription du site.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[Interpretation from Spanish]*

Mr. Chairman,

We have been looking carefully at this nomination and very carefully listened to ICOMOS in particular, and we feel that this file, with its 139 component parts, covers a huge area right from the Swiss border to the North Sea. We

think that this is a very complex serial site, and we would like to have more information concerning the process by which the two submitting States Parties selected the sites that they did.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar.*

La Délégation du Qatar :

Shukran, Said Rais.

Je vais commencer par les remerciements de la *Evaluation Body* et les États parties de ce site.

En vue de la préambule de l'acte consultatif, M. le Président, l'UNESCO, proclame que, je cite : « Les guerres prenant naissance dans l'esprit des hommes, c'est dans l'esprit des hommes que doivent être élevées les défenses de la paix. »

M. le Président,

En vue du rapport d'évaluation du *Body* et nous pouvons regarder, nous pouvons marquer les principes et les valeurs qui portent ce site. En raison de l'histoire de ce site, nous pouvons remarquer en plus, depuis le premier moment, les valeurs universelles exceptionnelles.

M. le Président,

J'ai vu personnellement et sur place ce site, et comment la diversité de sacrifice de toutes les religions a été pour un seul objectif qui était la paix, et pour l'humanité.

M. le Président,

Pour ces raisons, l'État du Qatar soutient l'amendement de l'Afrique du Sud.

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I would like to appreciate the States Parties of Belgium and France for bringing forward such an important nomination.

As mentioned by many of the Committee members, this nomination has a global significance. The cemeteries nominated may be in France and Belgium, but the heroes who are laid down there are from different corners of the world.

So, Ethiopia strongly supports the amendment by South Africa.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman.

We'd like to thank ICOMOS for its very thorough report, and also Belgium and France for nominating this site of memory dedicated to one of the most devastating conflicts of the world's history.

We feel that the OUV has been clearly demonstrated through its Funerary and memory sites, and that's why we would like to support South Africa's proposed amendment, but we would also like to learn a little more about the selection of sites. Each of these component parts has its own unique contribution to make to the overall OUV, and that is why since integrity and authenticity have been proved, then we feel that the current selection of component parts does make sense. We feel that that all of this can make a positive contribution to international peace, and we would like to see that the transnational management and conservation strategies continue. These sites from the First World War have become a place for reconciliation, for reflection, and that is why Argentina is able to fully endorse any policy dedicated to ensuring the preservation of *[inaudible]*.

We also feel that this can make a huge difference in promoting peace, moving away from a world where there was incomprehension towards mutual understanding.

We are very impressed by the way that the States Parties have undertaken many of the recommendations already, and worked hand in hand with the Secretariat to take due note of the recommendations of the Advisory Body, and we'd like to support the proposed amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation would like to thank the Advisory Body for this detailed report and to commend the States Parties for elaborating an extended and well-established nomination, which is the result of a thorough documentation and constructive collaboration between the two countries.

Taking into account the submitted information and the Guiding Principles for the preparation of nominations concerning sites of memory associated with recent conflicts, we strongly support the inscription of this nomination.

In this regard, we consider that the Funerary and memory sites of the First World War in Belgium and France bear witness to a completely new architectural movement, which features a new typology of decorative, architectural and landscape elements reflecting cultural sensitivities of national styles. Moreover, the nominated property, through its diverse component parts, presents a very complete picture of the nations and peoples involved in this conflict, implying a high degree of respect for the international testimony of the fallen of so many countries from the whole world.

In view of the above, and taking also into account the intangible attributes of the nominated property, whose symbolism exalts peace and reconciliation, we support the proposed amendment by South Africa by inscribing this property on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi).

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Salaam Aleykum. [translation from Arabic] Peace be upon you. [end of translation from Arabic]

Dear Chair,

Saudi Arabia would like to support the South African amendment in favour of the inscription of the memory sites of the First World War on the World Heritage List.

These sites have a historical legacy that transcends borders and time. Their strong warning on the cost of wars left an indelible impact on numerous political leaders. Let me remind you, these sites have a historical legacy and transcend borders and time. Their strong warning on the cost of wars left indelible impact on numerous political leaders.

Let me remind you with the statement of the Director-General in her opening speech of this Committee: "Indeed, time passes by, but sites like this will remain and be guardians of collective conscience." These sites must serve as places of reflection and essential sources of truth, of justice. Saudi Arabia believes that the lessons they convey must be preserved for future generations.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Le Bulgarie salue l'engagement continu des deux États parties dans la protection et la préservation de ce site de mémoire.

Nous soutenons les amendements proposés par l'Afrique du Sud visant à inscrire ce site sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial pour sa signification globale.

Notre Délégation considère que ce site représente vraiment une mémoire de paix avec l'intention donnée à chaque victime de plus de 130 pays du monde entier. L'engagement des architectes et des paysagistes renommés a permis à chaque nation d'exprimer son identité et d'engager dans un dialogue intemporel des cultures et des religions.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more comments or interventions, so I'd like to pass the floor to the State Party of Belgium to respond to the questions addressed by Japan, Mexico, and inquire by Argentina.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président.

La Belgique remercie chaleureusement l'Afrique du Sud pour la présentation de l'amendement ainsi que les autres membres du Comité qui se sont portés coauteurs. Merci aux autres membres du Comité qui ont exprimé, parfois de manière très émouvante, leur soutien ou qui nous ont adressé des questions.

Nous allons essayer d'y répondre au mieux et pour cela, nous allons nous structurer notre discours en trois points :

- Le premier concernera le plan de gestion. Celui-ci s'appuie sur une longue histoire de préservation déjà existante. Chaque mémorial ou cimetière de notre série fait partie d'un ensemble beaucoup plus large et souvent de dimension internationale. Ces mémoriaux et cimetières font l'objet d'une protection juridique solide, qui est organisée depuis des décennies, parfois plus d'un siècle, par des accords internationaux et des réglementations nationales, régionales et locales.

Un élément clé de notre plan de gestion se fonde sur l'approche participative et inclusive qui vise à impliquer activement toutes les Parties prenantes, depuis les gestionnaires internationaux jusqu'aux acteurs locaux.

De plus, le *momentum* de cette inscription permettra, nous en sommes certains, de renforcer encore davantage les synergies et l'échange de bonnes pratiques pour la conservation, la valorisation et une interprétation partagée de ces sites ;

- Le deuxième point que nous aborderons porte sur la composition de la série. 139 sites peut sembler impressionnant. Certains éléments de réponse ont déjà été mentionnés : le nombre des États impliqués, plus de 130, ou encore l'ampleur du territoire qui est concerné, plus de 700 km de long avec une largeur pouvant atteindre 15 kilomètres, le tout parsemé de nombreux mémoriaux et sites funéraires.

En fait, la sélection proposée par la France et la Belgique représente moins de 5 % des sites funéraires et mémoriels de la Première Guerre mondiale qui sont recensés tout le long de ce front ouest.

Cette sélection a été élaborée minutieusement. D'abord, elle illustre la qualité architecturale, artistique et paysagère de ces sites. Elle illustre également les influences artistiques venues du monde entier. Ensuite, il était essentiel, on l'a dit, de rendre hommage à toutes les victimes venues des cinq continents pour combattre sur le front Ouest. Qu'elles soient connues ou inconnues, alliées ou ennemies, les victimes sont honorées sans distinction de leur origine, de leur rang, de leur classe sociale, dans le respect de leurs convictions religieuses et philosophiques. Ces cimetières et mémoriaux font partie du patrimoine des 130 pays qui se sont battus. C'est cette diversité qui confère à ces sites leur force de réconciliation ;

- Notre troisième point portera sur l'interprétation. Cette candidature célèbre la mémoire pour la paix. La Première Guerre mondiale, on l'a dit, est un événement complexe, et il est important de pouvoir regarder l'histoire en face, y compris dans ses aspects les plus sombres. Nous attachons donc une grande importance à l'intégration des récits liés aux nations autrefois colonisées pour que leurs pertes dans ce conflit ne soient ni oubliées ni minimisées. Cela se traduit par une collaboration étroite avec des experts et des chercheurs. Notre but est de promouvoir une histoire partagée, de tisser une toile narrative riche, équilibrée et inclusive.

Cette reconnaissance, si vous en décidez ainsi, s'inscrira dans le droit fil de la volonté des concepteurs de ce site, sera un vibrant hommage à tous ces soldats venus des quatre coins du monde tombés sur le front Ouest et constituera un appel à la coopération, la réconciliation, la paix et l'entente entre les peuples.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, I'd like to pass the floor to the Advisory Bodies, but before doing so, I'd to give the floor to Mexico.

La Délégation du Mexique :

M. le Président,

Nous remercions les informations détaillées fournies par la Délégation de la Belgique.

Nous souhaitons joindre notre voix à celle de nos collègues en soutenant l'amendement présenté par l'Afrique du Sud, en appuyant le message de paix et de réconciliation qui se dégage de ce dossier et qui coïncide pleinement avec l'esprit de l'UNESCO.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much; ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I think there was one question from ICOMOS from the Distinguished Delegate of Zambia concerning why ICOMOS has recommended the referral.

There were three main reasons:

- The first concerned the fact that the two criteria that ICOMOS has recognized having potential, criterion (iv) and (vi), were proposed under justification that ICOMOS did not find convincing, but ICOMOS was able to envisage what could have been a direction for justifying these criteria;
- The second point was that certain sites that were included were not sufficiently supporting the OUV in terms of being very similar to other component parts, and ICOMOS, in that regard, has carefully looked at the diversity that each of the component, diversity in terms of people buried. So, this was some aspects that ICOMOS has looked at carefully in order to reflect the diversity;
- And the other aspect, indeed, concerned the aspect related to meeting the definition of "sites of memory" that is embedded into the Guiding Principles.

I hope I have clarified why ICOMOS has provided this recommendation.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS.

So, I'd like to know if there are any interventions or comments concerning this nomination.

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I do understand the points raised by ICOMOS, but nonetheless, in this particular case, we would like to support the amendments from South Africa on this particular file in light of the clarifications by the State Party of Belgium.

As we are approaching a consensus on this particular file, I would like to make a short statement.

This time, three properties which have already been inscribed and one property which is about to be inscribed deal with the historical memory of global significance and are justifiable, in our view, in terms of five Guiding Principles. In addition, there is no contestation against the inscription. On the contrary, we do recognize the widely shared sense of appreciation, sympathy, and solidarity. Those three properties will set excellent examples for the future nomination and inscription of the files under the category of the sites of memories.

Now, the five Guiding Principles and contestation mechanisms are actually stipulated in the decision of this Committee in its fifth extraordinary session, which adopted the report of the Working Group on this topic. There were considerable debate, heated debate, in the Working Group against, and finally the agreement was reached in the end, that appeared honestly impossible at the outset.

In this regard, I would like to pay my particular appreciation, my particular tribute to the Chair of the Working Group, Madam Vera Lacoecilhe, for her strong leadership in this Working Group, and also Mr. Alessandro Balsamo for his assistance, for his help, in the deliberations of the Working Group. I think without those two personalities, we would not have come here today.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

So, I would like to invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.52**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of South Africa, coauthored by the Distinguished Delegations of Ethiopia, India, and Bulgaria. Furthermore, we have received support from the floor, from Committee members: Zambia, Egypt, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Oman, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Italy, Qatar, Argentina, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, and Japan.

The proposed amendment.

Revised Para 2: "Inscribes Funerary and memory sites of the First World War (Western Front), Belgium, France, on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi);".

Para 3: "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:".

Para 4: "Requests the States Parties to:"

- Points a) and b) are deleted.
- Revised Point a): "Protect all component parts through national designations in accordance with the current legislation," stays the same.
- Point b) is the same except removal of the term "nominated".
- "c) Finalize the Framework Agreement with all relevant actors for the management of the French section of the serial property,"
- d) remains same as original except removing the term "nominated".
- e) remains same, and f) remains same removing the term "nominated".

Para 5: "Recommends that the States Parties give consideration to "a), b), c), d) are deleted. e) is rephrased into the para: "developing a common transnational monitoring system, based on the attributes of the property and on the same set of indicators, that would allow for a joint periodical evaluation of the state of conservation of the serial property;".

Para 6: "Requests the States Parties to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the draft decision and examine it paragraph by paragraph.

So, for the First Paragraph, we do not have any amendments. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree to the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? You may scroll down slowly. Do we agree with the proposed Paragraph no. 3? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. There are none, then the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues,

I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole, and I see no objections and no comment. I, therefore, declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.52** adopted as amended. *[applause]*

Congratulations to the States Parties, Belgium and France, on behalf of the Committee.

Belgium, you have the floor.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

[première oratrice] Merci, M. le Président.

Excellences, chers collègues du Comité,

Au nom de la France et de la Belgique, États parties à la Convention, nous souhaiterions exprimer aux membres du Comité notre profonde gratitude pour cette inscription.

Après l'inscription, hier, du site mémoriel argentin et, ce matin, du site des génocides rwandais, nous avons ouvert un nouveau chapitre à notre Convention et je voudrais à présent passer la parole aux régions de Belgique qui ont été porteuses de ce projet pendant un très grand nombre d'années. Je voudrais ici me faire l'écho de tous pour remercier, les remercier, pour tout le travail ardu mais constructif qui a été fait pendant de nombreuses années.

[second speaker] On behalf of the Government of Flanders, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to UNESCO and to the Committee for this exceptional inscription of the Funeral and memorial sites of the First World War onto the World Heritage List. A true celebration of memory for peace.

It fills our hearts with a special sense of pride that this inscription takes place, as tomorrow we will be celebrating the International Day of Peace as proclaimed by the United Nations.

This inscription is the culmination of over 20 years of work, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all those who have tirelessly contributed to making this enterprise a reality: departments, experts, site managers, local authorities, local communities, and civil society in France, Wallonia and Flanders.

I also extend my thanks to all the States that participated in the Open-ended Working Group on Memorial Sites as well as to its highly Esteemed Chairperson. Through their efforts, they have opened a new chapter for the Convention, which is so dear to all of us.

[troisième orateur] Cette inscription est un honneur pour la Wallonie et pour toute la Belgique, car ce patrimoine, conçu par des architectes et paysagistes renommés, a permis à chaque nation d'exprimer son identité et sa culture et est à la hauteur de la mémoire des victimes et de la diversité de leurs origines. Ces sites de mémoire pour la paix nous rappellent de célébrer les valeurs universelles portées entre nations au sein de l'UNESCO.

La Wallonie, la Flandre et la France sont fières de participer à ce message par leur patrimoine matériel. Cette reconnaissance internationale reflète justement la contribution significative de ce patrimoine à la promotion de la paix à l'échelle mondiale. Cette inscription sera aussi un encouragement pour les gestionnaires institutionnels et les communautés locales, dont le dévouement et la bienveillance ont permis d'entretenir et de conserver ces sites depuis plus d'un siècle en Belgique et en France. Les Sites funéraires et mémoriels de la Première Guerre mondiale sont un extraordinaire témoignage de réconciliation qui doit être transmis aux générations futures. Leur inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial est aujourd'hui plus pertinente que jamais, car elle nous encourage à bâtir ensemble un monde de paix.

Ensemble, nous vous remercions, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. France, you have the floor.

La Délégation de la France (Observateur) :

Merci, M. le Président.

Simplement pour dire que nous trouvons extraordinaire qu'un bien sur la guerre soit inscrit comme bien parlant de paix, de réconciliation, de fraternité et de respect des morts.

Merci beaucoup. *[applaudissements]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and congratulations again.

8B. MINOR BOUNDARY MODIFICATIONS OF PROPERTIES ALREADY INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST // EXAMEN DES MODIFICATIONS MINEURES DES LIMITES DE BIENS DEJA INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

So, dear colleagues, we will now proceed with the examination of the 22 minor modifications to the boundaries of properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List. You will find the related draft decisions in Document 8B.

As announced during the opening of Item 8B, for those minor modifications to the boundaries that are recommended for approval, we will go straight to the related decision without presentation.

I, therefore, invite Mr. Balsamo to read the list of the minor boundary modification requests proposed for approval.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

List of minor boundary modification requests proposed for approval:

1. Albania / Austria / Belgium / Bosnia and Herzegovina / Bulgaria / Croatia / Czechia / France / Germany / Italy / North Macedonia / Poland / Romania / Slovakia / Slovenia / Spain / Switzerland / Ukraine, Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe;
2. Belgium / Netherlands, Colonies of Benevolence;
3. Bulgaria, Ancient City of Nessebar;
4. Côte d'Ivoire, Comoé National Park;
5. Côte d'Ivoire, Taï National Park;
6. France, French Austral Lands and Seas;
7. France, Prehistoric Sites and Decorated Caves of the Vézère Valley;
8. Georgia, Colchic Rainforests and Wetlands;
9. Holy See / Italy, Historic Centre of Rome, the Properties of the Holy See in that City Enjoying Extraterritorial Rights and San Paolo Fuori le Mura;
10. Italy, Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata;
11. Italy, Historic Centre of Florence;
12. Japan, Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan;
13. Libya, Old Town of Ghadamès;
14. Peru, Historic Centre of Lima;
15. Slovenia, The works of Jože Plečnik in Ljubljana – Human Centred Urban Design;
16. Spain, Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro, a landscape of Arts and Sciences;
17. Switzerland, Three Castles, Defensive Wall and Ramparts of the Market-Town of Bellinzona.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any questions or comments regarding this item?

I see none, therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decisions **45 COM 8B.54, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 62, 64, 65, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, and 75**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decisions proposed?

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the draft decisions proposed.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, if there no comments, I, therefore, declare Draft Decisions **45 COM 8B.54, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 62, 64, 65, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, and 75** adopted. ^[gavel] ^[applause]

Minor boundary modifications proposed for examination in 2022 – Cultural heritage // Modifications mineures des limites proposées pour examen en 2022 – Patrimoine culturel

8B.57 Abu Mena (Egypt) // Abu Mena (Égypte)

The Chairperson:

So now, I would like to invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modification of Abu Mena (Egypt).

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

There should be slides or not? Okay, Thank you.

This is presentation for the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for Abu Mena (Egypt).

[Next slide, please]

The proposal is for a minor boundary modification of the property's delimitations and to establish a buffer zone.

Abu Mena represents the development of an early Christian pilgrimage centre from the 5th to the 7th centuries CE that grew around the tomb of Saint Menas and developed into an unparalleled complex of early Christian monastic architecture.

The minor boundary modification proposes to add land plots adjoining the designated archaeological site delimited by the drainage ditch separating the archaeological site from agricultural land and excluding some land plots outside the ditch. The proposed buffer zone covers the area delimited by the drainage ditch draining water from agricultural lands away from the archaeological site.

The newly added plots are not part of the protected archaeological site, so it is not clear what protection measures would apply to the property area outside the designated archaeological site. The proposed buffer zone is very limited and can protect only from physical encroachment; it does not suffice to protect from possible development that may occur outside it. No information was provided on management regime for the wider setting to ensure that it continues to guarantee the enjoyment of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

Finally, ICOMOS notes that no specific management structure is yet in place and the operationalization of the management plan is uncertain.

[Next slide, please]

In conclusion, ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the proposed minor boundary modification of the boundaries of Abu Mena (Egypt) and the proposed buffer zone be referred back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Clarify the protection regime that may apply to the enlarged property;
- Establish an appropriate protective designation for the areas added to the property;

[Next slide]

- Establish an ad-hoc management body for the property;
- Consider enlarging the buffer zone or, at least, establish mechanisms that guarantee the effective management of the immediate and wider settings of Abu Mena.

ICOMOS recommends that before any new proposals are submitted, either for the property boundaries or for a buffer zone, a management plan for the property is prepared.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments concerning this minor boundary modification? I see none.

I, therefore, invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.57**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

No amendment is received for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B. 57**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

There are no comments or questions or objections?

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

I have no objection about the decision, but I want to ask about the management plan that is requested: Is it before the approval of the boundary modification or after? This is the question.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Is it directed to the State Party or the Advisory Bodies?

The Delegation of Oman:

The Advisory Body.

The Chairperson:

ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

ICOMOS has seen that there is a management plan for which the operationalization is uncertain, and it is about to expire.

ICOMOS recommends that there is a management plan for the property prepared. This might be in parallel, but there should be a management plan in place in order to ensure that also the buffer zone and the modified property can be managed properly. So, it could be aligned together but should come together with the proposed minor boundary modification.

I hope I have clarified the ICOMOS position.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much ICOMOS.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.57** adopted. *[gavel]*

8B.58 Historic Cairo (Egypt) // Le Caire historique (Égypte)

The Chairperson:

I also would like to invite ICOMOS again to present the minor boundary modification of Historic Cairo (Egypt).

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We're waiting for the slides.

This is the presentation for the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for Historic Cairo (Egypt).

[Next slide, please]

The proposal is to modify the boundary of the property. In 2008, maps submitted in the boundary clarification process were approved by the Committee. In 2012, the Committee asked to further clarify the boundaries of the property and to consider those proposed by the Team of the Urban Regeneration for Historic Cairo project. In 2015, the State Party informed that the boundaries for the property and its buffer zone, as proposed by the above-mentioned project, had been approved but no minor boundary modification request was submitted. In 2020, through the state of conservation report, the State Party submitted revised boundaries. The Committee requested the State Party follow the procedure for minor boundary modifications and, in 2022, a formal request in this sense was submitted by the State Party.

Cairo became the new centre of the Islamic world, reaching its golden age in the 14th century. Historic Cairo is an extraordinary survivor not just for the corpus of its architectural masterpieces but because whole neighbourhoods have survived, each with an exceptional richness of urban fabric and historic monuments.

With this minor boundary modification request, the boundaries of the property are proposed to be considerably reduced, compared with the boundaries submitted in 2008 and significantly reduced compared to the boundaries approved by the State Party in 2015.

The lack of clarity of the boundaries have been an ongoing cause of concern for this property, not fully resolved in 2008 or in 2015. Equally, the World Heritage Committee expressed long-standing concern over the years on the lack of conservation of the urban fabric, degradation, and new developments adversely impacting the integrity.

Evaluating this minor boundary modification proposal poses issues in relation to what should be considered the status quo of the boundaries and to the lack of documentation to justify the proposed reduction of the boundaries. The retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value has not been approved yet, but the adopted justification of the criteria at the time of the inscription clarifies that Historic Cairo was inscribed on the World Heritage List also because its intact urban fabric reflecting medieval planning.

ICOMOS appreciates that the scale and complexity of this large urban property: establishing coherent boundaries is needed but it should be tied with a robust strategy and linked to an approved statement of Outstanding Universal Value, detailed attributes and documentation of the urban structure and neighbourhood and how they have evolved since inscription. Given the complexity of the issue raised by the boundaries, in ICOMOS' view, the proposal needs to be considered by an on-site Advisory mission to the property, to take place before a further revised minor boundary modification request is submitted.

[Next slide, please]

In conclusion, ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the proposed minor modification to the boundary and buffer zone of Historic Cairo (Egypt) be referred back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Prepare further documentation and undertake analysis to:
 - Delineate in detail the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, based on an approved Statement of OUV,
 - Prepare detailed maps that define the discrete urban neighbourhood of the property and their relationship to registered monuments and attributes,
 - Demonstrate changes that have taken place to the integrity of the property since inscription;

[The next, please]

- Invite an Advisory mission to the property to consider proposals for modifications to the boundaries and documentation and analysis and to protection and management requirements;
- On the basis of advice from the Advisory mission, submit a revised minor boundary modification request.

Thank you very much for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS.

Are there any comments concerning this minor boundary modification? I see none.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.58**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments regarding this draft decision proposal.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.58**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And if there are no objections, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.58** adopted. *[gave]*

8B.63 Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo (Panama) // Fortifications de la côte caraïbe du Panama : Portobelo, San Lorenzo (Panama)

The Chairperson:

So now, I'd like to ask ICOMOS again to present the minor boundary modification of the Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo (Panama).

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This presentation is for the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for the serial property Fortifications of the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo (Panama). The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 273 of the English version and page 277 of the French version.

[Next slide, please]

The serial property is made up by nine component parts, eight of which are located around Portobelo Bay. The proposal for a minor boundary modification relates to clarifications and definition of the boundaries of each component parts of the serial property and their buffer zones, considering the differences between them. For San Lorenzo Castle, the boundaries of the component part correspond to the castle itself and its upper battery. The proposed buffer zone includes both terrestrial and maritime sections.

ICOMOS notes that the rationale for the delineation of the buffer zone is not explained by the State Party. As for the terrestrial section, it is not clear how the proposed area will ensure an additional layer of protection for the San Lorenzo component part. As regards the maritime section, the rationale for its delineation is not explained either.

[Next slide, please]

The boundaries of the component parts in the Portobelo area correspond to those of the fortifications. The State Party has identified other key elements that contribute to enhance the historic and cultural values of Portobelo, which have also been provided with a precise delimitation and buffer zones.

The State Party proposes a differentiation between the individual buffer zone of each component part, and a larger area, referred to as the "Main buffer zone", which encompasses the whole area of Portobelo Bay and its surroundings, where the ensemble of fortifications and the town are located.

ICOMOS considers that the rationale for defining the individual buffer zones is not explicit, and these boundaries are not related to the features of the surrounding areas.

ICOMOS commends the work done by the State Party in defining and regulating the boundaries of the component parts and their buffer zones but considers that clarifications and eventual modifications are still pending, especially in relation to the buffer zones, in order to ensure the adequate additional layer of protection expected.

[Next slide, please]

In conclusion ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the proposed minor modification to the boundary and the proposed buffer zones for the Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo (Panama) be referred back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Clarify the rationale to define the boundaries of the buffer zone in the San Lorenzo Castle, and eventually consider its extension if appropriate;

[Next slide, please]

- Consider the possibility to adopt the area of the Monumental Historic Ensemble of Portobelo, established by Law 91 of 1976, as a single buffer zone that encompasses the component parts located in the area of Portobelo;

[Next slide, please]

- Elaborate an integral management plan for the serial property that clarifies the protection and management for its component parts and their buffer zones.

Thank you very much for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS, for this presentation.

Are there any comments concerning this minor boundary quantification?

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

I have a general comment and request because now, we have discussed Egypt and now we're discussing Panama, and the List, maybe, it's going on and on.

I want to know from the World Heritage Centre because these sites and, we know, in the World Heritage Centre, we have region desks or section: What are the efforts made to help Member States to work on these boundary modifications and any requirement like...? We need also to know during the report: What were the efforts made by Member States in order to get rid of the comments? And now we are going on refer and defer, etc.

I think the World Heritage Centre and the Secretariat, I know they are doing a lot of work, but they need to concentrate a small section, maybe, to follow this, these places because to us, I think, it is not to inscribe but how to maintain this inscription in the good shape that we are supposed to.

So, I would like to hear from the Centre.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

I think I would pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to answer your question.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

Je remercie le Distingué Délégué de Oman pour sa question, et je voudrais rebondir un peu sur la dernière partie qui est, en fait, celle qui est plutôt encourageante et qui confirme effectivement le travail que nous faisons déjà.

Je pense que, comme vous l'avez dit, les biens, quand ils sont inscrits, effectivement, doivent être conservés, et c'est la raison pour laquelle le Centre du patrimoine mondial travaille avec une stratégie de dialogue et d'assistance aux différentes régions. C'est pour cela que les unités régionales, effectivement, existent pour faire ce travail, avec le soutien et l'appui de l'Unité de nominations, qui a la responsabilité de suivre ces questions et avec l'appui des Organisations consultatives.

Les activités de renforcement des capacités, qui sont menées dans les différentes régions, sont aussi menées dans ce sens-là. Les recommandations ou les conclusions des évaluations des Organisations consultatives sont effectivement dans cette dynamique de montrer que la question de la révision des limites est une question qui n'est pas simplement une question purement technique, mais qui est une question qui va dans le sens de protéger à la fois les attributs qui sous-tendent la valeur universelle exceptionnelle, mais aussi qui permettent de gérer le bien dans son ensemble en prenant en compte les menaces qui existent sur ce site, pas simplement actuelles mais également aussi futures. Et c'est cet ensemble qui nous permet de mieux apprécier les limites après qui sont proposées et qui font que nous avons ce dialogue avec vous.

De toute façon, après ces décisions que vous prenez, nous continuons le dialogue dans ce sens-là pour permettre effectivement que ces révisions qui sont renvoyées puissent aboutir pour le bien des sites du patrimoine mondial qui sont dans vos différentes régions.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Director.

So, I hope that answer your question, Your Excellency.

And also, if there are any other questions or comments... So, I see none.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.63**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

No amendment is received for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.63**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And if there are no objections, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.63** adopted. *[gavel]*

Minor boundary modifications proposed for examination in 2023 – Cultural heritage // Modifications mineures des limites proposées pour examen en 2023 – Patrimoine culturel

8B.66 Rock Art in the Hail Region (Saudi Arabia) // Art rupestre de la région de Hail en Arabie saoudite (Arabie saoudite)

The Chairperson:

As the next item concerns Saudi Arabia, I will ask South Africa, the Vice-Chair, to replace me for this item.

The Vice-Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modification of the Rock Art in the Hail Region (Saudi Arabia). ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chairperson.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for Rock Art in the Hail Region (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).

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This is a serial property of two sites, inscribed on the basis of petroglyphs and inscriptions that include a large number of animal and human figures. These are associated with 10,000 years of human history.

At the time of its inscription in 2015, the World Heritage Committee recommended extension of the buffer zone of one of the components, Jabal Umm Sinman, in order to strengthen the protection of its visual integrity.

The State Party has submitted a proposal to extend the western extent of the buffer zone and has also provided some corrections to the calculations of the area of the property and buffer zone.

ICOMOS welcomes the adjustments made to the western boundary and also considers that the extension to the buffer zone to the south is needed, in line with the previous decisions of the World Heritage Committee.

[Next slide, please]

In conclusion, ICOMOS recommends that the examination of the proposed minor boundary modification of Rock Art in the Hail Region (Saudi Arabia) be referred back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- First, consider extending the buffer zone to the south of Jabal Umm Sinman by 1.0 to 1.5 km, in accordance with the previous World Heritage Committee decisions; and
- Second, to include the viewshed from the main road leading to Jubbah in the buffer zone.

ICOMOS has also provided some additional recommendations that are associated with the buffer zone protection of this component, such as the need for viewshed studies, monitoring indicators and the assessment of development projects.

Thank you for your attention.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none.

Let's proceed then, thank you.

Since there are no comments and any questions. I see none.

I now invite you to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.66**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.66**.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any other comments? I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.66** adopted. *[gavel]*

8B.67 Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din (Syrian Arab Republic) // Crac des Chevaliers et Qal'at Salah El-Din (République arabe syrienne)

The Chairperson:

Now, I would like to invite ICOMOS also to present the minor boundary modification of Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din (Syrian Arab Republic).

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This presentation is for the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din (Syrian Arab Republic).

This ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B1 on page 517 of the English version and page 562 of the French version.

[Next slide, please]

The minor boundary modification concerns the buffer zone of the Qal'at Salah El-Din castle. It proposes an extension of the existing buffer zone in all directions, and would result in including 30 new archaeological structures, together with some surrounding landscape.

The World Heritage property was inscribed to illustrate the exchange of influences and documenting the evolution of fortified architecture in the Near East during the time of the Crusades.

The modifications of the buffer zone aim to ensuring protection of the archaeological structures that are located outside the property but support its Outstanding Universal Value. The viewsheds from the property towards the surrounding historic landscape were also considered by the State Party, thus contributing to protect the integrity of the property in visual terms.

ICOMOS welcomes and supports in principle the extension of this buffer zone. However, ICOMOS notes some discrepancies between the current submitted graphic representations and those approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2006 as well as some inconsistencies related to the size of the buffer zone before and after the proposed modification.

ICOMOS considers that a clearer justification for the proposed extension, and a rationale for the zoning and respective protection mechanisms need to be provided.

[Next slide]

In conclusion, ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the buffer zone of the Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din (Syrian Arab Republic) be referred back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- Explain the methodology used to delineate the proposed boundary of the buffer zone;
- Revise the perimeter of the proposed buffer zone to allow for greater precision in the definition of the boundary;

[Next slide]

- Clarify the size of the extension to the existing buffer zone and the total area of the new buffer zone of Qal'at Salah El-Din after the proposed modification;
- Officially endorse through national regulation the proposed extended buffer zone;
- Clarify the need for and the division into different zoning within the proposed buffer zone and consider simplifying it;
- Provide more information on any arrangements made with private land owners within the proposed extension in terms of management and the timeframe for endorsement of the new buffer zone at the national level.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, ICOMOS, for this presentation.

Are there any comments concerning this minor boundary modification? I see none.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.67**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the Draft Decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

No amendment is received on the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.67**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And if there are no objections, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.67** adopted. [gavel]

8B.76 Statements of Outstanding Universal Value of properties inscribed at previous sessions and not adopted by the World Heritage Committee // Déclarations de valeur universelle exceptionnelle des biens inscrits lors des sessions précédentes et non adoptées par le Comité du patrimoine mondial

The Chairperson:

We will now proceed with the adoption of Statements of Outstanding Universal Value of properties inscribed at previous sessions of the Committee.

I now invite Mr. Balsamo to present this point.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The World Heritage Committee, here, is called to actually adopt the Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for those properties that were not initially recommended for inscription and that were inscribed at the last sessions of the Committee. You will remember the discussion we had this morning about this item.

So, the World Heritage Properties inscribed at previous sessions for which we are adopting Statements of Outstanding Universal Value, are the following:

- Chile, Settlement and Artificial Mummification of the Chinchorro Culture in the Arica and Parinacota Region
- Côte d'Ivoire, Sudanese style mosques in northern Côte d'Ivoire
- France, Nice, Winter Resort Town of the Riviera
- Gabon, Ivindo National Park
- Germany, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt
- India, Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple, Telangana
- Iran, Trans-Iranian Railway
- Netherlands, Dutch Water Defence Lines
- Republic of Korea, Getbol, Korean Tidal Flats
- Russian Federation, Petroglyphs of Lake Onega and the White Sea
- Saudi Arabia, Ḥimā Cultural Area
- Spain, Paseo del Prado and Buen Retiro, a landscape of Arts and Sciences
- Thailand, Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex
- Türkiye, Arslantepe Mound.

I think this is all.

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments concerning these points? So, I see no interventions.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.76**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.76**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, there are no comments.

I declare that Draft Decision **45 COM 8B.76** adopted. *[gavel]*

**8C. UPDATE OF THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST AND OF THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER //
MISE À JOUR DE LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL ET DE LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL
EN PÉRIL**

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

Now that we have concluded the examination of the state of conservation reports and the nomination of properties on the World Heritage List, we have to examine Item 8C, which concerns the update of the World Heritage List and of the List of World Heritage in Danger.

As you'll remember, in line with Decision **18 EXT.COM 3** and Annex 2 of the related Document, this Agenda item will be adopted without debate.

The Agenda item has been distributed and circulated to the Committee members and also updated on the website. The updated lists will be presented orally by Mr. Balsamo.

You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

So, this is concerning Document 8C, that has been just distributed to you, and it's the update of the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The World Heritage Committee at its extended 45th session in Riyadh, in Saudi Arabia, inscribed 42 new properties on the World Heritage List, 9 natural, 33 cultural, and approved the extension of five properties already inscribed on the List.

Among the successful nominations, there are five new cultural landscapes, and with these additions, we have now 126 properties officially recognized as such on the World Heritage List, which represents 10.5% of the List.

The breakdown by region of the new 42 properties inscribed and the five extensions approved at the extended 45th session is as follows:

- Africa: seven properties;
- Arab states: three properties;
- Asia-Pacific: 13 properties;
- Europe and North America: 21 properties;
- Latin America-Caribbean: three properties.

The overall figures of the World Heritage List are now: 1,199 properties, of which 933 are cultural, 227 natural, and 39 are mixed.

The breakdown by region of the overall List is as follows:

- Africa: 103 properties;

- Arab States: 93 properties;
- Asia-Pacific: 288 properties;
- Europe and North America: 566 properties; and
- Latin America and Caribbean: 149 properties.

For the purpose of this count, the transregional properties are counted in only one region.

Out of the 50 nominations examined, 14, that is 28%, are situated on the territory of current World Heritage Committee members.

Following the debates on Item 8B, no nominations were referred and three were [deferred].

At this session, in 17 cases, the Committee did not follow the Advisory Body's recommendation which was presented in the draft decision. Nine referrals became inscriptions, seven deferrals became inscriptions, and one non-inscription became a deferral.

As a result of the decisions relating to the state of conservation of properties inscribed on the List and the decision on nomination of properties to the World Heritage List, at this session, the Committee decided to inscribe two properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Both are from Ukraine: Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra; and L'viv – The ensemble of the Historic Centre.

At the same time, one property was removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger, from Uganda: The Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi.

According to this decision, there are now 56 properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

And at this session, in five cases, the World Heritage Committee did not follow the recommendation presented in the draft decision relating to the List of World Heritage in Danger. Five properties recommended to be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger were not inscribed on it.

Draft Decisions **45 COM 8C.1**, **45 COM 8C.2**, **45 COM 8C.3** are on pages 3, 4, 5 of Document 8C in both its English and French versions.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr. Balsamo, for this update.

Are there any comments regarding this?

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thanks for the Secretariat.

Only no. 7, the last on the last page that we just... If the language can be revised because we don't want to say: "At this session, in five cases, the World Heritage Committee did not follow the recommendation." I think we need to try to reword it in a language that it shows also a respect for the World Heritage Committee because here "did not follow" means that we are breaking rules we have not followed.

So, I do recommend that the language here to be revised.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair.

I would like to echo what has been said by the Distinguished Ambassador of Oman.

I think the wording ought to be revisited and it is assumed that the Committee is breaking the rules.

On top of that, is it necessary to include the number of properties inscribed whereby Committee members belong to, in the report? Because it says: "In 17 cases, the Committee did not allow for the Advisory Body says", and at the same time: "out of the total inscriptions, 28% are situated in the territory of the current Committee members." Why it is relevant to do that?

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, if there are no more questions or interventions, maybe, I'll pass the floor to the Secretariat to follow up on the latest comments.

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to see these data in the report, also knowing how many nominations presented by Committee members were inscribed at this session or each session.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This is exactly what I wanted to say.

I think the intervention by the Distinguished Delegates of Oman and Ethiopia was, of course, to allow us to try to revise the way Paragraph 7 has been written, simply because this has also been in the past, where we are just informing you on the recommendations that have been followed or not followed. But it doesn't actually, and I can assure you, mean that you did not follow the rule because the Committee is the one that decides according to the Rules of Procedure, and you have worked according to the Rules of Procedure. But this is just an information, and you have decided not to follow the recommendation by the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat, because they are Advisory Bodies and we are the Secretariat, and you are the body to decide.

But we take note of your important comments, and it will be reflected in the Summary Records, and we will make sure that we take it into consideration for the next report.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

I don't want to argue any, my colleague.

I understand we want to see the information, but I am saying about the wording. I mean, when you say: "The World Heritage Committee did not follow the recommendations presented", it can be said that the World Heritage Committee decided to put this, and in a different wording, because this is now, I can understand the colleagues are not commenting, but I can look at it. It is a negative, English wise, when you look at it, language wise, it is presented a negative connotation.

Thank you, but if no comment from others I can take this.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair, for giving the floor.

I think we also would align ourselves with what the Distinguished Ambassador of Oman just pointed out.

I think this expression that "the Committee did not follow" is a very strong expression. Perhaps, it could be changed. The wording could be changed. Instead of saying that "the World Heritage Committee did not follow the recommendation", we can say that "the Committee did not accept the recommendation" and, therefore, it gave a contrary viewpoint.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you.

In fact, this item need not to have a debate.

However, we are very serious on the statement. "Committee did not follow it". Completely, we break.

Thank you, Director, for the explanation given how the responsibility of the Advisory Bodies. We definitely understand, at the end of the day, it is the decision of the Committee which matters a lot. However, "based on the Advisory Body recommendations, the Committee takes its own decision" is a polite way of expression.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Well, Chair, I am not a native speaker, but in my opinion, we did accept the recommendations of the Advisory Body, we just decided to go a different way. And I would think that is "we did not follow".

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I'll pass the floor to the Legal Advisor, maybe, for some clarifications.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

Of course, it's not for me to make any statement with regard to what the perceptions are, with respect to the language contained herein, particularly as English is not my mother tongue, I'm not sure about what the connotations are about that.

However, Mr. Chair, I should point out that the terminology that is being discussed currently is actually contained in a working document that was prepared by the Secretariat for submission to the Committee. So, the Committee cannot change the working document of the Secretariat. The Secretariat has submitted this to the Committee, the Committee may express its views and even criticism to the terminology that is being used, which the Secretariat may take into account in the future in order to avoid language that might be perceived as having a negative connotation. But I would recall that the Committee cannot change a working document before it. The Committee is actually here to take the decisions as the draft decision, which is contained at the end of the concerned working document.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair, once again.

We have listened to the opinion of the Legal Advisor, but unlike other documents which have been presented and shared, of course we do understand what the Legal Advisor is trying to say. But this is one such document which has been actually edited, it's only after all the Agenda items have been discussed, this is a kind of a summary document. Now, herein, if we go by the argument that has been presented, that if we are saying that this point 7, that "the Committee did not follow the recommendations" means that it has already been assumed that the Committee is not going to follow. However, as Belgium also pointed out, the Advisory Bodies gave a recommendation, the Committee looked at the recommendation and it did not accept that recommendation, and it gave a contrary view point. So therefore, this is the reason why we are proposing this intervention.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We do understand the arguments put forward by the previous speakers, but also, for our part, we'd like to underscore something that came up during some of our nomination discussions in this session.

We are of the belief that we are actually... we could be perceived as ignoring the work of the Advisory Bodies if there's a trend to come up with other conclusions, to decide other than has been recommended, then little by little this Committee and the previous Committee have basically inscribed everything. Everything that came their way ended up getting inscribed on the World Heritage List. And I think we do actually need to start reflecting on whether this is a trend we should follow. Perhaps, we should go back and hark back to that so-called "rebellion of the 2010 sessions".

Committee members,

I do think, maybe, we need a broader reflection on this, and going forward, we should actually take into consideration what the Secretariat and the World Heritage Centre has asked for, and that the Committee accepts that when we had the 50th anniversary of the Convention, the World Heritage Centre itself had actually said that maybe we need to start looking at an overarching strategy. France and our own Delegation mentioned that this reflection was important. And what we're facing right now is, I think, actually just a continuation of that whole issue. What is occurring here really is an invitation for us to decide in which direction do we want to go, because this Committee has a huge responsibility vis à vis the whole world when it comes to making up the credible, balanced World Heritage List.

So, I don't think we're going to be able to ensure perfect balance at any time, but we do need to really look carefully into these issues.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So maybe, I will pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre for some clarifications and suggestions.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

As the Legal Advisor has already indicated, what we prepared is, of course, a working document. And if you remember this item, when you adopted it at the last extraordinary session, was an item which was proposed without debate. Every time you have concluded the examination of Item 8B, we distribute this document.

So, like I said, we have clearly heard and understood your concerns about Paragraph 7, and we are going to include it in the Summary Records as it is clear, and we will definitely take it into account when we prepare the working document on this specific item at your next session.

So, I think this is what I can say because we're now waiting for you to know if you adopt the draft decision as it has been presented to you by us.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

I am not satisfied, I'm sorry, I repeat, I am not satisfied by the reply of the Director of the WHC.

An item that is proposed without debate, well, it's only proposed, it's not accepted. And I stand by the statement by the Distinguished Ambassador of Oman, who has many, many years of more experience than us. And the Committee is sovereign, you're dealing with sovereign nations. This is not the case of someone is a guru and we are following, I'm sorry. The Advisory Bodies job is to advise the sovereign nations, take a call out of their own free will. We cannot follow in this manner. So, the question of not following does not arise because that's the definition of being sovereign. You are dealing with sovereign nations. We are not dealing with a bunch of followers, that is the fundamental difference. When you deal with sovereign nations, you have to respect them as sovereign nations,

it's a question of our sovereignty. This is how international diplomacy works. And that is why I find myself completely aligned with the views of the Omani Ambassador, with the views of the Ethiopian, and I found that the Belgium Delegation gave a very nice way out of it. We did accept certain advices, we were shown a path, and we chose to walk on a different path. So, maturity is that we find a terminology that suits both sides of the argument, and we move on rather than sticking to the position and say: "item proposed without debate". It will not change. That is it? I am sorry, we are sovereign. We will not be subject to this. It's a question of my sovereignty and I hold my stance.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

I would like to pass the floor to the ADG for Culture.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Esteemed members of the Committee,

Nobody is questioning the sovereignty of any country in this room. And when you raise your flag, we recognize your sovereignty.

The question is actually something quite different. Yes, the Committee is sovereign to take a decision, to adopt any decision that it sees fit, which means that when we reach the decision, if you insist in changing the wording, you can sovereignly do so.

But it would be unusual to have me change an information document that the Secretariat has prepared, however. Yes, if it's a decision, you are able to change the wording if the room agrees because that's the role. But if you're changing the meaning of a word, then this is a drafting issue. But here, what we're saying is just stipulating what occurred. We can't change the word, the meaning of the whole sentence because I would like to recall for everybody that the exact same words were used in last year's report. And so, when you say that the decisions of this Committee, if you go ahead with the decision, if the decisions are taken, the decisions need to reflect what occurred in the room during the session.

And I'm just saying, again, we did not open this point for discussion because the Secretariat, they were actually not here in this room but in other instances, might have decided to have amended a decision, that would be a problem, but here we're talking about a sovereign decision that you could take.

Now, when it comes back to laws, remember, yes, there are rules and rules are there to be followed. I agree with you, Sir.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you Chair,

Apologies, I don't have the document in front of me, so, what I'm going to say may not make a lot of sense. Would it help if we go for a number of times the Committee decided differently, which is factual and maybe not has additional meaning?

The Chairperson:

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

I am sorry the discussion went on that side.

I was only talking about language here, and I think we have gone far away in the discussion because when I read the sentence, it gives a negative connotation. And we said we want to twist only the sentence, that's what we are talking about. So, we should not go further, a lot of discussion. I am talking about language context only in this sense.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Can we go for a revised document?

We have done it before when we decided that the information is not fully acceptable. So, can the Secretariat present to us a particular revision of the words that takes care of the sentiments expressed?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair.

The reason why we are coming now and then on this idea, you have been trying to mention the previous documents. This is not a Bible, this is not a Koran, this is not a dogmatic document. We have to revise it.

If any independent researcher is given this document for his review automatically, what implies behind this? The Committee is not working based on the scientific advice. So, we need to revisit it and reshape it according to, maybe, some amending work. So, that is our intention. We are deciding historical issues. If we have something wrong done back, we have to revisit it and act accordingly.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I will pass the floor again to the Legal Advisor for some clarifications.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

I believe there are two discussions here which I would like to separate.

The first one, which is a substantive discussion, is about the negative or positive connotation that the expressions used in the working document may have. And on this, States members of the Committee may, of course, have the opinions they have, even a joint opinion they may have in that regard, and reflect this in any decisions they make, either at this session or in future sessions. On that first question, Mr. Chair, I will not take position myself since this is not a legal issue.

The second, however, discussion that is taking place here is rather a procedural one, and it does take us into the realm of the Rules of Procedure. And that is the fact that the document that you are discussing, which contains that terminology, is a working document that was prepared by the Secretariat and submitted to the Committee for its consideration. You may disagree with it, with the terminology put into it, you may express criticisms to it and even include those criticisms in the decision, if you so wish, or in the Records of the session if you so wish. But I would advise against the members of the Committee amending a working document of the Secretariat. This is not a matter of sovereignty, it is a matter of responsibility. The Secretariat has the responsibility of providing to you working documents, and it needs to retain that responsibility. As was mentioned by the ADG of Culture, we have faced similar situations in other bodies at UNESCO in which certain Member States have expressed criticisms to terminology that has been used by the Secretariat in its working documents. Those criticisms were reflected either in the Summary Records or in decisions. But of course, the working document itself is a fact. It's something that has been put in front of you.

Mr. Chair,

I, of course, defer to the decisions that the Committee may wish to make on the basis of my legal advice.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

I agree most of the time with the advice of the Legal Advisor, but somehow, this time, I find gaps in his advice when he talks that it is not sovereignty but responsibility.

May the Legal Advisor, please, let us know under which Rules of Procedure is a working document not editable by the Committee?

I want him to quote the Rules of Procedure, and if there is no Rules of Procedure, then let him explain what does he mean by responsibility.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, I'll pass the floor again to the Legal Advisor.

The Legal Advisor:

Mr. Chair,

In response to the question by the Distinguished Delegate of India, and indeed, it is a rare occasion that we find ourselves in disagreement, even if I don't think there is such disagreement in this case. With regard to his specific question, I would refer to Rule 43, Paragraph 2, which mentions the fact that the Secretariat shall, and I'm quoting: "shall prepare the Committee's documentation", end of quote, as to whether that provision provides explicitly whether that documentation can be changed by the Committee or not. I do recognize that it is not written down, but when it says that "the Secretariat shall prepare the Committee's documentation", it is providing to the Secretariat the duty, what I call the responsibility is the duty to prepare for the Committee this thing.

Once again, I would advise against changing what the Secretariat is saying because this could open a Pandora's box in other instances, I wouldn't say this one but in other instances, in which Member States may wish to change parts of reports that the Secretariat has presented with which they disagree in terms of politics.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

I'm sorry to take the floor again.

This is precisely why I had asked for the Rules of Procedure. Now, as per Rule 43, Para 2, there is no restriction on the Committee to edit the documents.

The responsibility which was spoken about, it is the responsibility of the Secretariat to prepare the documents. Preparing a document is a secretarial job. In an office, your secretary prepares the documents. The Secretariat by the very name performs this secretarial job. When a secretary presents a document, the head of the Bureau, the head of the Committee or the entire Committee by itself has the right to edit or not to edit. The secretary doing a secretarial job cannot take the power away from a hierarchical position of the Committee and say: "No, because the secretarial job has been done, you don't have the right to edit it." No, the very word "secretariat" means it's a secretarial position, and the secretarial position has done the job to just prepare the documents for the final approval or editing of the Committee.

Excellency, I think I have proved my point.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

I would like to say the following: I feel like I'm taking a legal course in a law school right now.

I would like to go back to what His Excellency Sultanate of Oman said, so he said that his question was about the language context. What he meant was not related to the document prepared by the Secretariat, but rather the way the sentence was phrased. It was a comment on the formulation rather than the content. So, I would like to ask for clarification. Perhaps, the Secretariat has another proposal about the wording. We would very much welcome this and we wish to arrive at a consensus.

So that's my comment, I just wanted to be brief. I just wanted to say that the Sultanate of Oman really focused on the wording, not the meaning of the sentence of the document.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We just wanted to clarify.

If the Secretariat has prepared a document, and it is available for us as Committee members on the website, and it has factual errors, does that mean that we can't correct those factual errors? We just want to understand. Therefore, what then is the objective of the Secretariat preparing document? Because our understanding is that the Secretariat exists to serve the Committee members and States Parties' interests in ensuring that the Convention is implemented. So, if we can just address what is the purpose then of the Secretariat posting a document or preparing documents, and then we hear that such a document may not be amended, even if it may have factual errors.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We believe there might be a misunderstanding that now we are approving the working document. The Committee is not approving 100% of the content or the wording used in the working document. So, we can be in disagreement. And as it has been stated very clearly by the Legal Advisor and ADG Culture, this will remain in the Records of the Committee, that the Committee or several members of the Committee were in disagreement with the wording used in the working document. But still, we are not approving the working document. We are just, maybe, considering it, taking note of it, but we don't have to be in agreement with 100% of the content. We can express our disagreement, but we don't have to change the language of the working document itself.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to pass the floor to the Secretariat to respond to the question addressed by South Africa.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je pense que le Conseiller juridique a déjà clarifié cette question.

Dans ce cas précis, il s'agit d'une impression que les membres du Comité ont exprimé sur ce Paragraphe 7 de ce document, et je pense que les représentants d'Oman et du Qatar ont donné des commentaires qui sont plutôt à prendre, d'après ce que nous avons compris, pour l'avenir. Et donc l'idée était donc de dire, et je remercie la Distinguée Déléguée de l'Italie, qui l'a renforcé en clarifiant, que ce qui est important, c'est que vous examinez un document, mais vous pouvez prendre une décision. Et donc, ce que nous vous avons suggéré, c'est que ce document, effectivement, ce que vous avez dit, soit très clairement reflété dans le Résumé de vos débats et de manière à ce que nous puissions, à l'avenir, faire très clairement cette distinction que vous souhaitez.

Donc, j'espère que j'ai pu répondre à la question, mais je sais que Monsieur l'ADG va peut-être essayer de clarifier un peu plus.

Le Sous-Directeur général pour la Culture :

Merci.

On va pas rester dans une grande discussion, on a clairement une vision différente.

La seule chose que je voudrais clarifier, peut-être, je comprends mal ce qu'est une « erreur factuelle ». Que je sache, il n'y a pas d'erreur factuelle, c'est une constatation. On est d'accord sur le point que vous considérez que le langage n'est pas approprié ou ne reflète pas comment vous voudriez que cela soit reflété. On a très bien compris, et cela veut dire que le Secrétariat non seulement le mettra dans le Compte-rendu, bien sûr, mais surtout prendra en compte cela pour l'avenir, pour ne pas heurter les sensibilités des membres du Comité. Ça, on l'a compris, c'est clair, et donc j'espère que le Secrétariat ne commettra pas cette indifférence vis à vis des membres

du Comité de l'exprimer à travers le langage utilisé depuis plusieurs Comités, parce que ce n'est pas la première fois qu'on le fait.

Cependant, comme l'a mentionné, vous voulez faire une constatation au-delà du rapport, dans la décision, vous pouvez changer le *wording* ou mettre un amendement, une nouvelle phrase qui laisse très clair ce que vous venez d'exprimer. Et effectivement, c'est dans votre droit et vous pouvez le faire. Mais, on a très bien compris, je crois, que le Secrétariat tel qu'il a été reflété, fait plus qu'être seulement le Secrétariat, dans le sens où nous avons aussi une obligation de représenter ce qui se passe et peut être, une fois de plus et je finis là, bien sûr, il y a toujours des manières d'améliorer le langage pour ne pas heurter les sensibilités. Je crois que c'est le but d'une organisation aussi belle que la nôtre.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

I have just two questions:

- No. 1, is this an INF document or do you want a decision of this Committee for this document? That's my first question: Do you want a decision of this Committee or it's just for information?
- Point no. 2, you have already mentioned a lot of figures that, for example, nine referrals became inscription, seven deferrals became inscriptions, which means these were the advices, and the advices the Committee chose to walk on a path of its own sovereign choosing. You already have the figures mentioned under Para 3. What need then is to qualify and add sentences like "did not follow" because, you know, this is just re-emphasizing what is already been mentioned in numeric terms. Do you think we can do without these qualifying sentences? If yes, then we have a consensus and we can move forward.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, I'll pass these questions to the Legal Advisor.

The Legal Advisor:

Mr. Chair,

I will answer the first question, which has a legal component.

Mr. Chair,

Under the present item, the Committee is called to make two decisions, which are **8C.1** and **8C.2**, and none of them makes reference to the document concerned.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

In other words, if I may say, there are other cases in which, in the preambular paragraphs, the Committee says: "Having examined such and such document", or "Taking note on such and such document", that terminology is not contained either in Draft Decision **8C.1** nor in Draft Decision **8C.2**, to the best of my knowledge.

Thank you very much.

And there may be an 8C... Oh, there is also an **8C.3**.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

My question is not answered.

Is this an INF document or is a decision of this Committee required?

I just need a very simple answer to that question.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, I'll pass the floor to Director of the World Heritage Centre.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

I think, in this working document, you have a number of draft decisions that you have to consider. These are a background information that help you to take the decision.

You have before you a Draft Decision **45 COM 8C.1** and then you have **45 COM 8C.2**, and these decisions are decisions which you have already taken, and it is just to confirm these decisions, including the number of properties that have been inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. So, we have prepared this background information for you to take the decision. We have also Decision **45 COM 8C.3**, which of course, it confirms the decision that you have taken for the removal of one site from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

So, this is primarily a background information that the Secretariat is providing.

Now, in a background information, if a Member State is expressing a desire to just change one word, what difference does it make? It's just background info, it's not the draft decision.

So, my humble request is, that is the reason why I asked the question: Was it an INF or you wanted a decision? So, this is not the draft decision. Member States are not requesting you change the draft decision. What you are requesting is the background information which you have provided. Just change a word or two. That's it.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Le Sous-Directeur général pour la Culture :

Vous êtes en train de parler sur ce document de travail. Le problème n'est pas ce document de travail, c'est le principe.

Demain, dans un document préparé qui ne va pas à une décision, un État membre décidera de nous demander de changer le *wording* parce qu'il ne l'aime pas. Ce n'est pas dans une décision, je parle d'un document de travail. Vous l'avez exprimé, on l'a compris, on pourra le corriger pour le futur. Mais il ne s'agit pas de changer des petits mots. On parle de principes, là peut être vous voyez que cela n'affecte pas prioritairement, mais dans d'autres décisions, que ce soit ici ou dans d'autres réunions statutaires, cela peut avoir des conséquences.

Donc, pour votre réponse, on vous a dit tous les instruments dans le passé qu'on a déjà utilisés, et j'insiste, vous avez l'opportunité de le mettre dans la décision, vous avez l'opportunité d'en faire rapport. Mais le document, il a été présenté comme un document de travail et on peut l'aimer ou ne pas l'aimer, mais c'est un document de travail.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, ADG. So, after we have heard from the Secretariat... Also from Zambia, please.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

From what I've understood, I think, here now, we are dealing with issues of semantics.

The truth of the matter is the Committee has observed that the wording should have been changed, but at the same time, we are also looking at the issues of precedence, meaning that whatsoever we do today might affect the operations of the Committee tomorrow.

So possibly, I am just making a proposition: Is it possible, like it is already being suggested by the Secretariat, that the Committee should put it on record that whatsoever the Secretariat did was not in line with what the Committee

was expecting in terms of the terminology that is being used? Meaning that on record it will be there that the terminology was not acceptable.

But if we're to do the other way round, it means we will be opening a Pandora's box for the future operations. So, my take is that, maybe for now, for the sake of progress, let it be noted that the Committee was not and is not in agreement with the wording, so that the Secretariat should know in the future that that wording should not be used.

That is my submission, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, this is what was explained by the Director of the World Heritage Centre, since this was the standard and the practice before, but your interventions and feedback will be integrated in the Summary Report, and that will be taken into consideration for the future.

So, if you are all in agreement with this, to proceed with this and integrate the notes and observations of the Committee in the Summary Report, we proceed.

So, I see we are all in agreement with this and...

India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

Chair,

Because this discussion is going on for long, and I think everybody would want to close this, could we possibly, though I'm trying to sort of structure a sentence out of it, when we are talking about the Draft Decisions **45 COM 8C.1**, **8C.2** and **8C.3**, could we, where we start: "The World Heritage Committee having examined" and all, could we write something to the effect in the paragraph saying that: "Following the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies", "Based on the" or "Following the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies, the World Heritage Committee decides to retain the following properties:". So, we've looked at the advice given by the Advisory Body, but the Committee has then taken a call, and thereafter the list goes on. Something to that effect.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

So, I just wanted to double check with you. Is it in under C.1 or C.2?

The Delegation of India:

In fact, it will be under all, **8C.1**, **8C.2**, and **8C.3**. It starts with that. If you give us a minute, we will try to propose a sentence.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Yes, please. So, I'd like to pass the floor to the Legal Advisor.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

I believe that both the Distinguished Delegate of Zambia and the Distinguished Delegate of India have made very constructive proposals which showed a way forward. And in that regard, I would like to give guidance to the Committee of what are the options that are available to it.

First of all, Mr. Chair, it is possible, and indeed it is already the case, that the views that were expressed by the members of the Committee be reflected in the Summary Records of the session. I believe that you have already made clear that you want this to be so, and I am sure that the Secretariat will be able to provide to include this, reflecting the discussion that has taken place.

Second of all, Mr. Chair, it is of course possible, and this is what falls under its sovereign purview for the Committee to change its decision or even to make a decision orally through the Chair today by saying, the Chair could say: "The Committee has taken note that this terminology was used and prefers another terminology, and I would like to put on record for the current session that this is what it decided", and it is an option.

And last but not least, the option that was proposed by the Distinguished Delegate of India is possible. That is actually a proposal of an amendment to the decision, and as other amendments have been considered during the session, it could be considered adopted by the Committee and you may continue your proceedings.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much to the Legal Advisor. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Could we ask for the draft decision to be projected so that we could propose an amendment, please?

The Chairperson:

Indeed, I'll ask the Rapporteur to position...

The Rapporteur:

Chair,

We will show the Draft Decision **45 COM 8C.1**. It's on screen.

The Chairperson:

India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

If we could insert in Para 2, saying: "Having examined the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies, the Committee has examined and", and we follow: "decided to inscribe". So, this actually goes in for all the three, draft decisions.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

So, I'll pass the floor to the Rapporteur to clarify something.

The Rapporteur:

If we could just slightly edit this, I think we don't need the middle phrase. It can be: "Having examined the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies, decides to inscribe the following properties:", if that's acceptable.

The Chairperson:

So, India, does that reflect your meaning?

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

At this point in time, I just want to go back to my room and listen to some nice music. So yes, we are all very tired and it's a good recommendation.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, let's adopt it for the three draft decisions.

So, I invite you to adopt the Draft Decisions **8C.1**, **8C.2** and **8C.3**, but before doing so, I'd like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any additional amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have just received one amendment from the Delegation of India which is shown on the screen. The rest of it is as original.

The Chairperson:

Concerning **45 COM 8C.1**, the First Paragraph, you don't have any amendment. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. [gavel]

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel]

So, the whole draft decision as a whole. And if there are no objections, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8C.1** adopted as amended. [gavel]

Concerning Draft Decision **45 COM 8C.2**, for the First Paragraph, we do not have any amendments. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. [gavel]

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel]

And if there are no objections or comments, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 8C.2** adopted as amended. [gavel]

Regarding **45 COM 8C.3**, the First Paragraph, we don't have any proposal. Do we agree to accept it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. [gavel]

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel]

And I declare that Draft Decision **45 COM 8C.3** adopted as amended. [gavel]

So, I'll pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre for general announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Of course, I think it's you to... I just wanted to let you know that the Host Country is inviting all the Delegates at the closing event of this Committee, which will take place in two days. So, all information will be provided to you and that will be on Friday 22 September, starting from 8:00 pm. All information regarding transportation and logistics will be provided to you. I just wanted you to start putting it in your calendars.

So, thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much to Mr. Director, and I would like to also remind you that the Bureau will take place tomorrow at 9:30.

See you tomorrow. [gavel]

The meeting rose at 6:17 pm. // La séance a été levée à 18h17.

ELEVENTH DAY
Thursday, 21 September 2023
TWENTIETH PLENARY MEETING
10:09 am – 1:05 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

ONZIÈMEE JOUR
Jeudi 21 septembre 2023
VINGTIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h09 – 13h05
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

Good morning.

I would like to share with you information provided on the 11th meeting of the Bureau, this morning, about the timetable of the remaining days of work of the Committee.

I am pleased to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to explain the change you may occur.

Director, you may have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Good morning.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Good morning to everyone.

This morning we will start with Item 8 on the nomination process in order to close this item. As you remember, the item remained open until the examination of Item 8B and the Item 8C yesterday.

So, following the examination of this item, we will resume to Item 7 on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties in order to examine the decision.

And then once this is done, we will start the examination of all the items related to the Periodic Reporting Exercises. We will start with Item 10C on the implementation of all Action Plans for the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting for Africa and the Arab State regions. It will be followed by Item 10D, which will be on Progress report on the implementation of Action Plans of the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the other regions that have not started the Third Cycle. And then after 10D, we will go to Item 10E on the Progress report now on the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting on other regions.

And then, we will expect to conclude the morning with an important presentation on the results of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting Exercise in Asia Pacific, and this is Item 10A.

Then we will have a break, and in the afternoon we will resume.

We will come back to examine Item 10B, which will be the report on the results of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting Exercise in Latin America and the Caribbean.

And once this is completed by you, we will move to Item 14 on the International Assistance request, and then we will continue with Item 11, which will be on the follow up to Recommendations of Evaluations and Audits on Working Methods and outcomes of the Ad-hoc Working Group.

And we will then, after that one, continue with Item 12 on the revision of the Operational Guidelines.

Once this is completed, we expect to conclude the day with Item 15 on the presentation of the final accounts of the World Heritage Fund for 2021 and the report on the execution of the budget for the biennium 22-23, but also the budget proposal of the World Heritage Fund under the biennium 24-25, and a follow up on the Decision **44 COM 14**.

So, this is what we are expected to do today if times allow.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr. Director.

Please also note that, in case we can achieve the examination of all items scheduled for today, I would propose that we reconvene only on Sunday morning, 24 September for Items:

- 16: Other businesses;
- 17: Election of the Bureau of the 46th session of the Committee;

- 18: Provisional Agenda of the 46th session of the Committee;
- 19: Adoption of the report of decisions;
- 20: The closing of the session.

The next Bureau meeting would, therefore, be on Sunday from 9:30 to 10:00.

However, should the Committee not complete the works scheduled for today, we will have a working session tomorrow afternoon, Friday 22 September with the Bureau meeting from 2:30 to 3:00.

Are there any comments to this regard?

So, if you are in agreement, I will ask the Secretariat to circulate the adjustment to our Timetable and upload it on the World Heritage Centre webpage.

Thank you very much. Now, dear colleagues.

8. NOMINATION PROCESS [closing of the item] // PROCESSUS DE PROPOSITION D'INSCRIPTION [Clôture du point]

The Chairperson:

Now, dear colleagues,

As you know, Item 8 was presented on 16 September. The related Document is 45COM/8.

Before we move to the examination of the draft decision, are any comments on this matter?

India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair, for giving India the floor.

Now that the World Heritage Committee has examined all the nomination dossiers, the major and minor boundary modifications, and the adoption of the provisional SOUVs, India would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the States Parties whose properties have been inscribed during the current extended session of the World Heritage Committee.

We would also like to compliment you, Chair, the Secretariat, and the Advisory Bodies for the way the debates were conducted, and the decisions were arrived at in a most professional manner. The debates at times were quite intense.

It is the magnetism of the World Heritage Convention that today, after 50 years of the adoption of this Convention, the world is richer by 1,199 World Heritage properties that exhibit Outstanding Universal Value, and these are the properties that are the heritage of humanity. The conservation, protection, and management is a shared responsibility.

Mr. Chair,

Inscribing a property on the World Heritage List is a matter of pride and celebration for any State Party. We have seen glimpses of that in this hall and the celebrations continue even back at home. This indicates that the Convention has evolved from being a watchdog instrument to being a celebratory or an aspirational one. Its advantages and benefits to the local community are imminent in terms of global recognition of local cultural identities, and gives employment opportunities to local youth, and incentivizes the promotion of regional arts and crafts.

The natural and mixed properties too are benefited by the inscription, as it helps preserve natural spots of exceptional beauty, elements depicting Earth's history, or examples of outstanding ecological processes and natural habitats for the protection of biodiversity.

This year's several nominations also included cultural landscapes that celebrate the combined works and interaction between human and nature, and a new type of nomination, the sites of memory. This reflects the shift from monumental properties to places or sites of outstanding cultural or human significance. The properties reflect, on one hand, the outstanding human achievements and, on one hand, give us a message of universal peace, which is vital for entire humanity. We also acknowledge that the properties, once declared so, need to maintain their state of conservation, or any challenges that may compromise their OUV or conditions of authenticity and integrity. Nominating a property on the World Heritage List gives the Committee and the Secretariat an opportunity to examine these issues from time to time and, if required, garner international support.

To conclude, Mr. Chair, India would like to reiterate its commitment to work towards establishing the balanced List, reducing typological and geographic gaps, and to work at grassroot levels to enhance the capacity of local

communities, professionals, and officials. We are committed to inscribing more properties that have outstanding universal significance and value in times to come on the World Heritage List.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair, and good morning.

Yesterday, we inscribed two sites of memory where the recommendation from the Advisory Body differed from the actual decision that the Committee took, and it is our understanding that, in both cases, one of the reasons why there was a difference of opinion was because the Committee interpreted the definition of sites of memory in another way than the Advisory Body did. Frankly, Chair, we believe that what the Advisory Body did was just follow the definition that was decided on and agreed on at the extraordinary session earlier this year.

So, I would like to hear from the Advisory Body, if that is, in fact, the case, that they also think that we have this difference of opinion, and if that is the case, then maybe we, as Committee, should consider looking once more at the definition to make sure that, in the future, we have a solid and a common understanding of what the site of memory is.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, I would like to pass the floor to ICOMOS to respond to the question addressed by Belgium.

ICOMOS :

Je vous remercie, M. le Président, et je remercie le représentant de la Belgique...

The Chairperson:

Point of order, Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We are supposed to start in the Agenda, but now we are diverted the Agenda. We have heard a speech from India.

Now we have question: I don't know if this session is going to go like this, or there should be a slot of time to discuss such issue? Because if we are going to open such question, we are not going to enter to the Agenda.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, what we are doing is examining the draft decisions, and the floor is open for the Committee if they wanted to add anything or to discuss any matter.

So, you may continue.

ICOMOS :

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

Pour répondre à la question de l'Honorable Délégué de la Belgique en ce qui concerne l'interprétation de la définition des sites de mémoire comme elle a été adoptée par le Comité dans les *Guiding Principles*, l'ICOMOS, à travers les trois évaluations des sites de mémoire et à travers le travail qui a été conduit sur l'évaluation de ces trois sites de mémoire, a travaillé sur quelle était l'interprétation de cette définition comme elle a été définie par le Comité. L'ICOMOS a compris également que ces dossiers qui avaient été soumis avant l'adoption des *Guiding Principles* devaient être évalués sur leurs qualités propres, à la lumière de ces *Guiding Principles* mais sans non plus forcément les prendre en compte. De ce point de vue-là, l'ICOMOS souhaiterait peut-être rappeler une décision que le Comité a prise, en janvier également, qui était d'encourager les Organisations consultatives et les États parties, en coopération avec le Centre du patrimoine mondial, à continuer à renforcer les capacités et à continuer

à discuter et à travailler pour traiter les enjeux particuliers des sites de mémoire. Le Comité, également en janvier, a laissé la porte ouverte, en tout cas, à la poursuite d'un travail en ce qui concerne cette réflexion.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, apologies, Chair, for this follow up question.

In what way can we continue this joint discussion? Is this something that we need to set up under the form of a Working Group or is this rather in the dialogue that is associated with future nominations?

The Chairperson:

ICOMOS.

ICOMOS :

Je ne sais pas si c'est à l'ICOMOS à répondre à cette question, c'est aussi au Comité de décider la suite à donner à cette réflexion. La définition dans les *Guiding Principles* est claire, la façon dont elle est interprétée peut être discutée ou...

Mais, je ne suis pas sûre que ce soit à l'ICOMOS de répondre à la question de la forme à donner aux discussions sur cette question-là.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I'll pass the floor to the Secretariat.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

C'est juste pour dire que, en réponse à la question que le Distingué Délégué de la Belgique a posée, d'abord, le Groupe de travail a terminé son travail. Vous avez adopté une décision en janvier et cette décision, elle a deux Parties importantes. Évidemment, la première partie, qui a été effectivement de lever le moratoire, la deuxième partie qui a été effectivement d'adopter un mécanisme de contestation, et dans ce débat, vous avez considéré très clairement que le processus doit être un processus normal d'approbation. Donc, ce travail va continuer. Je crois que ce que je veux dire ici, c'est que, pour le Secrétariat et pour... Vous avez terminé ce travail-là. Donc, le Paragraphe 168 a été amendé en conséquence, vous l'avez fait en janvier. Donc, c'est un processus normal qui va continuer. Et c'est comme ça que nous, le Secrétariat et les Organisations consultatives, notamment l'ICOMOS, nous allons continuer à travailler sur cette question.

Je dois aussi dire que, quand on analyse les décisions que vous avez prises, vous avez inscrit les trois sites sur la base du critère (vi), ce qui confirme aussi les conclusions de la discussion que vous avez eue. Votre message, en fait, quand on l'analyse, il est bien celui-là, c'est-à-dire vous considérez que ces sites aujourd'hui doivent faire partie de la Liste du patrimoine mondial avec cette décision que vous avez prise là. Donc, pour nous, on va continuer le travail normalement, vous allez continuer votre travail de membre du Comité.

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Chairperson:

I agree with the Director, Chair, and I think also we need to continue. But maybe, we should keep an eye on the fact that we had an issue this year. It's a very limited experience, only three files were discussed. But next year, if we feel that we are hitting the same wall, maybe then we should look at, maybe, establishing a new Working Group or doing it as part of another Working Group to see what is not working yet.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

I'll be very brief.

I believe that it's worth recalling the work that underlies these three nominations and inscriptions of memory sites. Of course, we know that it will always be a controversial topic, but it's something that has the mandate of the Committee. And from 2017 to 2021, work was undertaken on this, led by Christina Cameron, who was the Chair of a Working Group which ended up adopting the document on sites associated with recent conflict. There is also a document published in 2018 by ICOMOS on sites of memory. So, we already have instruments which can help us to move forward on this matter. Of course, it will be complicated for the Advisory Bodies, but there are lots of other features that enrich OUV, which are not necessarily monuments.

We also need to look at the joint implementation of other UNESCO Cultural Conventions in order to enrich that framework, and this will allow us to have a better and accurate assessment of future nominations of memory sites.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

I just wanted to point out one thing from our point of view of a diplomat. I'm not an expert, but I was deeply involved in the Working Group. I was a Bureau member at that time.

Originally in the process of the Working Group, there were some doubts about whether we can actually agree on definitions. So, the Chair of the Working Group, very able Chair, asked the floor: Do we really want to define what are the memory sites? And obviously after that, there were considerable discussions, and we came up with a current definition. But definition in fact is not a guiding principle. Definition is there in a different place so that we don't bind everybody with that particular definition.

I would also like to point out another thing, there is a clear reference to case-by-case basis. This means we need to be flexible about the definitions that look at individual cases. So, if the Committee starts again: What are the definitions of the site of memories, we'll be in total confusion because many people want to put their own items. So, the definition becomes bigger and bigger, and it may not mean much.

So, I have doubts about starting the discussions of the definition again. This "site of memory" is very difficult to define. So, that is why we agreed to look at this on a case-by-case basis. So, unless we hit the wall again, and unless we are encircled by walls and don't know where to go, we may have to start the discussions again. But at this moment in time, I don't think we should restart the discussions with the definition. Rather, we should look at the files on individual cases. I don't think we can come to an agreement once it is reopened again.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, if there are no comments, I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 8**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

No amendment is received for Draft Decision **45 COM 8**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And if there are no comments or objections, I, therefore, declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 8** adopted. *[gavel]*

So, we have a couple requests from the floor. Norway.

The Observer Delegation of Norway:

Shukran, Mr. Chair, for giving Norway the floor.

We wish to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for a warm and generous welcome as well as you for your competent leadership.

We also wish to recognize and thank the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for their always professional and diligent work.

Norway carefully follows this important Convention.

As a recent member of the Committee, we felt the pressure and expectations of being elected on behalf of the remaining 174 States Parties. In our attempts to contribute to decisions based on objective and scientific considerations, as per Paragraph 23 of the Operational Guidelines, sometimes we had to stop and ask: Do we uphold the integrity of this Convention? Do we push the boundaries for best practice and standard setting, conservation and management for the most precious and valuable places on Earth?

We wish to recognize all States Parties who have accepted and follow the expert advice expressed in the draft decisions, be it on state of conservation, on nominations, including withdrawing and accepting non inscription and deferral recommendations. One notable example to be mentioned is Mongolia, with their inscription of the Deer Stone Monuments and Related Bronze Age Sites originally referred, and further the acceptance of deferring the Highlands of the Mongolian Altai, this year.

We have also seen inscriptions from the Czech Republic, France, and Spain, all previous deferrals, along with a few other examples. Such deferred nominations return as reconfigured, improved, and complete in compliance with the provisions or canon, if you wish, of the Convention and the Operational Guidelines. They are examples of what can be achieved through dialogue, expert advice, and exchanges between States Parties, the World Heritage Centre, and the Advisory Bodies. Inscription on this List is a decision for eternity; therefore, the decision must be right. We must clearly know what the values and attributes in relation to criteria, integrity, and authenticity as well as ensure the necessary protection and management all necessary to meet the requirements for OUV. Properties inscribed which do not comply with these requirements, as we have just heard from the Secretariat, do reappear as such matters in the future, increasing further the pressure on an already overwhelmed system with limited resources.

That is why Norway and many other States Parties have committed to establish mechanisms for early dialogue and capacity-building for all States Parties. The nomination reform, the preliminary assessment, for example, is a crucial mechanism to facilitate early dialogue and capacity-building for successful nominations for us all. It may also potentially enable significant savings of resources down the line. We are the current guardians of the world's natural and cultural heritage to be transmitted to our children, and remember, the future generations are also the heirs of our decisions.

Let's therefore always be certain that we make the right decisions for those coming after us.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I'll ask the Secretariat to read the list of speakers, and we will close the list of speakers.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The following observers have requested to take the floor:

- Spain;
- Sweden;
- Slovenia;
- Slovakia; and
- the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to urge you, dear colleagues, to...

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

And Switzerland.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

So, I urge you, dear colleagues, to stick to the two minutes allocated for you.

Spain, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Spain: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The presentation of the... On behalf of the Kingdom of Spain, we wanted to thank you for giving us the floor.

As observers, we also wanted to extend our thanks to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its excellent organization and warm hospitality, and we congratulate you for your able stewardship of the meeting.

We also wanted to extend our thanks to the excellent work done by the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre, whose contributions make it possible for us to do our work.

The Convention is now more than 50 years old, and the aim of it is that we never lose sight of how important it is to understand the OUV of all of the sites, and also to safeguard these amazing properties for future generations. Through this cycle, we've seen how important the reach of this, and remember that with all of these 195 States Parties represented, we think that the importance has been there. We are also accumulating experience when it comes to the Operational Guidelines, and it's through your deliberations, we're continually improving the methods of working. The World Heritage system is growing in terms of credibility, and this is reflected primarily in two aspects:

- Firstly, demonstrating OUV of all of the properties on the List; and
- Secondly, excellent safeguarding and appropriate management plans.

We think that this, therefore, is the perfect time to reflect more deeply on how we want to move forward in the next 50 years, and which direction do we want this Convention to go. And we need to make sure that we stay true to its fundamentals so that we can ensure that it's sustainable in the long run. We are sure that we will be able to reach the best of possible outcomes if we stick to those shared values.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sweden.

The Observer Delegation of Sweden:

Thank you, Chair, for giving Sweden the floor.

Let me start by congratulating you on your prominent leadership with which you have been conducting this meeting. We are truly grateful to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting this meeting and for the warm hospitality that we have received.

Thanks are also due to the Distinguished members of the Committee as well as the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies for their valuable scientific expertise, which constitutes a fundamental part of the World Heritage system.

We note that there has been continued constructive dialogue on the nominations between the Advisory Bodies and the States Parties concerned. We consider that this collaborative spirit can only be strengthened by the new two-step nomination process of preliminary assessment. This is especially important to address ambiguities that have been observed in relation to some nominations, and to avoid added stress on the state of conservation reporting.

Finally, we are convinced that preliminary assessment will contribute greatly not only to the quality of nominations but also to the overall credibility of the Convention.

Thank you, Chair. *Shukran*.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Slovenia.

The Observer Delegation of Slovenia:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving the floor to Slovenia.

First of all, allow me to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for generously hosting this meeting of the World Heritage Committee in Riyadh, which is also followed by many online.

We would also like to thank the Secretariat for its tireless work and Advisory Bodies for their expert contribution to this meeting and to the World Heritage Convention as a whole.

Allow us to congratulate the States Parties on their nominations, which the Committee examined during the session, especially those that have made great efforts over the years to produce comprehensive and high-quality nominations that provide a solid foundation for the conservation of properties and the well-being of communities.

We know from our own experience that these processes are lengthy and complex, that they require the commitment of experts as well as strong institutional framework, and that the work continues after the inscription. In this context, we have to note with regret that some inscriptions, as decided by the Committee modifying Advisory Bodies recommendation, appeared to be premature. In our opinion, they will require significant future actions by States Parties, Advisory Bodies, the Centre, and will place additional burdens on the existing World Heritage system.

Slovenia supports the mechanism and activities under the Convention that helps States Parties conserve their exceptional properties, including addressing relevant challenges such as the climate crisis, international cooperation, and capacity-building. We implement and benefit from them greatly at the national level. As a member of the Ad-hoc Working Group, Slovenia has actively contributed to the reform of the nomination process and strongly supported the preliminary assessment mechanism. We believe that this is an important step in enabling all States Parties to engage in dialogue with Advisory Bodies at an early stage, which would support their efforts in a clearly defined and systematic manner, thus contributing to the strengthening of the World Heritage system. Undoubtedly, a careful overall implementation of the two-step nomination process is our next common challenge.

In conclusion, we would like to join those States Parties carefully expressing their concern for the future of our Convention and our shared heritage. However, we are convinced that we can only bring about positive change if we rely on joint efforts and share responsibility.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Slovakia.

The Observer Delegation of Slovakia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Since it's the first time Slovakia is taking the floor, let me first express my heartfelt gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their warm hospitality and for the exceptional organization of the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee.

In the spirit of celebration, I offer my sincere congratulations to all the States Parties whose nominations have successfully found their place on the World Heritage List.

We share the commitment to preserving our cultural and natural heritage, and these inscriptions stand as statements to his unwavering dedication. However, just as the Esteemed Delegation of Slovenia and others, we cannot overlook the fact that, during this session, a considerable number of inscriptions deviated from ICOMOS and IUCN recommendations. While we respect the decision-making process, we must express our deep concern about the potential detrimental consequences this might have for the preservation of the properties in concern as well as for the World Heritage Convention as a whole.

In the light of these challenges, we firmly believe that the previously mentioned introduction of a two-phased nomination process through the preliminary assessment is crucial. This approach would enable us to address potential questions and challenges well in advance, and will allow the properties to benefit adequately from the invaluable expert advice of the Advisory Bodies, and especially, it will contribute greatly to safeguarding the credibility of the World Heritage List, which is of paramount importance. It is through the strict respect to rules and the maximum use of expert knowledge that we can preserve the essence of the World Heritage Convention.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Switzerland.

La Délégation de la Suisse :

M. le Président,

Félicitations pour votre gestion diligente des débats, et nos sincères remerciements au Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour l'accueil chaleureux qui nous est réservé.

Permettez-moi, en préambule, de relever le travail remarquable des Organisations consultatives, dont l'expertise, l'analyse et le professionnalisme méritent d'être salués. Les rapports sur l'état de conservation et les

recommandations émises contribueront assurément à renforcer la préservation des biens concernés et de notre patrimoine commun.

Permettez-moi également de féliciter les États parties, en particulier ceux qui ont vu leur respect des avis des Organisations consultatives et leurs efforts récompensés. En dépit de l'immense travail fourni par les États parties, force est de constater que certains dossiers de candidature demeurent incomplets ou fragiles, plaçant le Comité dans des situations inconfortables et, en tant qu'observateurs, nous relevons à regret les écarts répétitifs entre recommandations des Organisations et décisions du Comité.

Dans un esprit recherché par de nombreux États parties de renforcer la Convention et d'améliorer les méthodes de travail, de nouveaux instruments ont été introduits, à l'instar de la Déclaration de principes de l'Assemblée générale ou du processus d'analyse préliminaire.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

À l'issue de cette session, comme l'illustrent les statistiques dont nous apprécions le côté factuel, 26 % des biens inscrits ont été proposés par des membres du Comité. Nous relevons également que les Organisations et le Comité auront à évaluer 17 rapports additionnels entre 2024 et 2025, suite à la modification des recommandations par ce Comité. Ceux-ci représentent une charge supplémentaire et un investissement considérable, tant humain que financier, dans un système dont les limites nous paraissent toujours plus visibles. Systématiquement appliqué, le processus d'analyse préliminaire permettra de remédier à cette situation loin d'être idéale et contribuera à des décisions plus soutenues et partagées au sein du Comité. L'objectif de ces réformes est de lancer un mouvement vers une plus grande consolidation de la Convention et de sa crédibilité. Nous l'appelons de nos vœux. L'avenir de notre Convention en dépend.

Je vous remercie de votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Indigenous Peoples' Forum.

The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage (Observer):

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am reading this on behalf of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage to express our strong objection to some aspects of the nomination process.

Firstly, we strongly object to the fact that the nomination documents are not made publicly available before the Committee meets to take a decision on the nominations. There is no way for affected indigenous peoples to review the information contained in the nominations and assess whether it is accurate and truthful, and whether our rights, cultural values, perspectives, and needs are adequately reflected and sufficiently considered. This unacceptable lack of transparency is incompatible with our right to participate in decision making affecting our lives, and our right to free, prior, and informed consent. It also contradicts the principles of the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy.

We also object to the fact that we are only allowed to speak on issues affecting us after the Committee has adopted its decisions. After the last session of the General Assembly, we thought that this disrespectful practice was a thing of the past. The GA adopted a Declaration of principles to promote international solidarity and cooperation to preserve World Heritage, which states that the Committee commits to, I quote, "encourage interventions from observers, including indigenous peoples' representatives, in items concerning such groups before decisions are made by the Committee." The declaration emphasizes our collective responsibility to uphold the integrity and credibility of the Convention, and to conduct ourselves according to the highest ethical standards of professionalism, equity, and transparency, guided by the core principles of integrity, objectivity, impartiality, and respect for cultural diversity.

We consider that the Committee routinely violates these principles, and we call on the Committee to align the Rules of Procedure and Operational Guidelines with the principles espoused by the General Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

10E. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING IN THE OTHER REGIONS // RAPPORT D'AVANCEMENT SUR LE TROISIÈME CYCLE DES RAPPORTS PÉRIODIQUES POUR LES AUTRES RÉGIONS

The Chairperson:

So now, dear colleagues, we will proceed to our Agenda Item 10E on the Progress report on the preparation of the Third cycle of Periodic Reporting over the past two years, which is contained in Document 45.COM/10E.

As you will remember, in line with Decision **18 EXT.COM 3** and Annex 2 of Document 18.EXTCOM/3, this Agenda item will be without debate.

Allow me, dear colleagues, to now give the floor to Ms. Berta again, Chief of the Europe and North America Unit of the World Heritage Centre, and to Mr. Valentino Etowar, of the Policy and Statutory Meetings Unit of the World Heritage Centre, to present to us this report.

You may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

[first speaker] Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Honourable members of the Committee,

The complete report on Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the other regions can be found in Document WHC/23/45.COM/10E.

The report presents the overall conduct of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, more specifically the overall activities conducted in preparation for the beginning of the exercise in the Europe and North America region. It also covers other activities carried out by the Secretariat in relation to the coordination and conduct of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting.

As reminder, the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting was launched by Decision **41 COM 10A**, in Krakow, in 2017, where the Committee decided to maintain the same order as for the previous cycles starting with Arab States, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and North America.

Europe and North America is now the last region to undergo this statutory process under Article 29 of the Convention. I would thus pass the floor to my colleague Berta de Sancristóbal, Head of the Europe and North America Unit to provide you a brief overview of progress in the exercise.

[second speaker] The World Heritage Centre initiated the Periodic Reporting Exercise in the region on 21 September 2022. National Focal Points for the implementation of the Convention and World Heritage site managers in the region were invited to complete Section I and Section II of the Periodic Reporting questionnaires, covering the implementation of the Convention at the national and property levels respectively by 31 July 2023.

Subsequently, a kick-off meeting with the national focal points was organized online on 20 and 21 October 2022. This was an opportunity to take stock of the lessons learned from the Second Cycle and share experience related to the Third Cycle from those regions that have already completed the reporting phase, Africa in particular. Key information was shared with just over 80 Representatives of States Parties from the region on the overall objectives of the Periodic Reporting exercise, as well as on key dates of the Third Cycle. Participants were also introduced to the new features and themes in the questionnaires to be completed by States Parties. The meeting included contributions from the three Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee (ICOMOS, ICCROM, and IUCN) as well, who had the opportunity to present the set of tools and resources developed jointly with UNESCO over the last few years, which States Parties can rely on during the Periodic Reporting exercise and beyond.

States Parties from Europe and North America were able to leverage the experience of their predecessors and benefit from the valuable participation of two national focal points to the World Heritage Convention from Senegal and South Africa. Through the sharing of an overview of the challenges encountered and lessons learned during the process, African focal points provided valuable insights that allow others to enhance their understanding of the exercise.

By the submission deadline of 31 July 2023, all States Parties in the region have submitted Section I of the questionnaire and only Section II of the questionnaires for five properties located in the same country have still not been received and, therefore, will not be considered in the analysis.

The exercise involved all the 51 States Parties in the region, which, at the time reporting comprised 548 World Heritage properties. While this represents a very substantial sample from which to conduct in-depth and valid analyses, care will need be taken to ensure that sub-regional realities are not diluted in conclusions or aspirations that are too general or abstract. It should be noted that reporting for two trans-regional properties had been completed and submitted during the Asia-Pacific reporting period since the States Parties designated as coordinator of the Periodic Reports for these two properties belong to that region, Asia Pacific.

The Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank the 51 countries in the region for their considerable efforts in compiling such a substantial amount of information, and to assure you that the Secretariat will do everything in its power, making the most of the modest resources at its disposal, to ensure that the report and the resulting Regional Action Plan are up to the task.

The Secretariat would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Ireland for its generous support, which will enable us to bring together all the focal points in the region at UNESCO Headquarters in December for a working meeting to define and agree on the Regional Action Plan. The final dates of this meeting will be communicated to you very shortly. It is also thanks to the support of the Governments of Ireland and Italy, through their annual contribution to the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, that the South-East Europe sub-region will be able to benefit from more dedicated support to help it structure its contribution to the Regional Action Plan based on a preliminary analysis of its Periodic Report questionnaires at a workshop to be held on 24 and 25 October in Kotor, Montenegro.

So, there are months of intense work ahead of us, and I should also flag that, contrary to the other regions, Europe and North America cannot rely on a Category 2 Centre to support this exercise, nor the Secretariat, nor the States Parties. A team of experts covering cultural and natural heritage, as well as a statistician, are already analysing the information compiled. They will also aim to ensure proper integration between this exercise and Reactive Monitoring as the two main monitoring mechanisms under the World Heritage Convention. The Secretariat hopes to be able to share a draft Regional Report and Action Plan ahead of the December meeting, so that it can serve as a working basis and then be revised to reflect the input gathered from the focal points. There will then be a short period of further consultation with the States Parties so that they can solicit inputs from the site managers and the two documents should be finalized between February and March next year for presentation to the upcoming 46th session of the World Heritage Committee.

I would like to remind you that for this Third Cycle, Europe and North America are embarking on a joint exercise that presents both opportunities for synergies but also challenges. This is in response to one of the recommendations of the report on Periodic Reporting reflection 2015-2017 and launch of the Third Cycle, which was presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 41st session in 2017, namely, the recommendation that Europe and North America region report in one year to avoid duplication of work and promote further regional cooperation.

The approach proposed by the Secretariat to achieve the joint Action Plan has been designed so that, taking into account the means at its disposal, real opportunities for consultation are created, enabling the final document to be experienced as a meaningful roadmap for both the national authorities and the site managers, with a sense of divided responsibility but equal commitment. Of course, the challenge is particularly great for some of the States Parties in the region with the largest number of World Heritage properties. The role of the national focal points will, therefore, be particularly key for this region, unlike others where the number of listed properties has enabled a more direct engagement with the site managers themselves.

To conclude, I would also like to mention that contrary to the planned practice of annual monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan drawn up during the Second Cycle, which proved to be of little avail, the Africa and Arab States regions have opted for a mid-term monitoring exercise, the results of which will be examined by the World Heritage Committee. If the Europe and North America region opted for a similar approach, this would lead to a mid-term monitoring exercise of the next Regional Action Plan in 2027, based on a six-year Action Plan 2024-2030.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for this presentation.

I will now invite you to examine and adopt Draft Decision **45 COM 10E** included in Document 10E, but before doing so I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 10E**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 10E** adopted. *[gavel]*

7. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES [closing of the item] // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL [clôture du point]

The Chairperson:

So now, dear colleagues, you recall that it was decided to examine the Draft Decisions **45 COM 7.1** and **45 COM 7.2**, contained in Document 45.COM/7 on the State of conservation of World Heritage properties, at the end of our debates on Items 7A, 7B and 8B.

This Agenda item was introduced on 12 September by the Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

Before we move to the examination of the two draft decisions, I would like to know whether there are any comments on these two items.

India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving India the floor again.

Mr. Chair,

This year was unprecedented, as the World Heritage Committee had to examine nearly 260 states of conservation reports, including 55 inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger. The state of conservation reporting is a useful tool, once the property is declared as World Heritage, to review not only the state of conservation but any management issue or challenge that may potentially impact the Outstanding Universal Value of a property. From time to time, such a reporting is important, as it leads to a concerted effort of the concerned State Party, the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, and the associated communities and stakeholders to safeguard their OUV.

Mr. Chair,

We reviewed the report provided by the World Heritage Centre, and appreciate the need to improve the perception related to the List of World Heritage in Danger and various recommendations given to achieve that. We have noted the principal causes affecting the properties, notably the development pressures, the illegal activities, tourism, climate change, mining, gas exploitation, exploration, etc. These are serious concerns that are raised from time to time for the World Heritage properties, no matter which part of the world they are located in.

India understands fully the impact of these threats to the World Heritage Properties, and welcomes the efforts of the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies to resolve them. However, we would also request them to be mindful of the legitimate concerns of the States Parties, who have the duty to provide better facilities or sustainable solutions to their citizens.

Surely, raising this vital issue here is not to indicate any compromise on the Outstanding Universal Value of a property, but it is to work out a solution in consultation with the State Party, or, if we may say so, a middle path that satisfies everyone and, most important, ensure there is no negative impact on the attributes and authenticity, integrity of a property. Many issues or threats as identified by the Advisory Bodies to a World Heritage property, if left unresolved for a long time, may lead to it being pushed to the List of World Heritage in Danger. We agree that it should not be considered as punitive measure, as it allows A State Party to address all negative impacts in a given timeframe. India, however, realizes that often States Parties are not given enough time to manage the reversal of these impacts or the threats, and recommendations are given in haste to push a property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This, we think, can be counterproductive. We believe in allowing sufficient time to a State Party to try and resolve these issues, seek, if necessary, the help of the Centre and the Advisory Body, and if still it remains unresolved or if the OUV is threatened, that we may then consider of enlisting a property in the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Last, Mr. Chair,

India would also like to highlight the concerns raised by several States Parties, including India, related to the third-party information that often misrepresents and misinforms, and unnecessarily leads to a seeking of a SOC report. We realize it is often an unnecessary strain on resources and time. We understand the Para 174 of the Operational Guidelines wherein the said information is forwarded to the State Party for information, but in reality, it is akin to seeking a SOC for the said property. We, therefore, request the World Heritage Centre to be more judicious in this regard.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And if there are no more comments, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 7.1**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Japan.

The amendment can be seen on the screen.

It starts with Para 6, there is a minor change. Instead of saying "of" the United Nations framework, it is "adopted under".

Then the next amendment is on Para 12. There is a new Para 12 proposed under the subhead "Enhancing dialogue among States Parties, Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre".

Para 12: "Recommends that the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies ensure the following steps regarding the monitoring of state of conservation of the inscribed properties:

- a) Whenever an expert mission takes place within the framework of the reactive monitoring process, the draft mission report will be shared prior to its publication with the concerned State Party to allow them to review the report and to propose corrections on any factual inaccuracies and comment on other critical issues and *slash* /or misunderstandings, and consultations will be held, if necessary, between the concerned State Party and the relevant Advisory Body or Bodies,
- b) Whenever an expert mission takes place within the framework of the reactive monitoring process and the inscription of the concerned property on the List of World Heritage in Danger is recommended in the mission report, consultations will be held between the concerned State Party and relevant Advisory Body/Bodies, and the State Party's view will be referred to in the mission report or in its annex in the event that the views of both Parties do not converge in the consultations,
- c) Whenever the inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger is proposed in a working document on state of conservation produced by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to be examined by the Committee, consultations will be held within the available deadlines prior to the distribution of the document, between the concerned State Party, relevant Advisory Body or Bodies and the World Heritage Centre, and the State Party's view will be referred to in the working document, such as in its annex in the event that the views of the concerned Parties do not converge;"

Additional Para [13]: "Recommends that the States Parties enhance dialogue among themselves regarding properties that are or may be proposed for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in particular, cases in which causes of the danger are transboundary;"

Additional Para 14: "Recommends that the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies continue to work on knowledge sharing of best practice cases in which the property was removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger, and also encourage them to enhance providing capacity-building for the States Parties who have properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger;"

Para 15: "Recommends that the budget of the Advisory Bodies be adjusted in proportion with the additional workload generated by the additional dialogue and consultations as well as for capacity-building for States Parties with properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger. "

End of amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, I invite you, dear colleagues, to examine the draft decision, paragraph by paragraph.

Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to thank Japan for this proposal to enhance dialogue between States Parties and the Advisory Bodies. I think we had a full explanation from the Delegation of Japan, and we had a discussion on this matter.

My Delegation would like to facilitate or simplify the wording.

If we go to the first paragraph, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines propose to, if I can amend, Mr. Chair, if we can remove "Enhancing dialogue", Paragraph [12] a), b) and c), and I would like to propose a paragraph simplifying all this process and to not enter into details how we can enhance the dialogue prior to send the report, prior to its publication. We would like to simplify the language. So, my proposal is to remove Paragraph 12 and replace it by one paragraph, if I can, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

So, if you allow me, maybe we can start adopting from Paragraphs 1 to 5, and then we come to the amendment for Paragraph 12.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Yes, to replace Paragraph 12 a), b), and c) by one paragraph saying: "Bearing in mind the dialogue exists between the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the States Parties *comma*, States Parties should be given the opportunity *comma*, within the available deadlines *comma*, to send factual corrections and explanations that would be attached to the mission report and referred to in the state of conservation report;".

This is my paragraph, Mr. Chair, and this will allow all the States Parties to receive the report, to send factual errors, and correction, and explanation. The purpose of this proposal is to attach all the explanations of the States Parties to the mission report, and also to refer in the state of conservation report, and then the States Parties members of the Committee and all States Parties could read the two sides of the story, if I can say.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, let's examine the draft decision from the beginning, paragraph by paragraph, and then once we come to Paragraph 12, then we can open the discussion again.

So, from Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 5, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. So, they are adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have an amendment. Do we agree with this proposed amendment? I see no objections. Paragraph 6 is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, we don't have any amendment. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. They are adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 12, we have two proposals.

Japan, you would like to follow up on Saint Vincent's comment?

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

First, I would like to hear the views from other Delegations.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Well, Chair, just looking at what's on the screen, I think, we have more sympathy for the original idea presented by the Ambassador of Japan, but we would like to hear from the Advisory Bodies what kind of additional burden that would bring on their system because, if that is the case and we believe that it will be, then I think we should make this conditional upon the additional resources that we can provide the Advisory Bodies.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to support the original proposal from Japan. We are also interested in hearing the views of the Advisory Bodies.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I will pass the floor to the Advisory Bodies to comment on this.

Maybe we start with IUCN.

IUCN:

So, thank you, Chair.

The text that has been introduced here, from Japan, was the text that, I think, initially came from the discussion in the Ad-hoc Working Group, and we did have some good opportunities to discuss together the proposals that have been made, and I also think the Secretariat in the earlier part of the debate clarified that. I think what we have here is a text that contains some elements that are codifying what is already the current practice and which don't necessarily have any particular budgetary implications, but they do ensure that it is clear for everybody how we work with mission reports and exchange on those.

Secondly, it improves slightly, I think, the way that there is currently dialogue, which currently is normally a notification from the World Heritage Centre to the States Parties on the state of conservation reports that include recommendations for the Danger List before they're published. But that often happens at very short notice and, normally, not with a dialogue directly with the Advisory Bodies, that I don't think has significant budgetary implications. And then, there are some additional expectations that it's hard to provide advice in terms of what they cost because it will depend each year on how many state of conservation reports we have, when the Committee is timetabled, because an early Committee makes these things very challenging, a later Committee gives us more opportunity to work but do imply an additional level of work over and above what is currently happening.

I think the general principle, which, I think, is reflected later in the draft decision as well, is that there's a shared intent to implement this dialogue. We're all in favour of this. And I think the clarity that Japan is providing, they're all very clear and good suggestions that we would like to make work. And the constraints are always going to be just about how much time we have. That's the largest constraint, but also to what extent we have enough time, time in the day, enough staff on the ground to engage in all the dialogue that will be necessary. I think that sort of conditionality, just on the amount of time and the amount of budget always needs to be recognized.

ICOMOS might like to add, and I do think these are matters that also imply the Secretariat in the same process. So, it's not only constraints for the Advisory Bodies but for the whole way in which we interact. I guess I'll just close by saying we were very pleased and comfortable that there was a good level of dialogue around the text that Japan introduced before it was introduced. And I think we share very much the intent that is behind the text that's been introduced in this decision.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. ICOMOS.

ICOMOS :

Merci, M. le Président.

L'ICOMOS relève également le souhait qui a été exprimé par des membres du Comité de pouvoir renforcer le dialogue avec les États parties concernés autour de la mise en œuvre du suivi, qui est, de notre point de vue, essentiel, non seulement pour effectivement relever le travail autour des rapports de mission, mais aussi de la mise en œuvre des recommandations du Comité.

Comme cela a déjà été indiqué par l'IUCN, nous avons des impératifs de calendrier, auxquels nous essayons au mieux de souscrire, mais également de ressources, de ressources humaines et financières, qui sont effectivement essentielles pour mettre en œuvre ce renforcement du dialogue avec les États parties concernés.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Since also this one concerns States Parties and Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre, maybe I will also pass the floor to the Secretariat to explain their point of view on this.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

I think, in addition to what the IUCN and ICOMOS have said, and we do concur with their comments, I want to add that, of course, the Committee should clearly be reminded that Reactive Monitoring mission report is requested to the expert by the Committee, for the Committee. I think if the dialogue has to take place, as it has been said, it is, of course, knowing that the reports are requested by the Committee, for the Committee.

What also I wanted to add, which of course we have already discussed with the Distinguished Ambassador of Japan, is that, of course, you know that there is a need to make a clear distinction between the understanding that we have on factual inaccuracies, comments on critical issues and sometimes misunderstanding. And it is, of course, in this spirit that the dialogue, that we have started doing already, is taking place. I think what the suggestion that Japan is bringing is also to see how issues related to misunderstanding or even comments and others could be addressed once a report takes place, it could also be addressed, and you had already some discussion on it, through probably, for example, it could be a letter, it could be an official letter to the World Heritage Centre that could, after that, be made public, as the report is being published.

One last comment which I would like to make regarding this proposal is that, as you all know, in this dialogue, the World Heritage Centre is being solicited to facilitate, to organize, to be involved. So, I think, in this amendment, if the amendment is to be considered, it will be, of course, important that, of course, the need to include the World Heritage Centre in this dialogue, in the last sentence of the paragraph, be also considered so that the World Heritage Centre now can also play, as you wish, its role, and for the moment in this amendment, the World Heritage Centre is not reflected.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I would like to hear from the floor if there are any comments regarding this.

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Having heard the clarifications by the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat, we would like to join us with the proposal by Japan. And while the Centre is mentioned in the title, it seems logical to also do mention them in the amendment itself in the paras where appropriate.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Zambia would like to also join the rest in agreeing with that proposal.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the Advisory Bodies for the explanations and the Director of the World Heritage.

The purpose of this proposal was to simplify the idea, but now, if most of the members of the Committee agree on the proposal of Japan, we can withdraw our proposal.

My fear was also the budgetary constraints, and I heard that maybe it will not be very expensive to have this dialogue, but I am sure that it will cost a lot of time and I am sure that many, many States Parties will seek this dialogue.

So, I would like to know just from the Director of the Centre, if there is any budget dedicated to this dialogue and what are the financial implications?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for giving me this floor.

My question was also posed by the Distinguished Delegate of Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

Because we have a Para 15, proposed by the Distinguished Delegate of Japan, which states, if I am not mistaken, that "the budget should be adjusted". So, it supposes that would be a budget implication of these decisions. We would like to have a clarification about this, and also about the deadlines: In what deadlines this process will be developed? In what deadlines the State Party has right to reply? And how it will be technically organized?

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

After the clarification provided by the Advisory Bodies, we support the amendments proposed by Japan since we understand that they do not imply further financial burdens to the whole procedure, facilitating the dialogue between States Parties and Advisory Bodies and giving the opportunity to the States Parties to simultaneously make known their views.

Finally, we would like to make sure that this new procedure does not provoke delays, and thus sufficient human resources are available in order to be implemented.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Actually, the idea is excellent, important, but listening to the discussion, I'm a bit worried that the implication of the budget as well as, now we just heard from Greece, about delaying the process. Therefore, the idea is important, it is needed during the discussion. Also, we raised this, that the dialogue between the Member States and the Advisory Body is important, which is also happening, but we want to emphasize the idea.

So, I don't know if we need to simplify or we keep the wording, but we do need also to hear about the budget constraint and the process itself.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

After hearing the explanations by the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre, we would like also to support the proposal of Japan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I'll pass the floor to Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you Chair.

Very briefly, three points:

- The first one regarding the budget implications, I think we are more inclined with the Japanese proposal. We do understand where Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines comes from, but I think we have to take into

consideration that some costs are hidden costs. If we have a bad report, it will lead us to have a longer discussion, it will lead us to a situation in which we would be all paying and bearing costs;

- The second thing is about the accuracy of the reporting. I think what Japan is proposing would help in having more accurate report;
- And finally, the third one is on the fact that it enhances the confidence building and the mechanism between the States Parties and the Advisory Bodies.

So, we would back the Japanese proposal.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I will pass the floor now to the Secretariat to respond to the comments and questions addressed.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

On the different questions raised by the Distinguished Delegate of Saint Vincent, but also, I think, it was also a question from the Russian Federation Delegate and other Delegates, I want to say something which I said when we had the debate.

The dialogue, as it has been said, is already taking place. What we stressed was that if we want this dialogue to be even more effective, there are a number of issues, also a number of aspects that States Parties need to take into consideration. If you remember, I shared with you the information that on 1 February of each year, when we have the deadline to submit the report in order to start this dialogue, only 50% of reports are submitted, which in fact is already a challenge for the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies to be in a position to have a fruitful dialogue, probably in the way you have. So, this is also important for the States Parties to respect some of these deadlines. And we, of course, are committed to continue this dialogue.

Now, on the issue of the costing, you will note that when you will examine the budget, we have requested the Committee to approve the budget of the capacity-building because when you speak about the dialogue, you also speak about not only the dialogue in the sense of a dialogue, but also in the sense of capacitating, because this dialogue is also a process of capacity-building, which is happening while your experts and the experts of ICOMOS and IUCN and ICCROM and the World Heritage Centre are trying to work together. So, this line of capacity-building, we have increased it by 3.5, more or less. It used to be 50,000 on this line, so we are increasing it to more than 170,000. And so, this is already a first attempt for us to consider and work on this dialogue.

But of course, in terms of timing, if all conditions are met in advance, like having all the reports in advance, I think this will facilitate and make it probably more efficient in the way this amendment is expecting this dialogue to be as satisfactory as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I'll also pass the floor to the ADG for Culture.

Le Sous-Directeur général pour la Culture :

Très brièvement, c'est seulement pour appuyer les mots du Directeur du patrimoine mondial.

D'abord, réaffirmer que le dialogue existe, et depuis quelques années, il existe de plus en plus, sur la base aussi d'expériences par rapport à d'autres instruments normatifs où le dialogue est déjà mis en place.

La deuxième chose qui a été dite, c'est effectivement là, on a eu une situation, les deux derniers Comités, ça a été exceptionnel parce qu'ils étaient *extended*. Cela veut dire plus de 280 ou 268 SOC, ce qui fait une charge au travail des *Advisory Bodies* sans doute, mais aussi du Secrétariat, puisque ce n'est pas qu'on a bouclé l'année 2022, on les a laissés stockés dans un garage, et on est allé à 2023. Non, ce n'est pas comme ça. C'est-à-dire, on a dû revoir toutes les décisions parce qu'il y a des choses qui se sont déroulées sur vos sites, qu'on a dû bien sûr revoir, ainsi que les *Advisory Bodies*.

Par rapport au financement, le financement, ce n'est pas que les *Advisory Bodies* doivent engager trois ou quatre personnes de plus, ce sont les mêmes personnes qui sont en charge de faire, qui doivent travailler des heures supplémentaires pour pouvoir avoir ce dialogue. Ce n'est pas des déplacements, donc ne parlons pas de voyage, non, on parle d'heures de travail sur les réunions que vous avez en ligne que nous faisons déjà.

Troisièmement, donc, au niveau du budget, ça n'a pas augmenté exponentiellement, et on a un mécanisme qui, tel qu'il a été décrit, pourrait le financer. Par contre, effectivement, quand vous nous demandez, je crois que c'est la

Fédération de Russie, les dates butoirs, d'abord, il faudrait quand même être à temps pour qu'on puisse faire le travail, et 50 % de tous les SOC que nous avons reçus qui sont donnés après la date, c'est un problème, je dois le dire. Ça devient un problème parce que, je vous le dis comme ça, moi et mon équipe, on doit revoir tous les SOC. Donc après que ça passe par tout ça, ça vient à moi, et il y a des jours, on a revu 80 SOC en une soirée. Donc, il faut que vous compreniez que c'est une charge de travail très grande. Donc, vous dire qu'on va faire le dialogue entre le mois d'avril, juin, ça va dépendre des différents dossiers et comment les SOC évoluent. Donc, je vous dirais qu'il faut avoir une certaine flexibilité, voir sur l'expérience déjà mise en œuvre, et qu'il est nécessaire d'établir un mécanisme de date structurelle, on peut le faire, mais l'expérience nous a démontré que ce n'est pas comme ça que ça marche. C'est-à-dire, c'est quand vraiment il y a un intérêt réel de certains États parties de prendre contact pour essayer de comprendre ce qui ne va pas dans une évaluation ou dans la révision de cela, c'est quand nous entrons en contact, soit parce que vous en avez besoin..., non, "soit" non, toujours parce que vous, vous avez besoin. Là, je crois que l'exercice, et quand je vois l'amendement, c'est que ce dialogue soit des deux côtés, c'est à dire quand les *Advisory Bodies* et le Secrétariat trouvent qu'il y a quelque chose qui peut être amélioré dans la présentation ou un manque de documents, ceci se fasse d'une manière presque naturelle pour que, et là je remercie le Délégué de l'Égypte, mon cher Wael, parce que je crois que ça éviterait beaucoup, non pas de discussions, parce que les discussions sont très bonnes, mais de contradictions, de mauvaises interprétations ou de cette sensation que, finalement, on n'est pas d'accord avec le travail fait, soit par la décision que vous prenez, soit par les *Advisory Bodies*. Donc, je crois que ça pourrait aider beaucoup la crédibilité de la Convention.

Voilà, merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

We have spoken to the Secretariat on many occasions and also with the Advisory Bodies, maybe, I should look at this issue from a Delegate perspective.

For example, one day, we are waiting for the SOC report, and we don't know what's actually written there. And then, when that come out, on the day of publication it has happened, or a little bit before that, and we have about, this is a hypothetical case, I'm not saying that this happened to us, but this is just two weeks, and then we know there is a suggestion for In Danger Listing. Then, what happens is the Government in the capital is absolutely angry, and they instruct the diplomats, not the experts, to reverse this. And we have to work a lot and we have to do some, you know, ^[inaudible] in the capital. Also, the ambassadors here have to bring the papers. No, no, no, this is not true, what we are saying is this, you know, we have to fight hard. And in that process, it's not really the experts. It is actually the diplomats who are instructed to do it. And then, as we have seen in the discussions of SOC reports, there are many cases in which diplomatic efforts pay off and the decisions are amended. This is what it is. We heard earlier from many of the Observers, we need to keep the process of preliminary examination for inscription. There is a system there, but in case of SOC report we don't have that system. The point that I want to stress is if we want to have expert discussions, I think we have to do it before the political attention is drawn in the capitals. Once it is drawn, it's not necessarily the work of experts any more, diplomats come in to reverse what was written there. This has happened, and that will be a damage to the credibility of this Convention. So therefore, this prior dialogue before the publication is a way to help and to conserve the integrity of this Convention.

That's the way we see it because I know many of the Ambassadors were running around to amend what has been proposed. This is not necessarily a very healthy situation. So, at least their points have to be reflected on there. At the same time, prior consultation could solve this problem earlier, involving the experts, not necessarily the diplomats.

Well, I don't want to discredit my own qualifications, but nonetheless, that's the point that I wanted to make.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

So, we'll go back to Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines if they have any comments after this discussion.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

No, no, I don't have comment. I listened very carefully to the comments of ADG and the Ambassador of Japan. But the purpose was also to delete Paragraph 14 on the budget with my proposal, now, 15, sorry.

Now, we hope that we will not have a budgetary constraint, and I hope that the deadlines will be respected to have such dialogue. It's very important, and I hope that it will not be a lot of interference in the evaluations of the Advisory Bodies.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, it seems like everyone is in the favour of the proposal of Paragraph 12.

And if there are no objections... So, there are no objections, then the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 13, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 14, we have a proposal. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 15, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal?

The Rapporteur:

Mr. Chair,

If I may intervene, to be consistent with Para 14 and as mentioned by the Secretariat, we can add: "the budget of the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies".

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do we all agree to this proposal? So, it seems there are no objections, and then the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

So, dear colleagues, let me invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

And if there are no comments or objections, I, therefore, declare the Draft Decision **45 COM 7.1** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

With respect to Draft Decision **45 COM 7.2**, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments to the draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment from the Distinguished Delegation of Russian Federation.

The proposed amendment starts from Para 10. There is addition of "the World Heritage Centre" Para 10: "Welcomes the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies' continued actions in responding to emergencies and conflicts threatening cultural and natural heritage,". Rest of the para is deleted.

Para 11, there is an addition of the words "World Heritage Fund, HEF and RRF" in the last line.

Para 21, there is addition, after "the state of conservation" to add "the nomination process and the preparation and updating of management plans for World Heritage properties".

And Para 35, it's a new para: "Bearing in mind that specific and significant spiritual meanings are mentioned to justify the Outstanding Universal Value of a large number of World Heritage properties to be found in most countries around the world, also recalling a number of research studies and analyses of religious heritage and sacred sites carried out by the Advisory Bodies,".

36 is a new para: "Underlining that living religious and sacred sites require specific attitude and policies for protection and management that take into account their distinct spiritual nature, crucial to their Outstanding Universal Value, as a key factor in their conservation and that such policies cannot be sustainable without in-depth consultation with the appropriate stakeholders,".

And the last revised para is Para 41: "Requests the World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, to enhance activities in the framework of the Initiative on Heritage of Religious Interest and to resume elaboration of the thematic paper proposing to the States Parties general guidance regarding the management of their cultural and natural heritage of religious interest, and in compliance with the national specificities, and invites the States Parties to provide voluntary contributions to this end;".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to invite you, dear colleagues, to examine the draft decision, paragraph by paragraph.

So, dear colleagues, from Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 9, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to adopt the paragraphs as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 10, we have a proposal, so I would like also to hear from the Secretariat about this proposal.

Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Maybe it would be also interesting to hear from Russian Federation about this proposal. So, if I may.

The Chairperson:

Yes, please.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. *Shukran, Said Al-Rais.*

So, our amendments to Paragraph 10 and 11 of the documents are technical, and I intended to bring the draft decision in line with the legal framework of the Convention, the mandate of the Committee, and the agreed language of similar decisions that the Committee has endorsed at previous sessions.

This is the standard wording that has been used in Committee documents, for example, during the 45th extended session and before. We would like to emphasize that we certainly welcome the work of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies in responding to emergencies and conflicts threatening cultural and natural World Heritage. This is a noble mission of one of the tasks of our Committee. The comprehensive report, prepared by the World Heritage Centre on this subject, provides us, as far as we understand, exhaustive information on where and how this work is being carried out.

At the same time, we see no need to expand this paragraph further and to list separately programmes and initiatives that go beyond the scope of the Convention and are not directly related to the World Heritage properties. We believe such references create a misleading impression that the Committee prioritizes some countries over others.

Once again, I would like to draw attention to the fact that this is a technical and procedural issue for us. We believe that the Committee cannot comment on the substance of the documents or initiatives or programmes that the contents is unknown to us.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments on this amendment?

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

I don't want to make a lengthy debate on this one, but we know that the items listed there, Mosul, LiBeirut, and Ukraine, those are the major activities in terms of the emergency assistance. And there is no implication of anything beyond what it is. It all says those are the major programmes, that their names are there. But in this particular case, there is no reference to anything else. And for that reason, I don't think we need to delete those things. They are the major programs.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

With regards to Paragraph 10, we also have a preference for the original draft.

We believe it would be too reductive to focus only on the activities carried out by the World Heritage Centre instead of the whole UNESCO. We think it would be very important for the Committee to commend the whole set of activities carried out by UNESCO in this field. Therefore, we are in favour of the original draft, and we would like to stress that the initiatives and programmes mentioned in the original wording are of great significance and touching upon different regional areas.

Should the members of the Committee believe that the list of initiatives mentioned in the original draft is not sufficiently exhaustive or gives priority to some regions and countries over others, we welcome, of course, any proposal to mention, here in this paragraph, also other programmes and initiatives carried out in the field of the protection of heritage in emergencies.

Mr. Chair,

Let me also stress that we share the Director-General's view expressed in several occasions that the protection of heritage in emergencies should be a priority for the Organization, and we remain fully committed to support all UNESCO actions in this field.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also concur with what was already mentioned by Japan and Italy, and we firmly believe that this extremely important UNESCO activities should be retained in this paragraph.

Therefore, we fully support the initial wording of Para 10 without this amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Belgium would like to echo the remarks made by our Esteemed colleagues from Japan, Italy, and Greece.

Belgium thinks that there is nothing wrong with mentioning these actions, activities of the international Organization this Committee belongs to, and which have undoubtedly had a positive effect on cultural and natural heritage in the countries mentioned.

So, we would also like to keep the text as was proposed.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We also concur that it is important for the Committee to commend major initiatives in this crucial field, and we align ourselves with Japan, Italy, Greece, and Belgium in keeping the original text.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

If there is no intervention, maybe, I can answer my colleagues and also ask some questions from World Heritage Centre.

Just, dear colleagues, please let me remind you that we are not on the UNESCO fora. We are within the World Heritage Committee, which is dealing with the World Heritage Convention, so I don't see any reasons why the programme LiBeirut Initiative should be mentioned in this document, for instance.

My other question goes to the Secretariat. We are mentioned in UNESCO Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine. And what place we could find this document? Because we carefully studied all the documents presented to the attention of the Committee on the webpage of the session and during all the dispatch, we didn't find this document. So, I basically don't know what is in this Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine. How can I welcome it or not welcome? This is not the question of welcoming and not welcoming. We would just like to know what is it?

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'll pass the floor to the Secretariat to respond to some of the questions.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In order to reply to the question posed by the Distinguished Delegate of the Russian Federation, I would like to start by saying that this draft decision is about issues related to an emergency situation as you have said, because it is all emergency situation resulting from conflict and, as you know, this is an aspect which, even in the past Committee decisions, you have requested to pay more attention in order to protect all the sites that are threatened by such challenges.

We have a strategy which was adopted already in 2015, which is a strategy to deal with some of these issues. And since then, the work of the Committee has been regularly informed, because it's also true, the results of this, that a lot of lesson learned can continue to be used. And even if you recall in Item 7A, you have adopted a number of decisions where these action plans and others are also taken into consideration because we have reported to you on this.

We are using the Heritage Emergency Fund. You know that the Heritage Emergency Fund is an important fund that complements the work of the Committee for sites that are threatened by an armed conflict and others, even disaster, because this is the only fund that can be activated a few days immediately after something happened in order to save the sites which might collapse or disappear. That's the reason why, for example, the State Party of Qatar and other States Parties who are members of this Committee have been contributing to this fund.

So, it is absolutely important for us to report to this Committee on these activities, to report on the lessons learned and all the experience that we are having only on Mosul, on LiBeirut. In the working document, we have given you all the information related to it. If you go back to the document, in Paragraph 49 of the working document. So, I think this is what we have been doing, we have given you all the reports on the Revive the Spirit of Mosul, on the LiBeirut because it is important, but also on the Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I thank you very much, Distinguished Director of the World Heritage Centre.

If I am not mistaken, I didn't hear very well the answer, in what document we can find Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine. We can find the reference to this document in Para 49 of the report of the Secretariat, but we don't know the content of the document, and the document is not attached to the documents of the Committee. The same thing for LiBeirut and Revive the Spirit of Mosul. This is very beautiful initiatives, but they have nothing to do with the World Heritage and World Heritage Convention and World Heritage Committee.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

[first speaker] *Salaam Aleykum.*

We'd like to have a comment here to add...

[second speaker] Thank you, Your Excellency.

In Article 10, when we come to the continued emergencies, conflicts threatening the cultural and natural heritage, we would like to add the OUV into the... Yes, we would like to add the Outstanding Universal Value or OUV into the equation, because we think that such wording will add unjustifiable costs to the expenditures of the World Heritage in responding to any emergencies.

So sometimes, site is affected but the OUV is not. So, will the World Heritage Centre respond only to the site without the OUV or the OUV without the site? And I believe that the Outstanding Universal Value is what stands and requires us to intervene.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I'll pass the floor to the Secretariat to respond to the question addressed by the Russian Federation.

Le Sous-Directeur général pour la Culture :

Merci, M. le Président.

J'essaie de comprendre un peu le rationnel de ce qui est proposé par la chère Délégation de la Fédération de Russie, dans le sens où si on revoit toutes les décisions prises par le Conseil exécutif, la Conférence générale, depuis des années, demandent un travail intersectoriel, demandent un travail intra-entité de la culture.

Nous parlons d'un des sujets qui, pour le patrimoine et la culture en général, aujourd'hui est un des grands piliers, je dirais, ou même de l'action de ces dernières années où l'UNESCO fait une différence, qui est les sujets face aux désastres, face aux conflits. Et dire que le Comité du patrimoine mondial n'a rien à voir sur ça, je suis surpris. Je vous rappelle que, quand même, le patrimoine mondial, quand il a été créé, et vous pouvez revoir les premières pages, les premiers articles du patrimoine mondial, et je reconnais qu'il y a ce concept de *Outstanding Universal Value* qui a été travaillé après, part de la protection du patrimoine mondial. Rappelez-vous qu'il n'y avait pas de liste, on ne parlait pas de la protection du patrimoine mondial sur les listes. De même, la première liste n'est pas la Liste du patrimoine, c'est la Liste en danger. Et pour pouvoir créer une Liste en danger, on devait créer une liste Et c'est la Liste en danger qui est née de l'esprit des gens qui vous ont précédé pour pouvoir créer cette Convention et ces instruments.

Donc, qu'un État partie qui fait partie du Comité mais qui fait partie de l'UNESCO, parce que ce Comité, ce n'est pas un OVNI, c'est un des instruments que nous avons dans le secteur de la culture pour remplir notre mandat, me dise qu'elle ne connaît pas ce qu'on fait à LiBeirut, qu'on ne sait pas ce qu'on fait l'Esprit de Mossoul ou l'*Action Plan* de la culture pour l'Ukraine depuis un an me surprend. Parce que ce n'est pas seulement les différentes réunions d'information qu'on a déjà eues, que nous parlons dans plusieurs conventions, dont l'État partie fait partie, peut-être pas des comités mais en tant qu'États parties à ces conventions, cela me surprend, mais je peux comprendre quel est votre doute.

Moi, je crois qu'il est nécessaire de prendre le sujet du patrimoine et de la culture dans le mandat de l'UNESCO avec un regard solidaire, généreux et ouvert. Si vous voulez continuer à travailler en silo, je crois qu'on ne va pas y arriver aux objectifs que nous nous sommes tracés, tous, les, aujourd'hui, 194 ou les 195 États parties à cette Convention, pour regarder l'importance de ce qu'est la protection du patrimoine au niveau global. Et c'est cela qui est prétendu. Revoyez tous les textes. Quand on parle d'*emergencies*, dans toutes les conventions, même des conventions qui ne parlaient pas de cela il y a deux ans, aujourd'hui, c'est devenu le sujet principal. Dans la déclaration du G20 de Culture, où la Fédération de Russie a participé, j'y étais avec votre Délégation, on a parlé de ce sujet. Aux Nations Unies, à l'Assemblée, cette semaine, on va parler de la même chose. Donc vraiment, je ne vois pas comment on pourrait dire que le Comité du patrimoine mondial ou ses membres ne sont pas au courant des trois grands programmes phares que nous avons. Il va y en avoir d'autres. Aujourd'hui, on est en train de préparer l'Action pour la Libye. Donc, peut être que l'année prochaine, il faudra mettre aussi l'*Action Plan* pour la Libye ou si le Maroc le demande ainsi. Mais je ne vois pas vraiment que cela puisse provoquer un débat sur des projets que nous faisons en tant qu'UNESCO et où les *Advisory Bodies* nous aident à travailler aussi, ce qui montre l'importance des *Advisory Bodies*, au-delà même de ce Comité du patrimoine mondial et de cette Convention et l'apport que, eux, ils nous contribuent avec ICCROM, IUCN et ICOMOS, pour l'action et le mandat que nous avons. Et c'est ça qui est important, je crois, dans la proposition de la décision, mais il vous appartient d'en débattre et d'en décider.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Russian Federation.

La Délégation de la Fédération de Russie :

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

Et je remercie chaleureusement M. le Directeur adjoint, qui nous a bien présenté tout cet éventail des possibilités et qui a bien confirmé, je crois, la proposition de la Fédération de Russie, en nous rappelant bien qu'il y a beaucoup de fora qui s'occupent des questions générales de la protection de la culture dans les situations d'urgence, mais qui nous a rappelé également que nous assistons à la réunion statutaire de la Convention de 1972 et qu'on parle non seulement des questions générales de la protection de la culture et de l'héritage, mais du patrimoine mondial. Et encore une fois, on est bien au courant de l'existence des initiatives qui sont citées dans ce paragraphe, mais par contre, on n'a toujours pas trouvé le document qui est mentionné en dernier, la dernière ligne. J'imagine que ça existe au sein du Secrétariat, mais on a eu hier un grand débat sur les documents que prépare le Comité et les documents que prépare le Secrétariat. Donc, on ne veut pas intervenir dans les documents qui sont préparés par le Secrétariat qui, apparemment représente l'*Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine*. Comme ce n'est pas un document public, ce n'est pas un document qui a été adopté par les États membres, ni qui n'a pas été adopté par le Comité, je considère que ce serait un peu bizarre de le mettre dans le projet de la décision.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'll pass the floor to the Secretariat to respond to some of the questions.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Juste pour rajouter à l'explication que M. l'ADG vous a communiqué.

Dans cette réflexion globale sur l'état de conservation des sites du patrimoine mondial, vous avez toujours noté que nous vous présentons un éventail de questions très importantes qui sont à la fois du domaine du patrimoine culturel et du domaine du patrimoine naturel. Et un peu plus bas dans le document que vous avez vu, nous vous invitons aussi sur les questions liées, par exemple, au *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*. Évidemment, vous allez nous poser la question, vous ne l'avez pas vu et qu'il faudrait qu'on vous le mette ici avec le lien parce que vous ne l'avez pas vu. Mais tout le monde connaît ce travail-là. Ici, les questions que nous nous mettons en avant sont le travail de l'Organisation qui apporte un aspect très important dans la manière dont le Comité travaille pour préserver ces sites du patrimoine mondial qui sont menacés, par exemple, en temps de conflit. Et pourquoi, c'est très important de partager ces expériences avec tous les membres du Comité, mais aussi avec tous les autres pays qui sont confrontés à ces situations, comme par exemple, au Mali et en Irak et d'autres.

Donc ces expériences sont très importantes. Et nous, au niveau du Secrétariat, nous sommes convaincus que nous devons mettre ces expériences à l'attention du Comité pour que le Comité les considère comme effectivement très importantes. Il ne s'agit pas simplement d'une question qui ne concerne que le patrimoine mondial. Vous nous encouragez depuis plusieurs années à des synergies pour que tout le travail de l'Organisation soit aussi pris en compte. Et c'est bien dans ce cadre-là que ce projet de décision fait référence à l'Esprit de Mossoul, à l'initiative LiBeirut, mais aussi pas simplement au *World Heritage Emergency Fund*, mais aussi au *Rapid Response Facility*, parce que nous avons besoin de ces fonds pour pouvoir continuer à faire notre travail pour sauver les sites du patrimoine mondial. Et c'est très important que vous sachiez que ces fonds sont très utiles et très importants pour la culture et aussi pour la nature, et aussi pour ce plan d'action sur l'Ukraine, qui est absolument important.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

La Délégation de la Fédération de Russie :

Merci beaucoup M. le Président.

J'aimerais vraiment pas prendre beaucoup de temps, mais est-ce qu'on peut voir le document *Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine* ?

The Chairperson:

Mr. Director.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Je pense que vous êtes en train d'examiner un projet de décision. Le Secrétariat vous a donné, à tous les membres du Comité, toutes les clarifications nécessaires. Vous êtes en train de nous demander de vous donner... Est-ce que cela veut dire que vous êtes en train de dire qu'il faut vous donner ce document à vous ou à tous les membres du Comité ? Vous pouvez également demander que ce document effectivement dans un projet de décision, si ce n'est que celui-là qui pose un problème et pas les autres questions, vous pouvez rajouter, si vous voulez, un amendement pour demander que le Secrétariat à l'avenir vous communique ce document-là.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Russian Federation.

La Délégation de la Fédération de Russie :

J'ai pas très bien compris. Peut-être comme c'est une langue étrangère.

Donc là, on va accueillir favorablement le document que, apparemment, tout le monde connaît sauf un seul membre du Comité. Ou les autres sont aussi au courant de ce document ? Est-ce que c'est un document interne du Secrétariat ou est-ce que c'est un document qui a été adopté par les États membres ?

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Maybe what we are discussing here is not a document, it is a set of actions carried out by UNESCO in Ukraine, which are clearly summarized in the document related to Item 7. So, if it is clearer and it does not create any misunderstanding, maybe we should change the wording and make reference to "UNESCO's actions in protection of the heritage in Ukraine" or something like that. I don't know, we can work on the wording without making reference to an action plan that we don't have in front of us.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Russia, are you in favour of this?

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

So, as far as I understand, the Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine is not in the Agenda. So, we will never get the information about it. Okay, this is one point.

Other point, I understand the amendment proposed by Distinguished Delegate from Italy. I would like that it would be reflected on the screen. I think it would be very useful.

I would like also to support the amendment by made by Saudi Arabia, including the Outstanding Universal Value, which reflects the scope of the Convention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

And... Sorry.

The Chairperson:

Go ahead.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

And I also would like to add to the actions proposed by Distinguished Delegate from Italy, "actions..."

The Rapporteur:

In the last line, it's "UNESCO actions for Ukraine".

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

"UNESCO actions for Ukraine World Heritage sites". And also add, maybe it would be better: "World Heritage Sites", "UNESCO actions for World Heritage Sites in Ukraine, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Libya, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic." Sorry, and we will also add: "Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger".

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

I might ask the Rapporteur to assist us to revise the sentence or make it readable.

The Rapporteur:

"UNESCO actions for World Heritage sites in Ukraine, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Libya, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger;"

The Chairperson:

But it's not linked with the previous sentence. So, if we start from the beginning of the sentence.

The Rapporteur:

"The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies continued actions in responding to emergencies and conflicts threatening cultural and natural heritage, including the Outstanding Universal Value".

The Chairperson:

Then, we have a transition, we need to have a transition, here.

The Rapporteur:

We can say: "and also UNESCO actions for World Heritage sites in Ukraine, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Libya, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger;"

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

We are okay with this.

The Chairperson:

ADG for Culture.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

The document, it is called *Les actions de l'UNESCO en Ukraine*, donc effectivement le nom correspond. Cependant, si vous voulez, je peux vous donner la liste des 88 pays qui ont déjà reçu le fonds du HEF pour faire les actions qu'on fait, qui, des fois, ne sont pas des actions mais des programmes. Donc je ne sais pas si vous pouvez appeler "actions". Pour l'Ukraine, c'est, et le document vous l'avez, on peut vous l'envoyer, il y a la page web, mais ça s'appelle *Les actions de l'UNESCO en Ukraine*. Les autres, ce sont des programmes que nous faisons de *emergencies*.

Le seul commentaire que je veux faire, et je ne veux pas continuer la discussion, je comprends très bien ce qui se passe maintenant, c'est que, dans tous leurs documents, généralement, on mentionne les résolutions des Nations Unies, du Conseil de sécurité. Dans ce document, un paragraphe où on parle du CITES, que je sache, ce n'est pas le Comité du patrimoine qui participe à cela, mais vous les citez. Et tout d'un coup, on ne peut pas citer des programmes phares qu'a l'UNESCO. C'est ça qui me surprend, c'est que vous revoyez le texte ; vous trouvez dans l'Article 8 : "CITES", que je sache, ce n'est pas nous. Vous mentionnez toutes les autres conventions, même des conventions où certains États parties ici présents ou membres du Comité ne font pas partie. Et là, il n'y a pas de problème. Vous mentionnez donc... Ce que je veux vous dire, c'est que on sait de quoi on parle. C'est vous qui décidez, vous avez le document, il s'appelle, effectivement, nous l'appelons dans l'interne *Action Plan for Culture*, mais il s'appelle différemment ; c'est correct, il n'y a pas de problème. Mais ce n'est pas exactement la même action qu'on fait dans les autres pays parce que là, il y a une chose structurée, pour le Soudan, c'est dans un site du

patrimoine ou dans un site qui est sur la Liste indicative. En Irak, vous savez très bien qu'on travaille dans quatre villes. L'autre, c'est un *Action Plan*. Comment vous pouvez l'appeler ? Des actions, pas seulement pour les sites du patrimoine en Ukraine, malheureusement, ce n'est pas réel. Vous savez très bien qu'on travaille sur plusieurs sites qui sont sur les Listes indicatives, qui sont aussi en péril. Voilà.

Mais c'est à vous de prendre vos décisions.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I might also pass the floor to the Secretariat again to confirm that they would like to list any additional names, but maybe we can, to be more inclusive and not neglect anyone, maybe you can say "including actions", "including actions for World Heritage sites including Ukraine, Sudan, Syria...". Maybe we can put it at the end, I don't know. Because we will have more...

Mr. Director.

Japan first.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you.

I'm not sure if that helps, but as Mr. ADG explained, there's a unique name, you know, "UNESCO Actions for World Heritage in Ukraine". "UNESCO Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine" is an independent name. So simply we say: "UNESCO Action Plan", "Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine and other emergency programmes". Or maybe you don't need other "and emergency programmes" in the countries mentioned there. Perhaps, at the very end, we might add "and other countries" after Niger, we might add "other countries". I don't stick to this, but this is one suggestion.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mr. Director.

Sorry, Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

From the explanation given by ADG, we understand that all these actions are not of the same name and doesn't fit in the same category.

In order to have a clear picture, maybe we could give some time to the Secretariat and come with a new version of the whole paragraph so that the different actions and their specific qualities could be well described in a new drafting of this para.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Mr. Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This is just to help the Committee members, maybe also take into account something which is important.

First of all, in this paragraph, there are also something which is important. I think this Committee should recognize the role of the Heritage Emergency Fund and the Rapid Response Facilities. I think, of course you have to take a decision, but I would like to really stress, and I mean, to recommend or to advise or to suggest that you really consider, because this fund is a very important fund, and we need it. We need it for World Heritage, we need it for all other types of sites. Let me just remind you again that although you are conducting this work on specific World Heritage sites, you are also doing it in the framework of the entire Convention. And I can remind you that Article 8 of the Convention, it's Paragraph 2, where you commit to identify and protect all sites in your territories, including those that you propose for inscription on the World Heritage. And this fund that we are having are very important.

The second point, a comment that I want to make, concerns that, of course, we are doing also action in Mali, and I think the Distinguished Delegate of Mali is here. UNESCO is conducting an important action in Mali with its partners,

and this is important. Central African Republic, we are also working in Central African Republic and as the ADG has said, a total of 88 countries, we have been working to support many World Heritage sites. Or do you want to list all of them? But I think you should not forget to recognize the work, the importance of the Heritage Emergency Fund and the Rapid Response Facility.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Maybe we can see the paragraph without track changes and also go back to Russia if they are okay with the new proposed text.

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

I understand earlier, the Director of the Centre emphasized the importance of having, yes, exactly there, the World Heritage Fund and also the Heritage Emergency Fund. Those things should be recognized. And for that reason, perhaps we can also help them. The Centre becomes a bit long, but nonetheless, we can have those two things in the reformulated text.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So now, Russia.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Just waiting to read the paragraph.

Maybe there is a like draft error: "and also UNESCO actions and emergency programmes including in Ukraine, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Libya, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger". As said the Director and I let the State Party to add, if they wish to be added, Mali and Central African Republic and other countries. And we are okay, certainly with the mentioning Heritage Emergency Fund and the Rapid Response Facilities.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much.

I was not going to intervene here, but since we are mentioning country, I would like to add Palestine, please.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to keep the previous sentence proposed by you: "UNESCO actions in Ukraine and emergency programmes in Sudan, Syria, etc."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Just to echo the remarks of our Esteemed colleagues from Greece, we also prefer the previous wording for this part of the paragraph, and I hate repeating myself, but we are welcoming actions of the international Organization we all belong to. We all contribute to the budget that financed the actions mentioned on the screen. And we also should keep in mind that what the Organization is doing in Ukraine, as mentioned on its website, explicitly in the face of war, I think these actions should stand out without, of course, diminishing the value of the actions taken in all the countries mentioned at the end of the paragraph. But the actions of UNESCO in Ukraine in the face of war should stand out.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Russian Federation.

La Délégation de la Fédération de Russie :

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

Bon, pour moi, c'était plus la rédaction qui pourrait démontrer que le Comité, il est neutre, *neutral* et impartial, et qu'on attache la même importance à tous les pays du monde qui souffrent des conflits et des situations en urgence. Mais si les collègues préfèrent en faire les préférences, on ne peut pas dire que c'est pas notre position, mais ça reste quand même les actions que l'UNESCO fait en Ukraine et en notre pays qui sont mentionnées.

Donc, on peut vivre avec cette rédaction en sachant, qu'à mon avis, ça donne un signal assez particulier pour tous les autres pays.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

I originally wanted to support Greece and Belgium, and with a new proposal from Russian Federation... Can I see it there? The "UNESCO actions in Ukraine and other countries", do we still need to name all those countries? It was just or "UNESCO actions in Ukraine and other countries". Is that what the Russian Federation is proposing?

The Chairperson:

Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much.

No, it is not that that was proposed by Russian Federation, but just to assure Distinguished Delegate from Japan.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Italy.

La Délégation de l'Italie :

Merci, M. le Président.

C'était juste une précision par rapport à ce qui a été dit par la Distinguée Déléguée de la Fédération de Russie. Peut-être que j'ai mal compris, mais j'avais eu l'impression que c'était M. l'ADG pour la culture qui avait spécifié que le mot correct par rapport à les initiatives de l'UNESCO en Ukraine, c'était « actions ». Par contre, dans les autres cas, c'étaient des « programmes ». Donc c'était juste ça. Bien sûr, ce n'est pas une question de privilégier des pays par rapport à d'autres. En tout cas, on ne peut pas rester bloqué sur ce débat, donc j'espère qu'on va prendre une décision.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I think we strike through, "and other countries and emergency programmes including Sudan, Syria, Yemen, etc.". So, with this updated version...

Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We fully agree with what was mentioned by the Esteemed Delegate of Italy.

After the explanation given by ADG, our understanding is that the correct title is "UNESCO actions" specifically in Ukraine, without diminishing the value and the importance of other emergency programmes and initiatives of our Organization in the countries mentioned and eventually other countries.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, with this updated text and version of the paragraph, can we live with it? Are we in agreement? So, I see no objections. Then the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

And Paragraph 11, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Paragraph 11 adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

And from Paragraph 12 to Paragraph 20, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 21, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text?

So, I will pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre for some clarifications.

Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre, you may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Maybe we could change, instead of "and", after "the nomination process", we can strike out and put "concerning". Just to clarify that it is with regard to. If this is the intention and not regarding the whole process. So just to be specific, would that be...?

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Secretariat:

If that's agreeable.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Let's double check with Mexico. Mexico, is that your intention?

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Apologies, Chair.

Could you, perhaps, repeat the question?

The Chairperson:

Deputy Director, you may elaborate more.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

I just wanted to see if..., to make the meaning of this clearer. If we understood the proposed amendment, whether it would be more specific to say: "the nomination process concerning the preparation and updating" rather than "and the preparation and updating".

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Does this reflect your amendment?

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Yes, we wholeheartedly agree, Chair.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, do we have any objections or comments? I see none.

Therefore, Paragraph 21 adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

From Paragraph 22 until Paragraph 34, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 35, we have a proposal. Do we agree with this proposed text? I see no objections. Paragraph 35 adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 36, we have a proposal. Do we agree with this proposed paragraph?

So, I'll pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre for some clarifications.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I just wanted to... It is just to... so that the paragraph is clearly understood by us. Because, as you know, this is about also making sure that the implementation is clear.

So, in this paragraph, the first sentence refers to "specific attitudes". So, I don't know what this..., we would like to have some clarification about what type of attitude. What do you mean by it? So that it's clear to everyone and we can probably implement it. Or are you referring to "approaches" or in terms of "policies"? But because for us "attitude" is not quite clear.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Director-General, for your valuable input.

Indeed, maybe it was a not a good wording that was proposed. So, we agree with the approach to replace "attitude" by "approach".

Thank you very much for your input.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, do we all agree with this proposed text? I see no objections. Paragraph 36 adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

From Paragraph 37 to Paragraph 40, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 41, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text?

I'll pass the floor to the ADG for Culture for some clarifications.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Yes, just a clarification.

At the moment, the Heritage of Religious Interest Programme isn't only carried out by the World Heritage Centre. The specialist who was working on this, now works in another part of our sector.

So, I recognize the importance of this initiative, but we need to reflect that we're still working on this with the specialist who's working in another part of the section. This would help clarify things.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Russian Federation, I would like to pass the floor to you.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I believe it's an internal matter of the Secretariat, but I don't know how could we help with it? Maybe, "World Heritage Centre in cooperation with other bodies of the UNESCO Secretariat or with the Advisory Bodies".

Will it be okay for the Director?

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

I believe that the World Heritage Centre is part of UNESCO. So, what you should put is UNESCO, because the UNESCO Secretariat is the one who has many divisions, but it's UNESCO Secretariat, in the Cultural Sector.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

As far as I understood, every request that Committee made, it made to the World Heritage Centre.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

No.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

In our documents, we cite "World Heritage Centre requests", "the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body" or "in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies". So, I believe it would be accurate to make "the World Heritage Centre", and then, World Heritage Centre can provide and seek for a help from other specialists or experts. But if you want to request "UNESCO", it would be very strange for the Committee documents, in my mind.

The Chairperson:

So, maybe, it would be "the Secretariat".

Russia, that's fine with you?

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

"Requests the Secretariat"?

The Chairperson:

So, what about now?

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

We're fine.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, there are no more comments or objections. Then Paragraph 41 is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

And from Paragraph 42 until 45, there are no amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Therefore, dear colleagues, I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

And if there are no comments or objections, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 7.2** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

We have a request from the floor.

Norway. You have the floor for two-minute statement, please.

The Observer Delegation of Norway:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The state of conservation matters are the very core of this Convention.

In our time, we are facing an unprecedented climate and environmental crisis. The shared heritage of humanity is under increasing pressure all over the world, in particular when it comes to striking the delicate balance between World Heritage and sustainable development. These challenges are increasingly complex, and their resolution depend on independent and transparent expert advice, and collaboration between Advisory Bodies, the World Heritage Centre, and the States Parties. World Heritage properties must be world-class examples of successful conservation practices and sustainable development, promoting a holistic approach to heritage conservation that embraces the indivisible connections between people, culture, and nature, and not least, recognizing the role that indigenous peoples and local communities have in protecting heritage as a vital underpinning of sustainable livelihoods.

Speaking of best conservation practices, we would like to highlight the No-go commitments, which recognize that the World Heritage Convention has consistently reaffirmed that extractive activities and dams with large reservoirs are incompatible with World Heritage status, which has been truly impactful to protect nature.

We wish to recognize and commend the States Parties not requesting the opening of their state of conservation reports for discussion. As we have noticed over several years that a number of decisions are weakened by compromising Outstanding Universal Value and challenging the No-go policy. Norway encourages us all, including the Committee, to think beyond the borders of the individual World Heritage property and always keep in mind this Convention's unique significance to protecting our shared natural and cultural heritage, and its contributions towards fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals and achieving the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, dear colleagues, we will listen to the...

Also, we have another request from the United Kingdom.

The Observer Delegation of the United Kingdom:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United Kingdom welcomes the inclusion of this adoption by Japan in relation to enhanced dialogue amongst States Parties, Advisory Bodies, and the World Heritage Centre. We have noted and are thankful for the increased dialogue with both the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre in recent years. We believe that open dialogue reduces factual inaccuracies or misunderstandings. The possibility to include the State Party's view in the state of conservation report would make for a more transparent process. Recognizing and respecting any difference of professional views between the Advisory Bodies and national experts will provide the Committee with more full information on which to base their decision. The United Kingdom also supports enhanced dialogue in order to provide greater scope for better aligning views. We all share the same goal to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties.

The United Kingdom thanks Japan for proposing this amendment and looks forward to continuing open and respectful dialogue.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

10C. FOLLOW-UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLANS FOR THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING IN THE AFRICA AND ARAB STATES REGIONS // RAPPORT D'AVANCEMENT SUR LA MISE EN ŒUVRE DES PLANS D'ACTION DU TROISIÈME CYCLE DE L'EXERCICE DE SOUMISSION DES RAPPORTS PÉRIODIQUES POUR LES RÉGIONS AFRIQUE ET ÉTATS ARABES**The Chairperson:**

Dear colleagues,

We will now listen to the presentations of the follow-up on the implementation of the Action Plans for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Africa and Arab States regions, which were presented during our last Committee session in July 2021. The relevant document for this Agenda item is Document 45.COM/10C.

We will start with the report in the Africa region, as per Section I of Document 10C, and will then proceed with the report in the Arab States, as per Section II of the document. We will proceed with the adoption of the two related draft decisions once the debate is completed.

Therefore, I would like to invite, first, Mr. Muhammad Juma Muhammad, Chief of the Africa Unit of the World Heritage Centre, who will introduce the follow-up on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Africa region.

You may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Distinguished members of the Committee,

The report which I'm going to read can be found in Document WHC/23/45.COM/[10]C.

The draft decision is on page 7, both English and French versions of the document.

Mr. Chair,

At its extended 44th session in Fuzhou (2021), the World Heritage Committee endorsed the Regional Action Plan of Africa, following the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting exercise. You may also recall, Distinguished Committee members, that at that same session and in its Decision **44 COM 5C**, the Committee also requested the Secretariat to present a Progress report on Priority Africa. Hence, the actions which I'm going to underline are taken within the framework of the Regional Action Plan (2021-2027), in line with UNESCO's Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2022-2029) and especially, in particular, its Flagship Programme 3 "Fostering Cultural Heritage and Capacity Development".

Mr. Chair, Distinguished members of Committee,

The Africa Regional Action Plan (2021-2027) has five strategic objectives and 26 actions. I will present the progress in implementing five strategic objectives covering the period from July 2021 to May 2023.

[Next, please]

1. The first strategic objective aims to "Strengthen the representativity and credibility of the World Heritage List in the Africa region". This strategy covers four out of 26 actions. During the period mentioned, we have accomplished many results specified in the document, in close collaboration with our partners, Africa World Heritage Fund and Advisory Bodies (ICOMOS, IUCN, and ICCROM). I'll mention the most important ones here:
 - i. The first one, dossier for Nyungwe National Park was finalized. We are delighted that, Distinguished Committee, you have inscribed this property the day before yesterday;
 - ii. Three countries were supported to finalize and submit their Tentative Lists to the World Heritage [Centre]: Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Sao Tome and Principe;
 - iii. The following countries are supported to develop their nomination dossiers: Comoros, Eswatini, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, South Sudan, and Sierra Leone;
 - iv. I want also to mention that Kenya was supported in developing the nomination dossier, which was already submitted in July 2023.

[Next, please]

2. The second strategic objective targets "Improving conservation, effective management and promotion of World Heritage". This objective contains 11 actions related to funding, partnerships for conservation, development of corrective measures for the removal of sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger, use of digital technology or tools for conservation, and development of guidelines and risk preparedness plans. For the period, we have accomplished the following actions:
 - i. Ten countries were trained and supported to develop corrective measures for the removal of their sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger. We've done this in [Central African Republic], Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, [Democratic Republic of the] Congo, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Uganda. Regarding this last property, as Committee, you recall that these efforts were crowned with success as you decided to remove the Kasubi Tombs from the List of World Heritage in Danger on 12 September;
 - ii. Furthermore, stakeholders from [Central African Republic], DRC, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Uganda, and United Republic of Tanzania were trained in Disaster Risk Management.

[Next]

3. The third strategic objective deals with "Capacity for conservation, management and promotion of cultural and natural heritage". Four actions are proposed to support the development of capacities of site managers, experts, civil society and stakeholders. During this period, the following actions were undertaken:
 - i. 40 young experts (20 men and 20 women) have been engaged and trained to become experts on World Heritage, with Advisory Bodies to support States Parties, and, of course, UNESCO;
 - ii. To ensure sustainable conservation and effective management, 86 participants from 25 countries, including Angola, Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Rwanda, and Kenya, and United Republic of Tanzania, were trained to effective management using ICCROM Tool, *Enhancing our Heritage*.

[Next]

4. The fourth objective deals with "Heritage education, communication and awareness-raising of World Heritage in Africa region." Four actions are implemented to enhance collaboration between heritage institutions in Africa, raise awareness among communities, civil societies and stakeholders, and support the participation of communities in development of heritage. During the same period:
 - i. We have undertaken a mapping of African Universities in preparation for the initiative to establish a network of universities and to support them to develop curricula in the field of heritage;
 - ii. The African Site Managers Network has been created to empower site managers and enhance the exchange of knowledge and experience through peer learning.
5. Finally, the fifth strategic objective aims at "Community and stakeholder engagement for the effective management of World Heritage properties." For that, we support the engagement of local communities and stakeholders, promote traditional management systems, and support the development of sustainable businesses to promote entrepreneurship in heritage-related creative industries. During this period, we have:
 - i. Supported Kenya, for example, the Historic Town of Lamu, to strengthen governance and management structures for enhancing community engagement;
 - ii. We also mobilized funds from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to develop pilot initiatives in six countries (Comoros, Ghana, Gabon, Mauritania, Namibia and the United Republic of Tanzania) in cultural heritage-related creative industries to benefit local communities.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished members of Committee,

In implementing of these actions, we have faced different challenges. The sanitary crisis during COVID-19, of course, didn't help us. However, our crucial challenges are availability of resources, either human or financial resources. With the Regional Action Plan, and now reinforced by the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa, we are tackling challenges on human resources by increasing the number of African experts, enhancing the capacities of heritage institutions in Africa and developing initiatives to institutionalize capacity development in and with universities.

However, we are calling for more support on financial resources. We appreciate the mobilization of UNESCO Member States, notably through the Group of Friends of Priority Africa. In this regard, I would also like to thank countries that have supported us in implementing ongoing actions, namely, Belgium, China, France, Japan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the Sultanate of Oman.

Finally, I want to thank my team, the Africa Unit, which works very hard to produce these results. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, I would like to give the floor to Ms. May Shaer, Chief of the Arab States Unit of the World Heritage Centre, who will introduce the follow-up on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Arab States region.

You may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Shukran, Said Rais.

Good afternoon.

Distinguished Committee members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The report on the implementation of the Action Plan in the Arab States can be found in Document WHC/23/45.COM/10C, page 8 of the English and French versions.

As you know, the report on the outcomes of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Arab States, and its Regional Action Plan (2021-2027) was endorsed at the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2021.

The Action Plan has three strategic objectives, with 35 actions linked to identified priorities.

The first objective is to contribute to a representative and balanced World Heritage List in the Arab States, reflecting the cultural and natural diversity of the region.

The second is to enhance the 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.

And the third is to improve the integration of sustainable development policies in the management of World Heritage sites.

Capacity-building activities and support has been provided to States Parties in the region, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage in Bahrain, and of course, the UNESCO field offices in the Arab States. These activities contribute towards the enhancement of protection, conservation and management of World Heritage sites.

Some of these activities relate to support in the elaboration of the Desired state of conservation for the removal of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger, which is, indeed, a priority, in collaboration with ICOMOS. In this regard, for two properties, the Desired state of conservation and related corrective measures were elaborated during the reporting period and presented at the current session.

In addition, support and online workshops were organized focusing on the Reactive Monitoring process, state of conservation reporting, boundary clarification for effective protection and management, and the elaboration of retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value.

In this context, seven retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value have been elaborated by the States Parties within the reporting period and presented at the current session.

[Next slide, please]

We have continued to focus on strengthening capacities in the preparation of impact assessments, in line with the new *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context*, such as through an online regional workshop, in collaboration with the three Advisory Bodies (ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN), and another workshop in Cairo, in collaboration with ICOMOS.

With the aim of improving the integration of sustainable [development] policies in the management of World Heritage sites, we organized a regional online training workshop in addressing the various dimensions of sustainable development in conservation and management approaches, focusing on the four thematic areas of:

- 1) Sustainable Development;
- 2) the Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation;
- 3) Managing Disaster Risks at World Heritage sites; and
- 4) Climate change and World Heritage.

All of these thematic areas have been noted as priorities by the States Parties during the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting and reflected in the Action Plan.

[Next side, please]

Other actions have focused on enhancing resilience to natural hazards, such as in the case of Sudan, and carried out through the World Heritage Fund and extra budgetary support.

Several other activities were implemented in collaboration and by the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, which contributes to the implementation of the Action Plan, in particular through awareness raising and capacity-building activities. A number of activities have been carried out by the Category 2 Centre supporting the Action Plan, primarily focusing on heritage impact assessment, but also supporting States Parties in implementation of specific activities.

We would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation to the States Parties in the region for the continuous engagement, daily exchanges, and excellent collaboration, which helps in addressing the many challenges that sites in the region have been facing. Our appreciation also for the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, to the Advisory Bodies, and our colleagues in the field as well, in addition to the support provided through extrabudgetary projects, such as the UNESCO/Netherlands Funds-in-Trust, and the Government of France.

We hope to continue to pursue efforts in the framework of implementing the Action Plan for the Arab States and in addressing current challenges, and we look forward to working with the States Parties and partners and supporters in this regard.

Distinguished Committee members,

Draft Decision **45 COM 10[C].2** can be found on page 10 of Document WHC/23/45.COM/10C of the English version and page 11 of the French version.

Shukran jazeelan.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

I would like to see if there are any comments from the floor concerning this Agenda item?

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Yes, indeed. I just wanted to extend our thanks to our colleagues, May and Muhammad, Heads of the Arab and African regions at the Centre, and in particular, May Shaer.

Now, a couple of comments about the Arab region if I may.

We'd like to thank the field offices, the regional offices in the Arab region for all of their efforts. But we do think there is still an urgent need for many countries, and I don't want to go through the list of them, but just for example, in Syria, after the earthquake, the City of Aleppo, or in Libya, or in the cases of Sudan, Iraq, there are so many pressing needs that I'd just like to continue efforts. I'm not asking specifically from the Centre, but from all of UNESCO, from all States Parties. We've asked in Paris and in statutory meetings, we would have liked to have had a donor conference held because this really is a pressing international issue. These are civilizations that belong to all of humanity, and what is required is a joint effort for these countries and for all of their heritage. So, we'd love something to be done to protect their heritage.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Good morning to you and Distinguished Delegates.

South Africa acknowledges the progress made in the implementation of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting Action Plan in the Africa and the Arab States regions. We commend the collaboration demonstrated by the States Parties, the Category 2 regional Centres, the Advisory Bodies, the UNESCO Field Offices, and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in effectively implementing the action plans, including the assistance provided to the States Parties who currently have no properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, the support for nomination projects, and capacitating those States Parties who wish to have their sites removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger. In this regard, South Africa extends its sincere gratitude to the Governments of China, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and the Sultanate of Oman for their financial contributions that supported the implementation of the Action Plan activities in the Africa region.

Furthermore, we would like to call upon the States Parties to provide both financial and technical support for the implementation of the action plans within the Africa region and the Arab region.

Chairperson,

In the Africa region, numerous capacity-building activities were conducted. The Pan African Site Managers Network has been established, and the mapping of African universities and institutions whose curricula support the training of African experts in cultural heritage is in progress.

As a State Party, we commend the diligent efforts of the African World Heritage Fund as a regional Category 2 Centre in Africa for following up on the implementation plan in the region. Their proactive approach ensures that the actions as included in the plan are effectively implemented and contribute to the protection and promotion of our cultural and natural heritage in the African region. This shall continue.

Noting this, South Africa proposes an amendment to Draft Decision **45 COM 10C.1** to add a paragraph after Para 3, formally acknowledging the contributions by the Fund in the implementation of the Action Plan for the African States, the fund here making reference to the African World Heritage Fund.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

I, in turn, would like to make a few comments after what we heard from my brother and colleague from the Sultanate of Oman.

I'd like to thank May Shaer for her report and all of the laudable efforts deployed by the World Heritage Centre and, in particular, the ARC in Manama.

In our region, the Arab region, we are facing multiple crises and natural disasters. As you've all probably seen, numerous Arab States are having to redouble their efforts, and the Arab States that are suffering natural disasters like in Iran, Morocco, Libya, but also there are sites in Syria, in Palestine that have global significance. These are properties that date back to thousands of years BC, and they are so important not only in the region but for the world.

And so, in the face of these crises where, for example, in other countries such as Yemen, what is really needed is that the youth who are there, who know the problems on the ground, be trained to address these crises. We should like to thank everything that is being done in Yemen, for example, the programmes supported by UNESCO and conveyed by the Doha Regional Office, but also the Sana'a project. All of these youth programs are very, very valuable and should be continued in other Arab countries. We feel that more needs to be done. The Arab region really does require support, and so we need more programmes like this in support of World Heritage.

Thank you.

The Chairperson: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Egypt expresses its appreciation for the efforts deployed by UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies within the current Periodic Reporting cycle for both regions, Arab and Africa regions.

We highlight the importance of providing enhanced technical expertise and financial support to these regions. Building capacity, sharing knowledge, and providing the necessary resources are pivotal steps towards successful heritage conservation, and we appreciate the existing initiatives, including activities and programmes adopted under Priority Africa.

We would also like to highlight the invaluable contribution of Category 2 Centres in strengthening the capacity of Arab and African States in the heritage management and conservation. These centres, the Arab Regional Centre in Bahrain and the African World Heritage Fund in South Africa, play a crucial role in advancing our understanding of best practices and facilitating regional cooperation, and we believe that we should strengthen their role in the future.

We would further suggest to use the Periodic Reporting cycle as a valuable source for information for the capacity-building needs, the priority teams, and to enlarge the approach of capacity-building programmes from the upstream flow policies till the end of the execution of different activities on the ground.

Finally, Chairperson, we would like to express our appreciation for the outstanding performance and excellent collaboration we had with the World Heritage Centre, particularly with the Director, Mr. Lazare Eloundou, Ms. May Shaer from the Arab Unit, and Mr. Muhammad Juma from the Africa Unit, and we also commend and warmly welcome the cooperation that both units had increasingly in the last months.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Do we have any additional comments or interventions? So, I see none.

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt two related draft decisions, starting with the Draft Decision **45 COM 10C.1**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments, any proposal for amendment regarding this draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As already explained by the Distinguished Delegate of South Africa, an amendment is proposed by South Africa to acknowledge the African World Heritage Fund in Para 4, 8, and 12.

Para 4 is a new para: "Expresses its appreciation to the African World Heritage Fund for its follow-up on the implementation of the Action Plan for Africa (2021-2027);".

Para 8, it's inclusion of "the African World Heritage Fund" to "collaboration".

Para 12 is again adding the term "in collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund,".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I'd like to invite you to examine the draft decision, paragraph by paragraph.

Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to put ourselves on record that we also need to be included on the list of those who are supporting this report, given the amount of work that both the World Heritage Centre, the African World Heritage Fund have contributed to the State Party of Zambia.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We acknowledge the explanation and everybody's contribution to this very important item. Nigeria wants to be included among those who are supporting it.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We appreciate the efforts of the African World Heritage Fund in various activities that it undertook. So, we want our name to be there with other countries.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Mali souhaite que son nom soit ajouté à la liste des pays qui supportent l'amendement.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Rwanda soutient l'amendement proposé par l'Afrique du Sud, également.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

We would also like to support this as well.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeeelan.

So, I invite you to examine the draft decision, paragraph by paragraph.

From Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 3, we do not have any amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? So, I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposed text. Do we agree to this paragraph? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, and 6, and 7, we don't have any amendment. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with the proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 9 and 10, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 11, we don't have any amendment. Do we agree to adopt it as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 12, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

And if there are no comments or objections, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 10C.1** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Now, turn to Draft Decision **45 COM 10C.2**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments regarding this draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for this draft decision.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments on this?

And if there are no comments or objections, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 10C.2** adopted. *[gavel]*

Before we close our morning session, I would like to pass the floor to the Director of World Heritage Centre for general announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This is just to inform the members of the Committee and the Distinguished Delegates that we will have a side event which will start at 1:30. It will take place at Hegra Room, which is the Advisory Bodies space. It is organized by the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Underwater Cultural Heritage, and its title is "Underwater Cultural Heritage and the World Heritage Convention".

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Our morning session is over, and we will resume after lunch break. *[gavel]*

The meeting rose at 1:05 pm. // La séance a été levée à 13h05.

ELEVENTH DAY
Thursday, 21 September 2023
TWENTY-FIRST PLenary MEETING
3:13 pm – 6:16 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulalah Al-Tokhais

ONZIÈME JOUR
Jeudi 21 septembre 2023
VINGT-ET-UNIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h13 – 18h16
Président :
Dr Abdulalah Al-Tokhais

10D. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLANS FOR THE SECOND CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING IN THE OTHER REGIONS // SUIVI DE LA MISE EN ŒUVRE DES PLANS D'ACTION POUR LE DEUXIÈME CYCLE DE L'EXERCICE DE SOUMISSION DES RAPPORTS PÉRIODIQUES DANS LES AUTRES RÉGIONS

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We will now proceed on our Agenda Item 10D on the Progress report on the implementation of the Action Plans for the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the other regions. The relevant document for this item is Document 45.COM/10D.

This document presents the progress, over the past two years, on follow-up activities and implementation of Regional Action Plans of the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting for:

- Asia-Pacific (Section I);
- Latin America and the Caribbean (Section II); and
- Europe and North America (Section III).

As you will remember, in line with Decision **18 EXT.COM 3** and Annex 2 of Document 18EXT.COM/3, this Agenda item will be adopted without debate.

I will therefore invite the relevant Chiefs of the regional Units of the World Heritage Centre to present their sections.

I would like to therefore first give the floor to Ms. Himalchuli Gurung, Chief of the Asia-Pacific Unit of the World Heritage Centre, to present the first section of the document.

You may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

A pleasant good afternoon.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Distinguished members of the Committee,

I have the pleasure to present the implementation of Sub-Regional Action Plans in the Asia-Pacific region resulting from the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting:

- The Pacific Action Plan; and
- The Suwon Action Plan for Asia.

The Pacific Action Plan, initially created in 2009, underwent revisions in 2011 and 2015. Meanwhile, the Suwon Action Plan for Asia, adopted in December 2011, identified priorities for the entire region of Asia along with 21 sub-regional issues, and remained our guiding strategic plan until the adoption of the Third Cycle Action Plan under Item 10 of the present session.

The Sub-Regional Action Plans emphasized region-wide priorities such as the development of management plans, disaster risk reduction, and enhanced regional cooperation. Additionally, they recognized shared priorities, such as community involvement and gap analysis studies.

More than ten years after the adoption of these Action Plans, it is clear that they have guided so many initiatives in Asia and the Pacific that most activities concerning World Heritage in the region can, in one way or another, be linked back to the Sub-Regional Action Plans.

To take stock of the progress accomplished and of today's needs, a Review Workshop on the Pacific Action Plan was organized in November 2021 by the UNESCO Office in Apia, in partnership with IUCN Oceania, also involving the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The outcomes of the meeting fed into the development of the Regional Framework Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific that we will be discussing later today under Item 10A.

The implementation of the Suwon Action Plan for Asia progressed steadily since 2012, and over the last two years, many successful activities have been carried out, largely thanks to extra-budgetary funding mobilized in line with the priorities identified through the Periodic Reporting Exercise, both at UNESCO Headquarters and in the field, through our UNESCO field offices.

Efforts to strengthen capacities and enhance expertise have notably led to the review and improvement of existing management tools, fostering risk preparedness. For example, a new International Advisory Committee for World Heritage properties was established in Uzbekistan in 2021, following successful models previously implemented in the region in Angkor and Lumbini. Over the last two years, sub-regional and national workshops were conducted to enhance the capacities of heritage experts, including in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, the Lao PDR, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, and Viet Nam, and notably played a pivotal role in empowering experts to design and conduct necessary impact assessments.

Operational projects conceived as a response to the Action Plans have significantly contributed to conservation and community involvement, such as the UNESCO/Japan Funds-in-Trust projects for the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley (Afghanistan), for the safeguarding of the Bayon Temple of Angkor Thom (Cambodia), and also for Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha (Nepal), which have consistently and sustainably reinforced national capacities for conservation and community involvement in heritage management.

Similarly, the projects supported by the Funds-in-Trust made available by the Republic of Korea and Japan have supported the Silk Roads serial transnational World Heritage nomination efforts and served as a valuable platform for States Parties to collaborate institutionally, promoting international solidarity and cooperation for better understanding and safeguarding of heritage corridors and cultural landscapes in this sub-region.

This also supported the Action Plan's goal of increasing regional cooperation, which notably resulted in the successful new inscription of Silk Roads: Zarafshan-Karakum Corridor (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) on the World Heritage List a few days ago, when the Committee members inscribed the second property associated with the heritage of the Silk Roads on the World Heritage List.

Overall, the implementation of Action Plans in the Asia-Pacific region has led to substantial progress with heritage conservation, community engagement, and disaster-risk reduction, and supported ongoing efforts to strengthen capacities and foster regional cooperation for the preservation of our shared cultural heritage. It would take far too long to list all the activities in the region that result from the implementation of these Action Plans, even just those organized over the last two years, but I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the UNESCO World Heritage Centre's gratitude to the Governments of China, Japan, the Netherlands, and the Republic of Korea for their contributions towards supporting follow-up activities to the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the region.

As you know, the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, initiated in October 2020, has concluded in Asia and the Pacific region, and its outcomes will continue to promote dialogue, collaboration, and community involvement, which we will have the opportunity to present later today under Item 10A.

Draft Decision **45 COM 10D.1** can be found on page 5 of the English and French versions of the document.

Thank you, Mister Chairperson. *Shukran.*

The Chairperson:

Afwan.

I would like now to invite and give the floor to Mr. Mauro Rosi, Chief of the Latin America and the Caribbean Unit of the World Heritage Centre, who will introduce the second section of the document.

The Secretariat: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

Without repeating what is already set out in the document, I just wish to highlight that a large part of the period covered by this report involved implementing the last phase of the Action Plans for the Second Cycle while, simultaneously, implementing the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting. So, as you can see, it has been a very intense period for our teams and for States Parties in the region.

As regards the activities carried out during this period, I wish to highlight that these were made possible thanks to a significant fundraising effort as well as the solidarity of a number of donors and sponsors who are also mentioned in the draft decision, including Governments, international financial organizations, and Category 2 Centres, who provided both financial and operational support.

Another important aspect which should be highlighted is that the activities carried out cover all subregions as you can see in the document. We never forgot the specificities of each of the subregions and countries which make up Latin America and the Caribbean, and in particular, we always have borne in mind the specific needs of the Caribbean island States, and we've dedicated a number of our activities to that subregion.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Draft Decision **45 COM 10D.2** can be found on page 8 in the English version and page 9 of the French version.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would now like to give the floor to Ms. Berta De Sancristóbal, Chief of the Europe and North America Unit of the World Heritage Centre, who will introduce the third section of the Document.

Le Secrétariat :

Merci M. le Président.

Dans le cadre du deuxième cycle des rapports périodiques, la région Europe et Amérique du Nord présente la particularité d'avoir élaboré deux rapports et deux plans d'action distincts. En effet, le rapport du deuxième cycle de Rapports périodiques pour l'Amérique du Nord a été adopté en 2014 lors de la 38^e session du Comité alors que celui pour l'Europe l'a été l'année suivante en 2015 en même temps que les plans d'action pour chacune des sous-régions.

Dans le cas de l'Amérique du Nord, le Plan d'action a été préparé par les points focaux nationaux pour la mise en œuvre de la Convention du Canada et des États-Unis. Le Comité du patrimoine mondial a approuvé le Plan d'action du deuxième cycle pour la sous-région selon cinq domaines de résultats, à savoir :

- 1) la mise à jour des Listes indicatives ;
- 2) la mise en œuvre de stratégies d'information et de sensibilisation du public à propos du patrimoine mondial ;
- 3) le développement de stratégies pour renforcer la communication et la coopération entre les gestionnaires de sites du patrimoine mondial à travers toute la sous-région ;
- 4) l'octroi d'assistance techniques aux biens du patrimoine mondial en dehors de la sous-région ; et
- 5) l'intégration du patrimoine mondial aux domaines existants de la coopération sous-régionale.

Le Comité avait également demandé aux États parties d'Amérique du Nord de présenter un rapport d'avancement sur la mise en œuvre de ce Plan d'action. Après la soumission du premier rapport d'avancement sur la mise en œuvre du Plan d'action du deuxième cycle pour la sous-région en 2016, aucun rapport d'avancement demandé par le Comité n'a été soumis par les États parties d'Amérique du Nord.

Quant à l'Europe, le Plan d'action du deuxième cycle, le dénommé « Plan d'action d'Helsinki », a été préparé conjointement par les points focaux d'Europe, les Organisations consultatives et le Centre du patrimoine mondial. Il avait été conçu comme un plan d'action cadre comportant des objectifs régionaux quantitatifs afin d'en faciliter l'appropriation ainsi que l'intégration dans les stratégies nationales, sous-régionales et régionales. Il comportait trois objectifs clés qui sont les suivants :

- 1) l'identification et la protection de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle ;
- 2) la gestion efficace des biens du patrimoine mondial ; et
- 3) la sensibilisation à la Convention.

Ces objectifs clés primordiaux incluaient des domaines prioritaires correspondant à des objectifs spécifiques, eux-mêmes subdivisés en 34 actions spécifiques. Les points focaux et autres autorités compétentes étaient invités à décider lesquelles de ces actions étaient les plus appropriées dans leurs pays respectifs et à s'approprier le Plan d'action. Une enquête de suivi du Plan d'action d'Helsinki fut menée en 2016 mais, comme dans le cas de l'Amérique du Nord, il n'y a pas eu de suivi véritable de la mise en œuvre de ces plans ni par les États parties ni par le Secrétariat. Cela est très probablement dû au manque de ressources tant au niveau des États qu'au niveau du Centre du patrimoine mondial, mais cela peut aussi refléter un faible sentiment d'appropriation et d'engagement à l'égard du plan lui-même – un point sur lequel nous serons engagés à réfléchir pour construire le nouveau Plan d'action différemment. Comme il n'y a pas eu de suivi systématique de ces plans d'action, l'idée est d'utiliser les questionnaires que la région vient de remplir pour le troisième cycle pour tenter de produire une analyse succincte de la mise en œuvre des plans d'action précédents, qui puisse éclairer le futur Plan d'action.

J'aimerais mentionner également que certains des objectifs que s'étaient fixé ces plans d'actions, notamment pour l'Europe, demeuraient partiellement accomplis au début du troisième cycle en 2022. Par exemple :

- seuls 40 % des biens du patrimoine mondial, dans la région Europe et Amérique du Nord, bien sûr, avaient partagé leur plan de gestion avec le Centre du patrimoine mondial ;
- concernant les Déclarations rétrospectives de valeur universelle exceptionnelle, aucune ne manquait pour l'Amérique du Nord au début du troisième cycle mais 29 manquaient encore en Europe – dont le Comité vient d'en approuver neuf.

En ce qui concerne les cartes, l'exercice parallèle et complémentaire au rapport périodique, le projet dénommé « Inventaire rétrospectif », a révélé à la fin du deuxième cycle qu'environ la moitié des cartes de la région étaient concernées par ce processus de clarification cartographique et géographique.

Parmi les clarifications demandées, à nouveau environ la moitié ont été reçues, et de celles-ci seules 14 % ont été jugées satisfaisantes et sont désormais approuvées par le Comité. Bien entendu, l'analyse des autres clarifications et les échanges avec les États parties se poursuivent.

En dépit des moyens très modestes alloués par le Fonds du patrimoine mondial à l'exercice de Rapports périodiques dans la région Europe et Amérique du Nord, comme référence, juste rappeler que pour l'année 2022-2023, l'allocation était de 20 000 dollars EU, en dépit de ces moyens, depuis la dernière session du Comité en 2021 et grâce au soutien de différents partenaires, deux outils ont néanmoins pu être développés dans le but de soutenir une gestion efficace des biens du patrimoine mondial, et ce, pas uniquement en Europe et Amérique du Nord. Je les mentionnerai brièvement puisque beaucoup d'entre vous ont assisté aux événements parallèles lors de cette session, au cours desquels nous avons pu les présenter:

- 1) tout d'abord, le *Guide en ligne pour les projets d'énergie éolienne dans un contexte du patrimoine mondial*, élaboré conjointement avec les Organisations consultatives et grâce au soutien du Gouvernement des Pays Bas, et qui a été enrichi de cas d'études de la région. Ce guide a été développé afin de soutenir les États parties, les gestionnaires des sites et les autorités nationales dans la protection des biens du patrimoine mondial dans le cadre de la transition vers des sources d'énergie renouvelable, mais aussi pour offrir au secteur de l'énergie éolienne une vue d'ensemble des concepts du patrimoine mondial et des exigences en matière de protection et de gestion. Le Secrétariat se réjouit de l'opportunité que lui a offert ce projet pour commencer à développer un partenariat avec l'Agence internationale pour les énergies renouvelables, IRENA, de son acronyme en anglais, qu'il entend poursuivre notamment dans le domaine de l'énergie solaire ;
- 2) le deuxième outil, aussi présenté dans le cadre d'un événement parallèle lors de cette session, c'est la Plateforme des cartes en ligne du patrimoine mondial, le premier système d'information géographique en ligne pour des zones protégées par l'UNESCO, élaboré grâce au soutien du Gouvernement de la Flandre, permettant d'améliorer et rendre plus claires et accessibles les informations sur la délimitation des limites des zones protégées par la Convention du patrimoine mondial. Suite à l'appel aux États parties de la région Europe et Amérique du Nord en avril 2022 à partager, sur une base volontaire, les cartes géoréférencées des sites sur leur territoire, nous avons reçu les couches géoréférencées pour 61% des biens de la région.

Comme pour le cas de l'Inventaire rétrospectif, que je mentionnais à l'instant, les efforts ne s'arrêtent pourtant pas là, et les États parties de l'Europe et de l'Amérique du Nord, en tant que régions pilotes de ce projet, mais aussi les États parties des autres régions, sont vivement encouragés à continuer à partager ces données avec le Secrétariat.

Voici donc, membres du Comité, les deux initiatives sur lesquelles le Secrétariat a concentré ses efforts depuis la dernière session du Comité pour élaborer des outils de soutien à la réalisation des objectifs que les États parties se sont fixés eux-mêmes dans le cadre de leurs plans d'action précédents.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Now that we have heard about the three regions concerned, I will invite you to turn to Draft Decision **45 COM 10D.1**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on this draft decision?

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for this Draft Decision **45 COM 10D.1**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments on this?

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

On behalf of the Delegation of Japan and the countries of the Asian Pacific region, we would like to fully support the draft decision and profoundly appreciate the excellent work organized by World Heritage Centre as well as the Advisory Bodies and the Category 2 Centres.

They were organized the Third Circle of the Periodic Reporting, including holding the meetings or workshops with States Parties, analysing the large amount of data and publishing the detailed and excellent report, even though under the pandemic circumstances.

For the State Party of Japan, not only the central Government...

Sorry, sorry, my comment. I will return after, so I have a mistake. Sorry.

The Chairperson:

It's okay. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Our countries have now completed the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting for the Latin American Caribbean region, and at the same time, this was coordinated with the World Heritage Centre. We just wanted to fully support this Committee decision. And if possible, we would like to take the floor after the decision is taken.

Thank you, Sir.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more comments, and I, therefore, declare that Draft Decision **45 COM 10D.1** adopted. *[gavel]*

We now turn to Draft Decision **45 COM 10D.2**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment regarding this draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

No amendment is received for this draft decision.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments?

I see none and I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 10D.2** adopted. *[gavel]*

Last but not least, I now invite you to consider Draft Decision **45 COM 10D.3**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment regarding this draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

No amendment is received for this draft decision.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments? I see none.

Therefore, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 10D.3** adopted. *[gavel]*

Mexico, you would like to take the floor.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

No, Mr. Chairman. A bit further along.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

All right.

10A. REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE THIRD CYCLE OF THE PERIODIC REPORTING EXERCISE IN ASIA-PACIFIC // RAPPORT SUR LES RÉSULTATS DU TROISIÈME CYCLE DE L'EXERCICE DE SOUMISSION DES RAPPORTS PÉRIODIQUES POUR L'ASIE ET LE PACIFIQUE

The Chairperson:

And for now, dear colleagues, I will invite you to deal with the reports on the results of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise.

We will start with the Report on the results of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise in Asia-Pacific, which was due to be presented to the Committee in 2022. The relevant information is enclosed in Document 45.COM/10A.

Before we start, dear colleagues, I would like to give the floor to Mr. Valentino Etowar, of the Policy and Statutory Meetings Unit at the World Heritage Centre, to say a few introductory words on the Periodic Reporting exercise.

You may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

[first speaker] Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Honourable members of the World Heritage Committee,

The complete report on the results of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise in Asia and the Pacific can be found in Document WHC/23/45.COM/10A.

[Next slide, please]

The Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting was initiated by Decision **41 COM 10A** in 2017, in Krakow, Poland.

By Decision **43 COM 10B**, the Committee took note of the fact that Asia and the Pacific is the first region to undertake the exercise exclusively online due to COVID-19 pandemic, and commend the Secretariat for adapting all scheduled activities, outreach strategies, and training contents for the online delivery without changing the schedule of the exercise, and thank the reporting national focal points and site managers in the Asia Pacific for adapting to these new modalities. In this regard, the Secretariat has translated all the tools and guidelines in order to make it available for the sites online only, notably with the translation of the *Handbook for Site Managers* and the questionnaires on request by States Parties in the national language. Several national focal points have also proactively translated the questionnaire and handbook into the national language, notably in Thai, in Nepali, and in Russian to facilitate the exercise to the site managers.

Prior to the exercise, an early information session was organized during a side event, at the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee in Baku, in July 2019. A preparatory consultation meeting was organized between the World Heritage site managers and the Advisory Bodies, notably ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN, to identify the capacity-building trainings based on the questionnaire contents.

The Reporting exercise itself took place from October 2020 to July 2021, and in total, 16 online capacity-building training sessions were implemented to the national focal point managers. In addition to that, two online training sessions, explaining the process of the exercise, was conducted by the Centre to the national focal points, and also two other training sessions to the site managers.

At the time of the start of the Periodic Reporting, all the Member States, which were 44 States Parties to the Convention in the region, were invited to complete the questionnaire Section I related to the implementation of the Convention at country level, as well as 269 inscribed properties, at the time of the launch of the exercise, were invited to complete the individual questionnaire Section II, which concerns the implementation of the World Heritage Convention at the World Heritage [site] level.

The exercise was coordinated by the World Heritage Centre in close collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, as well as the involvement of the C2Cs in the Asia and the Pacific, namely:

- The World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific region (WHITR-AP), located in China;
- The International Centre on Space Technologies for National and Cultural Heritage, known as HIST, located in China;
- The Centre for Natural Heritage Management and Training for the Asia and the Pacific Region, which is in Dehradun in India; and

- The Global Research and Training Centre for Internationally Designated Areas, located in the Republic of Korea.

The UNESCO field offices in the Asian and Pacific were also very actively involved to assist States Parties in the process.

Overall, the Reporting phase in the region received very positive feedback from site managers, with many of them have indicated that the exercise was very helpful in better understanding the issues related to the sites.

The results, as you can see on the screen, of submission for Section I, 42 out of 44 States Parties have submitted the questionnaire at Section I, which is at State Party level, achieving a percentage of 95.4% completion rate. On Section II, 265 out of 269 World Heritage properties questionnaire were submitted, resulting in a percentage of 98.1%.

The collected data was then statistically analysed at the regional and subregional levels by four regional international-awarded experts as well as one statistician. Based on the outcomes of the data compiled, a preliminary list of priorities was established. The statistical result was then analysed at scale of the region and subregion as a whole.

In March 2022, a three-day subregional workshop was organized with the national focal points, the Advisory Bodies, and UNESCO field offices, and World Heritage experts. During this workshop, the Secretariat presented the results of the exercise and also gathered different feedback from States Parties, and also it was an occasion to gather, to prepare, to formulate actions for the Framework Action plan. After this session of this workshop, the Action Plan was consolidated further by the Periodic Reporting experts and the World Heritage Centre in order to harmonizing action based on the feedback, and was subsequently shared with national focal points for additional adjustment, comments and recommendation.

Following this, the World Heritage Centre further refined the Action Plan to eliminate any duplication, to ensure a concise set of actions that can be monitored in the future.

The proposed Framework Action Plan for the region that will be presented to you by my colleague, Mrs. Hima Gurung, Chief of the Asia and Pacific Unit, has been prepared by the national focal point of the APA region, and it is the work and the contribution which was across all States Parties.

Mr. Chair,

My colleague, Hima Gurung, will present to you now the main outcomes and the proposals of some of the Action Plan in the region.

[second speaker] Thank you, Valentino.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished members of the Committee,

The Periodic Reporting in the Asia and the Pacific region has yielded significant results.

I would now like to present in more detail some of the main outcomes and outline the proposed Regional Framework Action Plan for the Asia and the Pacific region.

[Next slide, please]

Several positive achievements have been highlighted by the Periodic Reporting: 23 States Parties have updated their national Tentative List since 2012, and it has reached a total of 176 new sites in Asia-Pacific.

Since 2012, 25 States Parties submitted 123 nomination dossiers for 99 properties. Out of these, 61 dossiers presented to the World Heritage Committee were inscribed on the World Heritage List, reflecting perceived benefits of enhanced heritage protection and prestige.

The Upstream Process was used by only 9 States Parties. However, States Parties expressed their willingness to use this tool in the future.

[Next slide, please]

Since the Second Cycle, cooperation and synergies with other biodiversity-related and Culture Conventions, programmes and recommendations have been strengthened.

These are increased cases of multi-designations with Ramsar sites, Biosphere Reserves, UNESCO Global Geoparks, and the elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

At the same time, the Periodic Reporting exercise identified a need to reinforce inter-ministerial cooperation, as well as coordination between the focal points of different conventions, programmes and designations at national and site levels.

The Periodic Reporting results also suggested that there is a room for greater use of the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape in some sub-regions.

[Next slide, please]

Since the Second Cycle, 18 States Parties have updated their national legislations for heritage protection, although the relevance of legislation for World Heritage needs improvement across the region. Legal frameworks for World Heritage are mostly considered adequate and enforced, although the Pacific region reported lower assessments.

[Next slide]

Most properties have a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

Some properties reported the need to revise Statements of OUV to reflect broader issues, such as climate change and indigenous people's cultures, especially in the Pacific subregion.

While over 90% of properties reported that key attributes of their OUV are well preserved, climate change is having a notable impact, especially on many properties in the Pacific.

[Next slide, please]

Most responses reflected positive perspectives, with 60% being positive factors and 40% being negative.

The effectiveness of management and institutional frameworks stands out as a key positive cross-cutting factor, which is almost 45%, together with Social/culture use of heritage, Service infrastructures, Building and development.

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"Local conditions affecting physical fabric" is most cited as a negative factor for cultural properties, while "Climate change/Severe weather events" is ranked first for natural and mixed properties, and second for cultural properties. These are followed by "Sudden ecological/geological events and Pollution".

[Next slide, please]

Many States Parties rely on national Government funding for maintenance. While 35% of properties reported having an adequate budget for effective management, only 56% reported that their budget could be further improved.

Some properties in the Asia and the Pacific and Central Asia receive substantial international assistance subsidies for both human and financial resources.

[Next slide, please]

Capacity-building is indicated across the board as a medium to high need, with some areas attracting especially high interest, such as climate change and digital technology, which was of course taken into account when developing the Regional Framework Action Plan.

States Parties use the World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy appropriately for purposes ranging from national-level implementation, fundraising to support specific programmes, to awareness-raising. However, the Pacific countries do not report using it for any of the listed purposes.

Responses to one of the most pertinent questions, whether States Parties have a national strategy for capacity-building, which was one of the expectations of the Capacity Building Strategy, are not encouraging and will need to represent an important strategic area for progress in the coming years.

[Next slide, please]

Concerning monitoring of the World Heritage properties, there has been a 10% improvement from the Second Cycle, with 68% of properties now reporting that they have a comprehensive, integrated monitoring programme. However, monitoring is often not based on key Monitoring Indicators, which should be identified to conserve the OUV. Furthermore, monitoring needs to involve local communities and indigenous peoples, which needs to be improved across the region.

[Next slide please]

Now, I would like to present you the proposed Regional Framework Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific.

This Action Plan is the result of in-depth consultation with the national focal points, site managers, the Periodic Reporting experts, and the Advisory Bodies.

Together, they created a robust draft of an Action Plan during a meeting in March of last year, which was consolidated and shared with all stakeholders to collect their feedback. It was then finalized into the document presented to the Committee for this session, taking into account the outcomes of the exercise and reflecting them into the strategic document that will guide the implementation of World Heritage-related activities in the region for the next six or more years.

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The Regional Framework Action Plan is based on the five Strategic Objectives of the World Heritage Convention, the 5 Cs: Credibility, Conservation, Capacity-building, Communication and Communities.

This proposed Regional Framework Action Plan for Asia and the Pacific is set up to be the key guiding document for World Heritage in the region for the next six years at least, and comprises 15 Expected Results, I repeat 15

Expected Results, with a set of actions with clear approaches and monitoring indicators to accompany States Parties throughout its implementation. National focal points are invited, along with their relevant national authorities, to appropriate the Action Plan and decide which of the 35 activities and actions are most relevant to them and what level of priority can be given to each action. The Action Plan also proposes means of implementation of each action to help guide the key actors identified as they plan and implement activities for World Heritage.

The objectives of the Plan can only be achieved through the partnership of global, regional, and local partners, actors, and stakeholders.

Such an approach, focused on stakeholders at all levels, especially emphasizes the key role of both local communities and global stakeholders.

It is enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As such, the involvement of youth and women with a strong emphasis on intergenerational exchange is a continuous theme of this Action Plan.

The Action Plan also places a role of UNESCO field offices and of Category 2 Centres under the auspices of UNESCO at the core of the implementation of the Action Plan, and you will see that they appear in many different actions. It is our firm belief that the role of these actors is key in achieving the goals and actions outlined by the national focal points in the Framework Action Plan.

I will now very briefly present the main Expected Results of the Action Plan following this structure by Strategic Objectives of the Committee.

[Next slide, please]

- Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen the representativity and credibility of the World Heritage List in the region.

Actions under Strategic Objective 1 on credibility include:

- Updating national inventories in line with the thematic studies and gap analysis;
- Updating Tentative Lists in accordance with the Operational Guidelines and the *Guidance on developing and revising World Heritage Tentative Lists* as shown on the screen; and
- Preparing high-quality nomination dossiers, including by requesting upstream support and other forms of early preparatory assistance.

[Next slide, please]

- Strategic Objective 2: Improve conservation, effective management and promotion of World Heritage

Actions under Strategic Objective 2 on conservation include:

- Ensuring adequate and sustainable funding to meet the needs of World Heritage, including by developing and reinforcing innovative and sustainable funding mechanisms dedicated to heritage conservation and management;
- Strengthening coordination and cooperation between stakeholders, ministries/agencies and focal points of different Conventions;
- Improving conservation through the effective governance of World Heritage properties, such as through promoting a better understanding of the properties OUV, attributes, and associated values for all stakeholders, and carrying out the necessary boundary clarifications for properties and their buffer zones;
- Strengthening conservation and management practices in line with sustainable development objectives; and
- Ensuring the legal provisions of the World Heritage conservation are adequate and fully implemented.

[Next slide, please]

- Strategic objective 3: Develop effective capacity-building measures for the understanding and implementation of the World Heritage Convention and related instruments.

Actions under Strategic Objective 3 on capacity-building include:

- Developing fully operational capacity-building strategies for World Heritage; and
- Providing training across the region and stakeholders.

And here, we would like to emphasize the key role to be played by the Advisory Bodies and the Category 2 Centres, including such as HIST and WHITR-AP in China, WHIPIC in Republic of Korea and the Wildlife Institute in India.

[Next slide, please]

- Strategic objective 4: Increase public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through communication.

Actions under Strategic Objective 4 on communication include:

- Enhancing heritage education, communication, and awareness raising; and
- Promoting World Heritage and effective participation of communities, I repeat communities, including youth and women.

[Next slide, please]

- Strategic objective 5: Strengthen community and stakeholder engagement for effective management of World Heritage properties.

Actions under Strategic Objective 5 on communities include:

- Promoting effective participation of local and indigenous communities, in cooperation with other stakeholders; and
- Ensuring that properties' contribution to economic growth such as through reinforcing the sustainability of heritage revenue, notably from tourism, while ensuring equitable benefit sharing.

[Next slide please]

Following the dissemination of the report and the Regional Framework Action Plan, States Parties are invited to appropriate their Action Plan and decide on the actions that would be most relevant for implementation at different levels: subregional, national, and at the site level.

We encourage States Parties in Asia and the Pacific region to organize national and/or subregional workshops to share broadly the Regional Framework Action Plan among relevant stakeholders. The key actors of World Heritage in the region are then invited to identify and integrate priority actions into national and site level plans, and to secure the necessary human and financial resources to implement the actions identified.

The World Heritage Centre stands ready to assist States Parties in such efforts, and will also monitor the follow up on the implementation of the Action Plan with States Parties and other relevant stakeholders.

As with other regions, the progress achieved in implementing the Action Plan will be assessed through a short, straightforward mid-cycle assessment scheduled for 2027.

[Next slide, please]

The World Heritage Centre would like to extend a deep gratitude to all States Parties in the region, the World Heritage focal points and site managers for their active participation in the implementation of the exercise.

Their individual and invaluable inputs provided insight into the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, as well as information about the factors affecting the properties and the challenges faced.

Sincere appreciation to the Category 2 Centres, including WHITR-AP, Wildlife Institute of India, and HIST, for their continued active support and commitment throughout the implementation of Third Cycle of Asia-Pacific region.

It is also extended to the Advisory Bodies and experts, as well as the UNESCO field offices in the region and the UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

Last but not least, the Secretariat would like to reiterate its sincere thanks to 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.

[Next slide, please]

For more information on the next steps for the implementation of the Framework Regional Action Plan, you are all invited to our side event, that will take place this evening from 6:30 pm onwards in Al Ahsa Oasis Room.

[Next slide, please]

The draft decision of this item can be found on page 118 of the English version and page 132 of the French version of the document.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for the informative presentations.

I would like to see if there are any comments from the room regarding the presentations just we heard about.

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much again, Chairperson.

I could not wait for the presentation on 10A so long time!

Anyway, on behalf of the Delegation of Japan and, as a country of the Asia-Pacific region, we would fully support the draft decision and really appreciate the excellent works organized by the World Heritage Centre as well as the Advisory Bodies and Category 2 Centres. They were organized the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting, including holding the meetings or workshops with the States Parties, analysing the large amount of data, and publishing the detailed and excellent report, even though under the pandemic circumstances.

For the State Party of Japan, not only the central Government but also a lot of local authorities, the local communities, and each level of stakeholders are involved in daily conservation works of heritages. And this Periodic Reporting was the good opportunity to be aware and to reexamine our conservation activities. We also welcome that the Periodic Report clarifies the common challenges among our region, such as shortage of the human and budgetary resources, transboundary cooperation, and climate changes. We would also like to cooperate to the next Regional Action Plan to be implemented with all stakeholders.

Finally, we would conclude by saying that we would also like to express our appreciation for the leadership of Ms. Himalchuli Gurung, the Chief of Asia and Pacific Unit at this time.

Shukran jazeelan.

The Chairperson:

Afwan jazeelan. L'Inde.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving India the floor.

At the outset, India would also like to thank the Chief of Unit Asia and Pacific for her very comprehensive presentation and compliment the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for the strategic exercise of this Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting for the region, carried out between September 2020 to July 2021, in accordance with the Decision **41 COM 10A**.

India appreciates the necessity of the self-reporting access process led by the States Parties themselves to provide an assessment of the application of the World Heritage Convention.

Being one of the focal points from India, I would like to inform the Committee that several ministries of the Government of India, namely the Ministries of Culture, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, External Affairs, Railways, Urban Development, Education, Tourism, etc., various State departments of Archaeology, municipal authorities, and private religious trusts participated in this exercise. Archaeological Survey of India and the Wildlife Institute of India, which is also a UNESCO Category 2 Centre, were the two focal organizations for the cultural and natural properties, respectively, that led the entire process of Periodic Reporting for India.

If I may say so, for India, the challenges of participating in the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting were manifold. They were not merely from the point of view of the limitations caused by the pandemic, but that India had to deal with the Periodic Reporting of a large number of 38 World Heritage properties, coordinate with 38 site managers, different ministries, organizations, municipal authorities, etc. that made the effort quite challenging but, in the end, fruitful and rewarding.

The Section I of the Periodic Reporting forms enumerated India's overall position on the conservation, protection, and management of India's heritage, its various laws, rules, and guidelines that guide the protection of India's cultural and natural heritage at national, regional, and local levels. It also gave India's position on simultaneous aligning with multiple other Conventions and recommendations. India highlighted the robust interaction between the World Heritage focal points and focal points of other Conventions. The Section I also highlighted India's keen interest to pursue and update the Tentative List and review it from time to time, which we are doing. India highlighted the continuing need to engage in dialogue with all relevant stakeholders in the process related to the preparation of the Tentative List documents and nomination dossiers. We also articulated our commitment to align itself with the UNESCO SDGs and gender-balanced contribution and participation.

The Section II of the Periodic Report reporting forms, filled individually by the sites managers of the individual properties, was also an opportunity to credibly reflect on the state of conservation and various management challenges. I am happy to inform that our site managers managed to provide the desired information on time. Filling up these exhaustive forms was not only with the objective of informing the World Heritage Centre but was also an opportunity for internal introspection. This enabled India to compile a huge amount of data that, now, we are examining and reflecting upon. It gives us an opportunity to address all the major issues and challenges that are being faced by our World Heritage properties, and we are committed to resolve them within a manageable timeframe.

Last, Mr. Chair, I would like to inform that it was also an opportunity to interact and exchange ideas amongst professionals' communities involved in the process. The ASI and Wildlife Institute of India initiated several training exercises for enhancing the capacities for site managers and associated communities to participate in this exercise.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you Chair.

My Delegation would like to express our appreciation for the work done by the Secretariat and the excellent presentation earlier.

Capacity-building is an important and indispensable part of the conservation and preservation of the World Heritage sites, especially in the implementation phase, as capacity-building can enhance opportunities for conservation and better management of sites. Over the years we have seen the results of these efforts, with new sites being included on the List in different regions.

In this regard, Thailand commends the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies and Category 2 Centres for their efforts to implement the World Heritage Capacity Building Strategy and its supporting role in organizing the International Conference on the Management and Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in April 2022, which was held online. The aims of the conference were to increase knowledge and understanding of the World Heritage Convention, with the focus on the process for inscription of the properties on the World Heritage List, developing related documents and effective management plan. It also aimed at promoting international cooperation of ASEAN community and international organizations in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Thailand, therefore, would like to once again express our sincere appreciation to the World Heritage Centre, especially the Chief of the Asia-Pacific Unit and the Advisory Bodies.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more interventions from the Committee members. I, therefore, will pass the floor to ICCROM.

ICCROM: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Advisory Bodies were delighted to contribute to the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in Asia and the Pacific, and we'd like to thank the World Heritage Centre for this opportunity.

The Advisory Bodies took part and followed closely in the meetings held with focal points and site managers in the region. The presentation of Periodic Reports is important because it gives us the opportunity, as members of the Heritage community, to take stock of the situation in properties worldwide and at regional level. It also gives us the opportunity to be in direct contact with site managers as well as national focal points. This gave us the opportunity to address urgent issues and challenges that the sites may be facing.

The Advisory Bodies wish to highlight some important results of this Report exercise:

- Some of the World Heritage properties display a lack of resources when it comes to protection;
- We also need to ensure better risk preparedness;
- The report shows that World Heritage risk assessments aren't always a requirement under national legislation. Therefore, the Advisory Bodies welcome the new *Guide for Impact Assessment within the World Heritage Context*;
- Likewise, a capacity development programme for implementing tools in the World Heritage context 2.0 would be a way of addressing the other challenges highlighted in the report.

There seems to still be a significant gap when it comes to improving monitoring and evaluation for a number of World Heritage properties in the region. The Action Plans, which have been developed at regional level, provide clear guidance on the priorities of each region and how to address those priorities. We hope to continue to collaborate, providing technical support and developing new monitoring programmes. In light of the results of the exercise, we're also aware that these exercises are essential in order to allow C2Cs to implement monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan.

As regards Objective 6 on capacity-building, the Advisory Bodies consider that the Action Plans of the Third Cycle of Reporting must serve as a basis for the development of the new strategy for capacity-building of the World Heritage Committee. Additionally, the results of the Third Cycle can be very useful in developing capacity-building strategies which are necessary for each region. Therefore, we believe that during the next cycle we should include the development of capacity-building. The Advisory Bodies are fully committed to supporting and contributing to capacity-building activities as set out in the Action Plans, and to adjusting them to the specificities of each region.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And also, I would like to... So I'll pass the floor to the Secretariat of the World Heritage Centre.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I just wanted to share with the Distinguished members of the Committee some additional remarks on this exercise, which has been a very important exercise. Actually, the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting is really an important moment with all the contributions of all the site managers, all the contributions of all the decision makers involved in issues related to conservation, to management and to policy of the World Heritage, issues are really important, and I think this exercise has brought us a number of lessons:

- First of all, I think, like ICCROM has said clearly, there is a need to continue capacity-building;
- This is important and this exercise has also brought in line the fact that World Heritage sites continued to be faced with a number of challenges that need to be addressed. They could be some external factors, like they could also be some internal factors that will require to continue use some of the tools that the Advisory Bodies have put in place like the tools for conducting Heritage Impact Assessment, and the reason why it's important that this continues;
- One positive lesson of this exercise is that many States Parties, I mean almost all the sites in Asia and Pacific, have a Statement of OUV. I think this is really encouraging, and it shows already that this will help continue to improve all aspects related to maintaining the Outstanding Universal Value of all the properties. I think Periodic Reporting exercises are also a way of exchanging experience among regions. I think this effort that has been done to make sure that all the sites have a Statement of OUV is also something that can be shared with other regions in terms of lesson learned.

I just wanted to share this with you, and this has been possible because of not only the coordination of the Secretariat but also the contribution of all the Advisory Bodies in this exercise during these past years.

So, it's just a word of gratitude and to all the States Parties, to all the site managers who have contributed to this exercise, who have really made sure that we, the team, reflected in this report in such a positive way.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, dear Director.

So, we have two requests from the floor. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I don't know whether I should go ahead with my comment, especially that the Director has preempted what I wanted to say. Maybe I can still, since I've been given the opportunity, let me just say one or two words.

Having taken part in one of the Periodic Reporting exercises in the past, just to add to what the Director has indicated, there is a need to strengthen the cooperation between the different regions so that there is exchange of knowledge. I'm saying so because when you try to compare the different Periodic Reporting cycles, at first, like the one, the second Periodic Reporting, there are few individuals who are involved in that Periodic Reporting cycle. And when you look at the third Reporting cycle, there were a number of people who are involved, and you find that even the results which were achieved were better than the previous Periodic Reporting cycle, meaning that if you are to have this exchange of information, there will be a lot of experiences which will be learned from the different regions.

I submit, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Zambia.

So, we have two requests from the floor, Republic of Korea and China.

We start with the Republic of Korea.

The Observer Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Dear Mr. Chairperson, Your Excellency,

I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak on the floor.

On behalf of the Republic of Korea, I would like to express our gratitude to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for their dedication and efforts for successfully implementing the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise in Asia and the Pacific region.

It is our great pleasure that the Republic of Korea is supporting the activities of capacity-building in World Heritage sites in Asia and the Pacific region through the UNESCO Korea Fund-in-Trust project. We hope for the Regional Framework Action Plan to be appropriately implemented in Asia and the Pacific region through active participation from members of States Parties, site managers, Category 2 Centres, experts and local communities. We will also continuously supporting the implementation of the Action Plan in coordination with the newly established International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage Sites (WHIPIC), located in the Republic of Korea. In addition, we hope that the Republic of Korea Fund-in-Trust can also contribute to enhance and establish transboundary properties in Asia and the Pacific region.

In all, I would like to extend our appreciation again to the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, and all the States Parties for all their continuous efforts in the World Heritage Convention and for the results of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting exercise in Asia and the Pacific region.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. China.

The Observer Delegation of China:

Thank you, Chair, for giving China the floor.

China extends its appreciation to the large amount of work carried out by the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies with regard to the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting exercise in Asia and the Pacific. In the challenging context of the global COVID -19 pandemic, the Centre took immediate action to adjust to the difficult situation and carried out this exercise successfully.

The thorough and quality report presented in front of us provides an in-depth analysis with a series of outcomes, both on national and on property levels; and the key areas of improvement identified in this process deserve special attention of States Parties in the next stage of implementation of the Convention through emphasizing important indexes as community development, climate change, capacity-building, and synergies with other Conventions, etc.

The concept of people orientation and sustainable development embedded in the World Heritage protection find their way into the minds and actions of the people working for heritage. China actively participated in the Third Reporting exercise by providing national and property level reports on time, with engagement of competent national authorities, national focal points, site managers as well as two Category 2 Institutes, with the National Commission for UNESCO playing a coordinating role.

It is our hope that the Third Cycle of Reporting exercise could serve as a cornerstone for future cooperation of States Parties and World Heritage sites in this region. We stand ready to cooperate with various stakeholders in protecting the treasures of our planet till 2030 and beyond.

Thank you, *Shukran*.

The Chairperson:

Afwan.

I see no more comments, and I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to examine and adopt Draft Decision **45 COM 10A** included in the Document 10A, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur has received any amendments on the draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 10A**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any comments? I see none.

Therefore, I declare Draft Decision **45 COM 10A** adopted. *[gavel]*

Dear colleagues,

As we just heard from the Secretariat, the Small Islands Developing States are a priority group for UNESCO region and, as you know, Tuvalu became the 195th State Party to the Convention last May, meaning that the World Heritage Convention now enjoys nearly universal ratification. We are delighted to have a video message from Mr. Moealofa, from the Ministry of Local Government and Agriculture of Tuvalu, who wishes to underline the importance for his country to have ratified the Convention. This is the first step by Tuvalu to mark its commitment to protect its heritage.

The Observer Delegation of Tuvalu: *[video]*

Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to say a few words regarding Tuvalu's ratification of the World Heritage Convention as the 195th State Party.

I also thank you and others for your warm words of congratulations.

This is a major milestone for us. Tuvalu and other Pacific atoll island nations are at the forefront of the climate crisis, where our nations are critically challenged by rising sea levels. We face the complete inundation of our lands by the end of the century, and this loss will be catastrophic. Amidst this existential threat to our people, culture, and heritage, we have taken the important step of ratifying the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. We have joined the Convention to mark our commitment to protecting our culture and heritage, but also to seek global recognition and call on the international community for support. This is the first step in our efforts to seek World Heritage site status because we believe that Tuvalu holds unique and outstanding value to the global community. As one of the world's few true atoll-island nations, Tuvalu has played a key role in the cultural development of the Pacific region, which continues to be one of the most under-represented on the World Heritage List. In our fight to tackle climate change and preserve Tuvalu's nationhood, we are seeking international recognition of the uniqueness of what and who we are as a culture and as a people, and global commitment to protect and preserve it.

It is a historic moment, and I count on the support of all countries, stakeholders and friends who believe in protecting the cultural and natural heritage of humanity for future generations.

Thank you. *Tuvalu motetu*.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for this message passed over to the Secretariat.

10B. REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE THIRD CYCLE OF THE PERIODIC REPORTING EXERCISE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // RAPPORT SUR LES RÉSULTATS DU TROISIÈME CYCLE DE L'EXERCICE DU RAPPORT PÉRIODIQUE EN AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÏBES

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We will now proceed with the Report on the results of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise in Latin America and the Caribbean. The relevant information is enclosed in Document 45.COM/10B.

Before we start, dear colleagues, I would like to give the floor to Mr. Valentino, of the Policy and Statutory Meetings Unit at the World Heritage Centre, to say a few introductory words on the Periodic Reporting exercise.

You may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

[first speaker] Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Honourable members of the Committee,

The complete report on the results of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise in Asia and the Pacific can be found in Document WHC/23/45.COM/10B.

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You can find on the screen the Reporting Cycles for the Latin America and the Caribbean region, with the dates when the report and Action Plan was presented to the Committee.

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With regard to the Third Cycle, as per Decision **41 COM 10A**, the Committee launched the Cycle of Reporting.

Per Decision **43 COM 10B**, the Committee further underscored the Secretariat's role in ensuring a "holistic approach across regions by providing overall coordination, guidance tools and analysis, as well as facilitating a State Party-driven approach of the exercise".

By Decision **44 COM 10D**, the Committee confirmed the start of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

Latin America and the Caribbean region is the second region after Asia and the Pacific to undertake the Periodic Reporting exercise exclusively online. The World Heritage Centre has adapted the scheduled activities, outreach strategies, and training contents for online delivery without changing the schedule of the exercise.

In this regard, the Secretariat has also translated the tools and guidance that have been provided for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting to the site managers and national focal points, notably *The Handbook for Site Managers*, the video tutorials, the key terms, and the Frequently Asked Questions into Spanish in order to facilitate also the work of the site managers and national focal points. The *Handbook for Site Managers* was also translated in Portuguese for Portuguese-speaking countries, lusophone countries.

The reporting phase of the exercise involved the completion of online questionnaire Section I, which is the completion of the...

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on the State Party level and the Section II of the questionnaire, which concerned the implementation of Convention at the World Heritage property level.

The public reports started in September 2021, and in early December 2022, a kick-off meeting was organized with the national focal points of the region to introduce the exercise and the questionnaire.

Three individual meetings were also arranged for national focal points upon request, and seven other meetings were organized for site managers [meeting] also requesting special assistance.

A help desk support has also been set in place to assist site managers throughout the entire process. The Centre has noted approximately 600 technical assistance provided to site managers.

At the launch of the exercise, for the Latin America and the Caribbean, 33 States Parties to the Convention in the region were invited to complete the questionnaire on Section I, as well as 147 World Heritage properties were invited to complete the questionnaire at Section II.

The Advisory Bodies (ICCRUM, ICOMOS and IUCN) were one of the key actors in the process, notably in providing targeted technical assistance and capacity-building trainings.

In addition, two Category 2 Centres, notably the Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas, located in Mexico, and the Regional Heritage Management Training Centre "Lucio Costa", in Brazil, [were] also involved in the process.

All the UNESCO field offices in the Latin America also participated in assisting the site managers in the completion of the questionnaire.

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Overall, the reporting phase in the region received very positive feedback, as site managers indicate mostly that the exercise has improved understanding of the issues related to World Heritage properties, and also has helped them to make an introspective of the sites. This is very particular true for site managers who have never experienced this statutory process and who were recently appointed.

As you can notice on the screen, the result of the submission of the questionnaire was quite high, and we have received 100% of submission: 33 countries of the 33 are in for Section I, and only two sites were not submitted for Section II.

[Next slide, please]

The collected data was then statistically analysed at regional and sub-regional levels by four regional and international experts. Based on the outcomes of the compiled data, a preliminary list of priorities was established.

In February 2022, a consultation meeting with all the World Heritage site managers and national focal points in the region was held to present the exercise's outcomes and gather their feedback and recommendations for the preparation of the Regional Action Plan.

A two-day final workshop was also organized to present the outcomes and the recommendations formulated by the site managers to the Action Plan, was very useful to organize the next meeting with the national focal points in order to draft the Regional Action Plan.

My colleague, Mauro Rosi, Chief of the Latin America and Caribbean Unit will continue the presentation on the main outcomes and the proposed Action Plan to the World Heritage Committee.

Thank you.

[second speaker] [Previous slide, please. Okay, Thank you]

[interpretation from Spanish] Mr. Chairman, Distinguished members of the Committee,

As concerns the main outcomes of this Third Cycle, they show that in our region, the national focal points and the designated site managers at the property level are very thoroughly familiar with the Convention.

Their regulatory frameworks and national policies do promote heritage conservation at the same time as incorporating some of the SDGs.

States Parties and site managers have made significant progress in implementing the World Heritage Convention since the Second Cycle, including the inscription of nine properties on the World Heritage List, and in particular, with an increase in the number of mixed sites.

There's also the fact that several major serial transboundary nominations have been put together, and this is a milestone.

[Next slide, please]

As you can see on the graphs in front of you, the States Parties responded very, very thoroughly as concerns the possibility and need to enforce the legal framework. In other words, legislation or regulations in order to protect and safeguard natural and cultural heritage.

National regulations on heritage identify heritage, but more does need to be done if they are to truly regulate heritage conservation. In 20 countries, there was a feeling that heritage really plays a role in community life, and in 76% of countries, heritage is integrated in the broader policies at the national level, although there are some shortcomings.

The main source of funding when it comes to running and maintaining costs actually come from national Governments. In 41% of the properties, they report shortcomings in funding, and 100% of the national Governments in Central America and Mexico and in South America, it's the Governments that are the main source of funding for heritage. But this figure actually drops down to 50% for the Caribbean subregion, where funding sources are rather diverse. Funding comes from multilateral international funding or international bilateral funding as well as from other international Convention funding.

The site managers in 75% of the properties reported that some of the key attributes of the OUV are well preserved.

When it comes to management requirements, human resources continue to be one of the key areas needing attention in the region. While the Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean have focused their requirements on ensuring a funding and managing of property visits, in South America and Central America and Mexico, they also identified educational programs and a need for management.

[Next slide, please]

On this slide, you can see a summary of synergies, and you can see the answers in the questionnaire about synergies between the main or across the main Cultural Conventions.

The main ones being the 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention or the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The Convention for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage in 2001 seems to be of more importance in the Caribbean and in the Central American and Mexican subregions.

Moreover, the region has a clear commitment when it comes to taking part in multilateral environmental agreements, such as the CBD, the Convention on Biological Diversity, or CITES International Convention on Trade of Endangered Species, or the IPPC, the International Plant Protection Convention.

When it comes to participation in other programmes, 35 properties were listed as biosphere reserves and 22 properties are actually listed under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The Recommendation on Historical Urban Landscape, dating back to 2011, is used in 80% of States Parties in the subregion of South America. For the Caribbean, it's 62.5% or ten sites, and in Central America and Mexico, it's only 28.6%.

[Next slide, please] *[end of interpretation from Spanish]*

I'll switch to English.

Capacity-building is a priority area as reflected in the Action Plan. The responses to the questionnaire focused on risk preparedness and climate change adaptation, as well as on impact assessment tools and capacity for the conservation and management of heritage.

Regarding the existing national capacity-building strategies, nearly half of the region does not have any national strategy and promotes capacity-building on an ad-hoc basis.

The priority identified in these areas are:

- First of all, risk preparedness and disaster risk management. That appears as the first priority, with 25 countries identifying it for the cultural heritage and 20 for the natural heritage;
- It is closely followed by the conservation and management of heritage sites, which was considered by 23 States Parties in the case of cultural heritage and 19 countries concerning natural heritage;

Important priorities emerged are also:

- Conservation and management of heritage sites; and
- Strengthening resilience to natural hazard; and
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The Caribbean sites include in their capacity-building priorities:

- Governance;
- Legislative, institutional, and financial framework and mechanism.

[Next slide, please]

In the graphics on the screen, you may see how the States Parties reported on the different strategies developed to encourage and support World Heritage property to manage and develop visitation and tourism sustainability, in particular.

A significant number of countries encourage and support sustainable management and development of visitation and tourism at World Heritage property, but this support could be strengthened further.

More than 70% of the States Parties have implemented strategies to raise awareness about World Heritage. However, more than half reported that strategies are being implemented with some deficiencies. From [2017] to [2021], almost 815 million people, nationally and internationally, visited World Heritage properties in Latin America and the Caribbean. For one year to the next, the number of visitors increased between 2% and 14%.

Locally driven sustainable tourism initiatives were reported by 57% of participants, and benefits from tourism are shared with the community in 63% of the cases. A strategy to manage visitors tourism activity and its derived impact on World Heritage properties is reported by 76 site managers, 46%.

Almost all property in the region reported a formal framework for community participation.

[Next slide, please]

So, based on this exercise, an Action Plan from now to 29 was drafted.

This action plan was, of course, developed on the basis of the outcomes of the contribution gathered through the questionnaire and from consultation with all stakeholders, state managers, national focal points, ABs, experts, and Category 2 Centres.

It was also defined based on a meeting with the site managers, which was held online in February 23, followed by another also in February, a meeting with all the national focal points.

This Action Plan was intended for the entire LAC region, but it is adaptable for any subregion that they will be able to identify its specific particular priority.

We have five Strategic Objectives, 15 Expected Results, 30 actions and activities. And it is also, like the Action Plan already presented by my colleague of the Asian Pacific region, structured around the 5 Cs of the Strategy of the World Heritage. Comprehensive and inclusive, of course, are also the main categories which have been taken into account in the definition of this Action Plan.

[Next slide please]

I am going to introduce, now, quickly some Expected Results by Strategic Objective.

- Strategic Objective 1: Strengthen the representativity and credibility of Latin America and Caribbean diverse heritage in the World Heritage List. For the implementation of this Strategic Objective, for its attainment, we have foreseen:
 - An Expected Result 1[.1] which is: Tentative List updated and enriched, aiming at improving the representability of diverse Latin American and Caribbean heritage on the UNESCO World Heritage List; and
 - The Expected Result 1.2: Reinforce Tentative Lists as instruments for cooperation; and then

- An Expected Result 1.3: National inventories updated to reflect the diversity of heritage, following gaps analysis and regional cooperation.

[Next slide, please]

- Strategic Objective 2 will be reinforced: Effective management for the conservation and promotion of World Heritage in the region. Under this Strategic Objective, we have:
 - Expected Result 2.1 which is: Conservation of World Heritage properties is improved through effective management, protection and adequate monitoring in line with the sustainable development;
 - Expected Result 2.2 will be: Strengthen legal framework and inclusion of World Heritage into larger policies;
 - Expected Result 2.3: Promote resilience at UNESCO World Heritage sites; and
 - 2.4: Enhance adequate and sustainable funding to meet the needs of World Heritage at all levels.

[Next slide, please]

- Strategic Objective 3 is: Develop and implement capacity-building for innovative approaches to conservation, management and promotion of World Heritage. Under this strategic objective, we have:
 - Expected Result 3.1: Capacities to enhance sustainable conservation and effective management are developed; and then
 - Expected Result 3.2: Promote exchange programmes for shared knowledge.

[Next slide, please]

- Strategic Objective 4 is: Enhance better use of heritage education, communication and awareness raising formulas for the protection of World Heritage. To attain this Strategic Objective, we have foreseen three Expected Results:
 - Expected Result 4.1: Heritage education, communication, awareness and readiness to be enhanced;
 - Expected Result 4.2: Improve World Heritage properties presentation; and then
 - 4.3: Development of useful research for the conservation of property.

[Next slide, please]

- Strategic Objective 5 will be: Reinforce community participation and stakeholder engagement for effective management of World Heritage property. To attain this objective, we have foreseen three Expected Results which are:
 - 5.1: Improve the role and involvement of local community and indigenous peoples, and stakeholders in the conservation and management of UNESCO World Heritage properties;
 - The Expected Result 5.2: Strengthen sustainable tourism in accordance with communities' human rights; and then
 - 5.3: Integrate stakeholders for an effective governance and management of sites.

[Next slide, please]

In conclusion, we have, I think, many problems in the region. I prefer the use of the term "problem" to the term "challenge", they are almost synonymous, but there are also many solutions.

Based on the implementation of the Second Cycle and on the basis of what we have exchanged and shared in during this Third Cycle exercise, we have the legitimate, reasonable hope that the region will progress again in the next years as much as it, in a spectacular way, it progressed in the last years.

[Next slide, please]

The next steps will be, of course, to shift to the operational stage after the consultation, after the definition of the objectives and the results, etc., the Action Plan will become action.

So, first of all, we will work at its dissemination. We are going to organize a starting meeting in December with all the necessary, all the concerned stakeholders, and we will follow up the recommendation integration into the national sites level plans.

We will, of course, continue to work as we did, with some success sometimes, to resource mobilization because, of course, we will need resources both in-kind and financial to improve this plan.

And then, we will, of course, follow up and ask for our colleagues of the Asia-Pacific region, we will have a mid-cycle assessment to finalize in 2027.

[Next slide, please]

Before concluding, I would like just to shortly quickly thank the States Parties for their commitment, for their exceptional work and also the Advisory Bodies, of course, of the World Heritage Committee, the regional experts, independent experts, coming from all the subregions, which work with us for the implementation of this difficult and complex exercise. Of course, the Category 2 Centres, the one in Zacatecas and the one in Rio, which really contributed to the exercise, but we hope, now, they will contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan, and of course, the colleagues of the field offices of UNESCO, which helped us a lot during this exercise.

[Next slide, please]

So, the draft decision is, Distinguished Delegates, on page 120 of the English version of the document and page 130 of the French version of the Document WHC/23/45.COM/10B.

Thank you, Mr. President. That's all.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for this informative presentation.

I would like to ask if there are any comments from the floor regarding this subject.

México.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

Our country has completed the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, coordinated by the World Heritage Centre through the Policy and Statutory Meetings Unit. We also benefited from constant support from the person responsible for Periodic Reporting. We also benefited from advice from the LAC Unit. The human factor is essential in these endeavours in addition to the institutional features, in order to carry out extensive projects like these, involving a number of stakeholders around the region, including the site managers of 140 properties as well as national focal points.

The final report is the result of the effort of 33 countries of the LAC region, and includes the Action Plan for 2023-2029. The priorities are in line with the Declaration adopted during the UNESCO Global Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development - MONDIACULT 2022, in addition to the global conference on "The Next 50 years - The future of World Heritage in challenging times enhancing resilience and sustainability". Mexico is currently preparing risk assessment plans as well as natural disaster preparedness plans alongside climate change adaptation and mitigation plans, in line with the Global Strategy for Risk Reduction and promoting World Heritage as an effective tool in the face of climate change and a sustainable option in the transmission of traditional knowledge.

Another key point that Mexico has been pushing for since 2013 is the joint implementation of the Convention alongside other Cultural Conventions under UNESCO, such as the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. The aim is to foster the conservation of World Heritage properties, as well as best practices for the management thereof.

We'd also like to thank the Advisory Bodies for their support, which has been essential throughout this procedure.

On behalf of my colleagues and speaking in my role, I would like to thank the other Observer countries of our region and to give them the floor, such as Cuba and Jamaica, so that they can give their views on this experience.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

We thank the Secretariat and Mr. Rosi for the presentation of this informative report on the results of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the LAC region.

In particular, as regards the coordination which has been carried out among the different subregions, we'd like to highlight the efforts undertaken by countries in the LAC region in implementing Sections I as well as the commitment of site managers when it comes to answering the questions set out in the questionnaire for this Periodic Reporting.

Argentina filled out the questionnaires in due time and we involved all stakeholders, including national World Heritage authorities and the persons involved in protecting the 11 sites on the World Heritage List.

The report satisfactorily reports on the outcome of Periodic Reporting in the region as well as the draft Action Plan for 2023-2029 for the Latin American and Caribbean region.

This is a key tool for better implementation of the Convention in our region. The priorities and Strategic Objectives of the Action Plan constitute a great opportunity to foster regional cooperation. Therefore, we encourage the subregional adoption of the Action Plan and the involvement of States Parties alongside the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies and C2Cs. All of the efforts made it possible to come up with an Action Plan for 2023-2029 for South America as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to thank Mr. Rosi for his report.

We see that the Third Periodic Reporting Cycle of Latin America and the Caribbean was successfully completed thanks to the commitment of States Parties, national focal points, World Heritage site managers, experts, national commissions, and NGOs.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines commends the efforts undertaken in this exercise, which provides a rich array of responses to the current situation in the region and, may be for the first time if I am not mistaken, with subregionally disaggregated data that reflects the specificities of the Caribbean as Small Island Developing States, Central America and Mexico, and South America.

We thank the Centre for the online meeting made available to the region for this purpose, in cooperation with the field offices. The support of the field offices and Category 2 Centres is crucial.

Although a total of 76% of countries responded that heritage is, in some way, integrated into broader policies at the national level, there are some gaps in their implementation, providing clear evidence that capacity-building is needed in the Latin America and Caribbean region at all levels to assist decision makers, social sectors, communities to adopt appropriate policies and raise awareness about the protection and conservation of heritage. We encourage the Centre to continue capacity development on risk preparedness and climate change adaptation, impact assessment tools and capacities, as well as training educational strategy to strengthen capacity development in the field of conservation, protection, presentation, and management of heritage.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the Third Cycle Regional Framework Action Plan 2023-2029, proposed by the Secretariat with the five Strategic Objectives, based on the 5 Cs. The prioritization of the 38 actions must be determined in light of the environmental, cultural, social, and economic context, and adapted to the specific needs of the region and subregions.

With the inscription of the sites of Argentina, Guatemala, and Suriname during this session, Latin America and Caribbean region, now, has 150 World Heritage properties distributed across 28 States Parties in the region. 5 States Parties do not yet have a site. Therefore, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines attaches a great importance on the Upstream Process to accelerate the nomination process. We look forward to working with the Centre to finalize the Tentative List update and with the Advisory Bodies to move forward with the preparation of nomination files with a view to ensuring a broader representative World Heritage List.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, there are no more comments or interventions from Committee members. I would like to...

So, I'll pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I just also wanted to again, maybe, highlight a number of important information that you have in this exercise, in this Periodic Reporting.

The first one has already been shared by the Delegate of Saint Vincent is, of course, that this is the first time this result is being shown with a number of specificities concerning the different regions. I think that was one of the efforts, and this effort was done thanks to all the meetings attended by all the site managers, but also the decision makers and others who are looking into policies. Really, I would like to thank them for having trust in the whole exercise that we conducted. Again, the report has highlighted one important thing is to continue reinforcing the

representativity on the World Heritage List of the region, and this is very important because it is based on the fact that a number of States Parties from the Caribbean do not yet have a site on the World Heritage List, but also it is important that the issue of updating the Tentative List be supported. And this, if you remember, has been one of the priorities highlighted after the celebration of the 50th anniversary.

The second important point which came out of the region is the whole work around the contribution of World Heritage to sustainable development, and also how sustainable tourism can be important in the promotion and also preservation of that, and how it contributes not only to the communities in general but, in particular, to the indigenous communities, because this is also something which has been clearly highlighted in this exercise.

The last comment I wanted to make is that, as you can see, also, the issue of the need to continue capacity-building has been highlighted. So, I just wanted to go back to Item 6 where you have requested us now to prepare the Capacity-Building Strategy, the new Capacity-Building Strategy, which of course will take stock of the results of these two exercises, the one from Asia and the Pacific but also the one from Latin America and the Caribbean, where it is important that the new Strategy reflects the needs highlighted in this exercise, but also to support the Action Plans that you have in this report.

So, it is also an opportunity to call for members of the Committee and States Parties to the Convention to support us to prepare this World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy, because we are in need of funding to make it real. And so, I am taking this opportunity to call for support because capacity-building is important as you have already again mentioned it and we need it.

Lastly, really, I would like to thank also all the experts and the Advisory Bodies, who have been involved in working with us during this exercise.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, dear Director.

We have two requests from the floor, Cuba and Jamaica. So, I would like to pass the floor to Cuba for a two-minute statement.

The Observer Delegation of Cuba: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

This is the first time we're taking the floor and, therefore, we'd like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their hospitality, and congratulate you on your able stewardship of this meeting.

Cuba wishes to highlight the importance of Periodic Reporting as an effective tool for the assessment of the state of implementation of the Convention as well as the management of inscribed properties and the challenges we face in the future.

In our national experience, the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting was a participatory exercise with in-depth reflections and the participation of different stakeholders including communities.

The results are clear. For the region, the Action Plan was adopted on the basis of the results of the Reporting, and it should be used as a tool in decision making in order to continue to strengthen international cooperation as well.

We'd like to thank the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for their support throughout the development of the Report in terms of technical support and remote support.

For Cuba, the Periodic Reporting exercise coincided with the final phase of the new Law of the Protection of Cultural Heritage, which is a significant step forward in terms of our national legislation and is an important international tool for protecting cultural heritage. Cuba has revised its Tentative List, which will soon be submitted to the Committee. These processes have allowed us to adopt an integrated, holistic approach to cultural heritage by repositioning the social aspects of cultural heritage as key drivers for sustainable development. Our shared willingness, which was displayed throughout the Reporting exercise, is reflected in the Declaration of the 77 plus China. After the meeting in Havana, Cuba, we were able to discuss these issues with the Director of the World Heritage Centre, and we thank him for his presence.

Once again, we'd like to thank you for your support and assure you of our full commitment to implementing the 1972 Convention.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Jamaica.

The Observer Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair.

Jamaica expresses its thanks and appreciation to the LAC Unit of the Secretariat for the extensive work carried out in facilitating the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting for the LAC region.

We were able to engage the process, albeit virtually, and determine the issues impacting Jamaica, the Caribbean, and the entire LAC region, and this was due to the wonderful support received during the process.

In this process, however, we found that among the States of the Caribbean, there is a submitted site for possible inscription every two years, with the last site, prior to Suriname in this session, being inscribed in 2017, in Antigua. This highlights for us the urgent need for capacity-building, as was just said, in nomination development for the Caribbean, as well as a better understanding of UNESCO recommendations such as the Recommendations on the Historic Urban Landscape and the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections. And we look forward to the Secretariat's plans in this direction.

Jamaica also believes there is a there is significant room for the countries of the region to work together in more effective ways. We experienced this with Mexico for underwater archaeology and really take this opportunity to thank our colleagues in Mexico for the help they provided for us.

Finally, we are pleased with the development of the six-year Action Plan and thank the Secretariat for putting our collective thoughts together on this. However, we know that, though the LAC region all face similar issues, a subregional framework will still be needed for Caribbean States. Issues such as updating Tentative Lists, management of sites, sustainable development, and climate change are all priorities for us, and we look forward to working together alongside the LAC Unit to furthering the work in these areas.

Again, we thank the LAC Unit for the significant work done on this process.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there are no more comments, I invite you, dear colleagues, to examine and adopt Draft Decision **45 COM 10B** included in Document 10B, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 10B**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Also, there are no comments or objections.

I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 10B** adopted. *[gavel]*

14. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE // ASSISTANCE INTERNATIONALE

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We move now to Item 14, devoted to the International Assistance.

To this end, I would like to invite you to pay attention to Document 45.COM/14. This information contained in this document spans over a 2-year period.

This document will be introduced to the Committee by the Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre.

You may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The first part of the document.

[Next slide, please]

The first part of the document is related to the International Assistance requests within the purview of the World Heritage Committee, that is, requests more than US\$30,000.

Please note that all requests under this amount are within the purview of the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee. The list of the requests approved in 2020-2021 and in 2022-2023, until 15 June 2023, can be found in the annex of Document 45.COM/14.

[Next, please]

You now see on the screen a summary of the requests submitted to the Committee for its decision. The funds available under the Conservation & Management Assistance budget, as of 15 June 2023, amount to a little more than US\$543,000, so there are enough funds to approve all 6 requests if the Committee decides to do so.

[Next, please]

The first request comes from Côte d'Ivoire, for the conservation of the Sudanese style mosques. The request responds to the Committee's recommendation made in 2021 at the time of inscription of the site. It is, therefore, recommended for approval. The amount recommended by the panel is a bit lower than the amount requested, because the panel considered that defrayment for the participants in the workshops should be reduced.

[Next, please]

The second request is from Ghana, for the preparation of a management plan for Asante Traditional Buildings. The site was inscribed in 1980 and has never had a conservation and management plan. This request, therefore, represents a clear and urgent priority; it is, therefore, recommended for approval, with a small adjustment in the budget which is reflected in the draft decision.

[Next, please]

The third request is for Abu Mena, a site inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger since 2001. The request foresees a training programme in the field of conservation to improve the skills of Abu Mena's staff and enable them to set up the conservation plan on the ground. This request is in direct response to the repeated decisions of the World Heritage Committee and is, therefore, recommended for approval.

[Next, please]

The fourth request aims to support condition assessment of shipwrecks within the Bikini Atoll Nuclear Test Site during the 2023 dive season. The project would start implementing a set of activities that are needed to protect and manage the property, in accordance with requests made by the World Heritage Committee at the time of inscription in 2010. This request is, therefore, recommended for approval. The amount recommended by the panel is a bit lower than the amount requested, because the panel considered that the amounts dedicated to diving equipment could be removed and that marine park fees should be waived.

[Next, please]

The fifth request aims to support conservation activities at a Hindu building within the World Heritage site of Polonnaruwa Ancient City. The project aims at strengthening the foundation to ensure safety of the building and at re-assembling the collapsed stone blocks. This request is, therefore, recommended for approval.

[Next, please]

The sixth and last request relates to the proper documentation of monuments at the World Heritage property of "National History Park – Citadel, Sans Souci, Ramiers" and also foresees the preparation of a risk preparedness plan for the main monuments that is aimed first at staff and experts and secondly at local communities. This request is, therefore, recommended for approval, noting that at the time of the implementation of the activity, the use of International Assistance funds should focus primarily on the attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value.

[Next, please]

The second Part of the document provides a brief overview of International Assistance requests approved in 2020-2021. The main figures are shown on the screen. As you can see, Africa and the LDCs are the main beneficiaries of International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund.

[Next, please]

Part III provides an update of the status of the 2022-2023 budget for International Assistance as of 15 June 2023. As you can see on the screen, almost all the funds have been used or have been already earmarked for approvals, including for the possible approvals to be decided by the Committee in a few minutes. Therefore, there is currently funding left only under natural heritage, where we usually receive a lower number of requests than for cultural heritage.

[Next, please]

In January-February of 2022, a review all the applications and final reports of the completed projects supported by International Assistance from 2016 to 2021 has been undertaken, focusing on Conservation & Management Assistance and Emergency Assistance. For each project, a short write-up captured the key impact and contribution

towards sustainable development including any innovative strategies or aspects. The full report is available on the International Assistance web page.

Some of the key findings are shown on the screen. Many projects identify new models of governance related to heritage management and set a framework which lay the grounds for sustainable development activities. The role of the projects in capacity-building at various levels also provides a potential tool to formalize the integration of the SDGs in World Heritage management.

[Next slide, please]

Mr. Chairperson, thank you very much.

Just to recall that the draft decision can be found on page 29 of the English version and page 30 of the French version of Document WHC/23/45.COM/14.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, dear Deputy Director.

So, I would like to ask if there are any comments concerning this Agenda item.

I will start with India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

India is happy to note the presentation made by the Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre regarding International Assistance.

We are happy to note that Africa and the LDCs form a majority of these beneficiaries of the World Heritage Fund.

We are happy to approve US\$85,000 for Côte d'Ivoire, happy to note that Ghana will be supported by US\$43,678. We are pleased to also note that Egypt will be supported with US\$56,504, Marshall Islands in the Asia Pacific will be supported by US\$70,000, in our neighbourhood, Sri Lanka will be supported by US\$47,500, and Haiti will be supported by US\$33,325.

We would like to urge the World Heritage Committee to explore new and innovative ways to increase the funding for the World Heritage Fund. It is an important fund that can be channelized to fund more projects across the world. And going forward, we look forward to some more suggestions, more contributions, and more innovative ways to fund this WHF funding.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

Indeed, it is a very critical issue.

Are there any additional interventions or questions? It seems...

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am looking at some of the requests.

Some of the requests they have evaluation, reporting. They request some budgets, some of them with zero budget. Does that mean the request coming..., the State Party is participating with some money for the evaluation and reporting?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. I will pass it back to the Deputy Director.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson, and thank you to the Distinguished Delegate of Oman.

Yes, the response is yes.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I see no more questions.

And I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the Draft Decision **45 COM 14**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received no amendment for the Draft Decision **45 COM 14**.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And if there are no objections or comments, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 14** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

11. FOLLOW-UP TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF EVALUATIONS AND AUDITS ON WORKING METHODS AND OUTCOMES OF THE AD-HOC WORKING GROUP // SUIVI DES RECOMMANDATIONS DES ÉVALUATIONS ET AUDITS SUR LES MÉTHODES DE TRAVAIL ET RÉSULTATS DU GROUPE DE TRAVAIL AD-HOC

The Chairperson:

So, dear colleagues,

We now have to consider our Agenda Item 11, which concerns the Follow-up to Recommendations of Evaluations and Audits on Working Methods. The relevant document for this item is Document 45.COM/11.Rev. This report spans over a 2-year period.

As you will remember, at its extended 44th session in 2021, the Committee decided to extend the mandate of the established Ad-hoc Working Group in two sub-groups.

I am pleased to give the floor to the Chairpersons of the 2 sub-groups of Ad-hoc Working Group, Ms. Yara Al-Ghafri (Oman), Chairperson of Sub-group 1, and Ms. Chiara Franco (Italy), Chairperson of Sub-group 2, who will report to the Distinguished Committee on the work of the Group.

Ms. Al-Ghafri, may you have the floor.

The Chairperson of Sub-group 1 of the Ad-hoc Working Group (Ms. Al-Ghafri):

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Through its Decision **44 COM 11**, the World Heritage Committee extended the mandate of the Ad-hoc Working Group, composed of the members of the Committee and up to two non-members per Electoral Group. The Group was divided into two sub-groups with specific mandates, and Sub-group 1 was mandated to analyse and propose sustainable and innovative solutions – including the cost-sharing mechanism described in Paragraph 168bis of the Operational Guidelines - for financing the nomination process including the Preliminary Assessment, with the aim to improve transparency, cost efficiency and identify possible synergies, overlaps, and potential cost-saving measures to be taken into account in the reformed evaluation cycle.

Sub-group 1 met online on eight occasions in 2022 and 2023. It was chaired in 2022 by Ms. Zoya Kritskaya from the Russian Federation, and in 2023 by myself. A Drafting Group, led by Ms. Kristin Karlsen from Norway, was created and met online on 9 May 2023 to draft the recommendations, which were then endorsed by the Sub-group on 16 June 2023.

During the meetings, it was underlined on numerous occasions that the main objective of the Preliminary Assessment was to improve the nomination process by facilitating the preparation of the nomination dossier, to decrease the costs of nominations for Member States, and to reduce the imbalance of the List. The estimated cost of the PA was presented and discussed, based on the analysis made by the Advisory Bodies, and which would amount to US\$1,181,220 for 2 years.

During the meetings, the group examined several presentations related to the financial situation of the WHC, including the IOS Performance Audit of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the financial report of the WHC (2020-2021), an analysis of funding under the World Heritage Fund, Regular Budget and Extrabudgetary Funds, and a

presentation on various budget lines of the WHF, as well as on the different existing reserves under the Fund. Several funding scenarios of the PA were presented by the World Heritage Centre:

- 1) To reduce the number of files reviewed per year;
- 2) To use the sub-account for the evaluation of nominations;
- 3) To decrease budget lines for advisory services.

There was a consensus among the group not to reduce the number of files nor decrease budget lines, particularly those pertaining to International Assistance and capacity-building.

The group mainly discussed and examined voluntary funding measures, although one State Party, referring to the long-lasting financial difficulties faced by the Convention, stressed the need to open a fundamental discussion on how to increase assessed contributions. Some States Parties made some funding proposals such as leveraging the private sector. One State Party submitted the idea of making the PA voluntary or introducing a mechanism that allows the States Parties to nominate more than one dossier per year at a substantially higher cost which could then be diverted into the World Heritage Fund to either subsidize the nominations of other countries or improve capacity-building in those countries.

The Group also recalled the different options presented in the Resolution **WHC 19 GA 8**, Paragraph 7, which recommended to States Parties to make unrestricted supplementary voluntary contributions, and discussed the importance of reiterating the call to States Parties to voluntarily double their assessed contributions, and to contribute to the sub-account on the evaluation of nominations, based on the cost-sharing mechanism as well as to settle any pending assessed contributions. This formed the basis for recommendations 1 and 2.

The Group also engaged in several discussions with BSP, the Bureau of Strategic Planning, on potential ways to leverage extrabudgetary financial resources. While acknowledging the difficulty in raising contributions for statutory processes, BSP recognized the potential of leveraging funds for the World Heritage Convention. One proposal was to potentially explore, if funds are made available, a membership scheme that would encourage World Heritage sites to contribute voluntarily to the World Heritage Fund. Discussion was also undertaken with regards to organizing partners Forum. In this respect, the Group agreed to recommend to the World Heritage Centre to collaborate with the Bureau of Strategic Planning on ways to raise extrabudgetary funding for the World Heritage Convention, including for the nomination process, and to look into ways to consider the possibility of organizing a Partner's Forum annually, in dialogue with States Parties, and to ensure appropriate follow-up and implementation of the outcomes. This formed the basis for recommendations 3 and 4.

The group also decided to recommend to use up to 100% of the amount in the sub-account on evaluations of nominations to contribute to the financing of the nomination process, particularly the Preliminary Assessment, as from September 2023, and to complement, if necessary, the financing needs of the World Heritage Centre related to the Preliminary Assessment, with funds from the operating reserve, as other reserves are restricted. This formed the basis for recommendations 5 and 6.

As these options may not necessarily constitute stable and sustainable sources of funding in the long term, the Group decided to recommend continuing discussions in view of finding sustainable solutions for financing the nomination process, including the Preliminary Assessment, in the framework of the next Ad-hoc Working Group to be established for 23-24. This formed the basis for recommendation 7.

Allow me to conclude by thanking the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as the Host Country of the World Heritage Committee, for trusting me in chairing this Sub-group, and Ms. Chiara Franco, from Italy, Chairperson of Sub-group 2, for her fruitful cooperation.

I also thank all the members of Sub-group 1, the Advisory Bodies, as well as BSP and the World Heritage Centre team for their valuable input and support.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan, Yara Al-Ghafri.

Ms. Franco, you have the floor.

The Chairperson of Sub-group 2 of the Ad-hoc Working Group (Ms. Franco):

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

The mandate that was given to Sub-group 2 can be resumed into three main subjects:

- 1) The long term financial sustainability of the Convention;
- 2) The mapping of current and potential additional advisory services providers with a view to improving geographical balance, and

3) The feasible procedures related to Article 11.3 of the Convention.

For what concerns the issue of long term financial sustainability, the States Parties had to acknowledge that, notwithstanding increasing challenges facing the Convention, there is a growing difficulty to adequately finance all necessary activities. Therefore, the Working Group examined several scenarios for possible cost savings, starting from the options that had already been presented by the Secretariat over the last few years, including:

- The reduction of the annual limit of nominations that can be evaluated;
- The reduction of state of conservation reports to be examined every year; and
- The reduction of the frequency of the meetings of the World Heritage Committee.

However, none of these possible scenarios was agreed upon by the Working Group. Indeed, all different scenarios examined were considered either not very effective in terms of savings or, in any case, not desirable for the purposes of the Convention.

Regarding the second issue within the mandate of the Working Group, it was acknowledged with conviction that there is a growing need for improved geographical balance in the Convention, which was deemed as a crucial and priority issue for the credibility of the Convention itself. The Advisory Bodies shared with the Working Group detailed information and statistics on their geographical diversity, and on their ongoing efforts to tackle the issue of geographical balance of the World Heritage List. Some reforms that have already been implemented by the Advisory Bodies, with the objective of improving geographical balance were recommended by the Working Group, with reference, in particular, to the change in composition of ICOMOS panels, replacing a system in which the composition of the panels reflected the geographical repartition of nominations submitted, with a system in which all regions of the world are equally represented.

Additional information can be found in Annex C of the document, and this reform has already been put in place in the 2022-2023 cycle of evaluation.

Further proposals by the Advisory Bodies meant to improve geographical representation were also discussed, and additional changes and improvements in the procedures were indeed encouraged in the recommendations.

Above all, there was a consensus on the need of enhancing capacity-building activities while also recognizing that this would require additional funding.

It was, therefore, recommended that the Committee calls upon States Parties to contribute to the World Heritage Fund through supplementary voluntary contributions for the financing of capacity-building activities.

The mandate of the Sub-group also included the possibility of exploring the criteria and governance under which the Committee may cooperate with international and non-governmental organizations, in accordance with Articles 13.7 and 14.2 of the Convention as well as Paragraph 38 of the Operational Guidelines.

In this context, a preliminary mapping of current and potential additional advisory services providers was presented by the Secretariat in accordance with the mandate of the Working Group. Such preliminary mapping included 271 entities. It was agreed that should the Committee decide in the future to work with additional services providers, others than the Advisory Bodies which are mentioned in the Convention, further debate would be needed as for the selection criteria to be used to choose such services providers as well as regarding the type of services that these organizations could provide.

Mr. Chairperson,

The mandate of the Working Group, including also the dialogue regarding Article 11.3 of the Convention, meaning the possibility of introducing new procedures to face possible nominations in contested territories. The debate in this case also did not lead to a definitive conclusion.

The Working Group finally considered the proposal meant to strengthen the dialogue between States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies with reference to the Reactive Monitoring process. While the proposal received broad support within the Working Group, a consensus could not be reached on whether the issue fell within the actual mandate of the Working Group itself. Therefore, no specific recommendation to the Committee was adopted at this regard. As you know, this issue has then been discussed in this Committee under Item 7.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

In such a limited number of meetings, the Working Group could not find concrete solutions to enormous and essential challenges for the future of the Convention in the aftermath of its 50th anniversary. Nevertheless, the discussions engaged were extremely encouraging as for the willingness and commitment of the States Parties for possible reforms in order to make the Convention increasingly efficient and up to date. This is also why it was recommended that the mandate of the Working Group be extended, including again, most of the issues that were already dealt with during this year's meetings, with the wish that new, concrete, innovative and, perhaps, creative solutions be found as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to sincerely thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the Host Country of the 45th extended session for trusting me in chairing this Sub-group, as well as the Advisory Bodies for the contributions to the discussion and the Chairperson of Sub-group [1], Ms. Yara Al-Ghafri for the excellent cooperation. Of course, I also thank all the participants to the Sub-group, and finally the work of the Working Group would not have been possible without the constant and precious support of the Secretariat, which I also want to thank once again.

Thank you all for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to see if there are any comments from the floor regarding this item.

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank both presenters for this excellent report and efforts.

I have two comments.

Yara, you mentioned about fundraising for the nomination, which is, I think, one of essential efforts at UNESCO. We need to explore this idea more and to see how can we fundraise either both the Committee, in addition to the World Heritage Centre and cooperation. I think this is very important to fundraise, especially for those countries in need to fundraise for the nomination. There is effort or there are efforts in the World Heritage Centre for the capacity-building to build the file, but maybe we want to enlarge that a little bit, even to include the nomination. This is one point.

The second point is mentioned by the second presenter and that is service provider, which is in the criteria "how to enlarge the Advisory Bodies". The idea, if we remember when I mentioned in one of my discussions, it is about capacity-building to enlarge the Advisory Body themselves. Where we need to have the second line, the third line, prepared to replace and to assist the Advisory Body on this. So instead of looking for service providers, I think it's very important that the Advisory Bodies themselves, I mean, our Advisory Bodies now, IUCN, ICCROM, and ICOMOS themselves, they need to enlarge their capacity by having more people queuing in line 2, line 3. They are very to be trained and by giving some services to help them in order to develop their professionalism. This is how I see it instead of having service provider.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Let me start by conveying Nigerians appreciation to the Ad-hoc Working Group for their efforts, which produced a recommendation by two Sub-groups, submitted in the document we are presently considering.

We note the very useful proposals on financing the nomination process, including the Preliminary Assessment, as well as those on financial stability, advisory services, and dialogue on Article 11.3, the recommendation of our ways forward, and also window for further discussion to improve our working methods.

At the same time, we are conscious of the continued heavy budget constraint of the World Heritage Fund, and the need for an effective management of increasing size of the List, and the call for the more balanced World Heritage List by reducing the gap in regional representation. However, these are a few issues are still lingering. They merit greater attention, perhaps through a broader participation and a general contribution that will enhance equity.

While we receive the report of the Ad-hoc Working Group with immense thanks, Nigeria is of the opinion that this Working Group could be enlarged and strengthened with wider participation for more diverse viewpoints in a spirit of continued quest for effective solution.

We, therefore, wish to join the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a co-sponsor of the amendments to the draft decision on this item. In particular, we support the creation of an Open-ended Working Group that will assume, among other responsibilities, the mandates of the Ad-hoc Working Group.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Chair.

Egypt would like to express its sincere appreciation for the dedicated efforts of the Ad-Hoc Working Group since the adoption of Decision **44 COM 11**. The work accomplished thus far is truly commendable and would certainly have not been possible without the cooperation and support of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

While we acknowledge the notable progress made in certain domains, particularly those related to the reformed evaluation cycle, we are also keenly aware that there are areas that require further deliberations and, more importantly, tangible outcomes. It is our collective responsibility to address these critical issues with the utmost diligence and unwavering commitment.

In this regard, we firmly support the amendment proposed for the establishment of an Open-ended Working Group in lieu of the current Ad-hoc Working Group. We firmly believe that this transition to an Open-ended Working Group would facilitate more inclusive discussions, thereby allowing for broader range of perspectives and expertise to be considered.

Chair,

We must emphasize the significance of the mandates proposed for this Open-ended Working Group. The persistent geographical imbalance of the World Heritage List remains a considerable shortcoming in the implementation of this Convention. It is regrettable that in this session, held shortly after the 50th anniversary of the Convention, we find ourselves still grappling with this issue, despite the adoption of the Global Strategy in 1994 and numerous, if not countless, decisions. Some regions, notably the Arab and the African regions, continue to be severely underrepresented. This underrepresentation is tied to deficiencies in addressing both the technical and financial needs related to the Convention. It is our collective duty to rectify this imbalance and work towards a more equitable representation.

Based on above, Mr. Chair, we fully support the amendment presented by Saudi Arabia.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The South African Delegation wishes to thank the Secretariat for providing a comprehensive report on the outcomes and recommendations of the Ad-hoc Working Group.

We know that the two Sub-groups, they held many meetings over the past two years in an attempt to find sustainable solutions for the various issues that they were tasked with to discuss.

Mr. Chair,

We are pleased with the progress made in Sub-group 1 in finding a solution to financing the nomination process, including the Preliminary Assessment, whilst recognizing, at the same time, that other funding proposals will still need to be found.

With regards to Sub-group 2, Mr. Chair, we are in support of the amendment proposed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the draft decision that the mandate of the Ad-hoc Working Group be transferred into an Open-ended Working Group to continue to delve deeper into the current imbalances on the World Heritage List, the need for further capacity-building initiatives, as well as finding additional financial solutions for the nomination process. We believe that, whilst the Centre, the Advisory Bodies, and the African World Heritage Fund are working tirelessly to address these issues on behalf of the African continent, this Open-ended Working Group will provide another opportunity for States Parties to propose innovative solutions to these challenges currently facing the implementation of the Convention. In this regard, we have noted the report and recommendation 12 by the Ad-Hoc Working Group of Sub-group 2 that the possibility of using additional service providers for the activities carried out within the Convention should be further debated.

As the discussions on this issue have not been exhausted, we recommend that we retain the original text in Paragraph 7 c) within the DR, which refers to exploring the possibility of using additional service providers, in order for the new Open-ended Working Group to discuss this matter further.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, South Africa is ready to participate actively in the Open-ended Working Group to contribute to the deliberations of the Group.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just I want to thank Ms. Al-Ghafri and Ms. Franco for leading the two Sub-groups.

It was a difficult exercise, but we have reached some interesting recommendations, maybe, to be discussed later. But, of course, I would like to make echo to what has been said by my colleague from Egypt about the balanced and credible list of the World Heritage List, and I would like also to thank Saudi Arabia for proposing a broader Working Group to think in depth on this process, on these problems.

Of course, we support the amendments, and we have just slight amendments to be presented later.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for giving India the floor.

We would also like to thank the Chairs of the two Sub-groups for their exhaustive presentations.

This has indeed given us a food for thought. I think we will cut our discussion short, but in the end, we would like to say that we would also align with the amendments that have been proposed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. But perhaps, at a later stage, we would like to discuss the Sub-group 1 and Sub-group 2 initiatives in greater detail later on.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Indeed. Thank you so much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you very much, Chair.

The State Party of Zambia takes note and appreciates the warm welcome and hospitality extended to the Delegates of this extraordinary Committee session.

We also are alive to the fact that Africa and, indeed, Zambia have, for some time, been underrepresented in terms of the sites inscribed on the World Heritage List and overrepresented on the Endangered List. This is not healthy for the Convention from the pedestal of Africa, Arab and Latin America. This underrepresentation of sites on the World Heritage List, despite the rich cultural diversity, geodiversity, and biodiversity in Africa, is not only a source of concern but demotivating. This is largely due to the lack or scarcity of human, logistical, and technical capacities.

Mr. Chairman,

The proposal by Saudi Arabia is coming at the time when States Parties such as my own are struggling to nominate and have sites inscribed on the prestigious List. At this stage, State Party of Zambia, we see light at the end of the tunnel if this amendment by Saudi Arabia is adopted.

Mr. Chairman,

Further, I would like to, as a State Party of Zambia, propose that given the leadership that has been demonstrated by the hospitable Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, be extended further by allowing them to take us through this new initiative if adopted, considering that they are also already championing the cause for a balanced World Heritage Listing. You know, it is said that: "If you want to become, you must be seen to be in the process of becoming". And already Saudi Arabia has shown that they are already becoming, and they are in the process of becoming.

Mr. Chairman,

Thus, Zambia is further proposing the inclusion of Saudi Arabia in the draft amendment to lead the Open-ended Working Group.

I submit.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Dawlat Qatar.*

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The State of Qatar would like to express my appreciation to the Ad-hoc Working Group for their dedicated efforts, and we acknowledge the budgetary limitations of the World Heritage Fund as well as the need for efficient and effective management to expand the scope of the List and address the call for a more balanced World Heritage List.

Qatar is also aware of the comprehensive Global Strategy adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 18th session, which provides a broader framework for analysing and implementing a programme to reduce the gap between the regional representation and achieve a balanced and a credible World Heritage List.

Mr. Chair,

We believe that creating an Open-ended Working Group of States Parties is a worthwhile endeavour. The establishment of such a group will enable all States Parties to engage in constructive discussions, which are essential for following reasons:

- First, reducing the gap in the representation of the States Parties on the World Heritage List; and
- Second, enhancing the balance of this List; and
- Thirdly, finding a sustainable solution to the financial requirements of the nomination process.

Mr. Chair,

The State of Qatar advises that this Open-ended Working Group should collaborate closely with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. Furthermore, it should be responsible for submitting a report with its recommendation during the upcoming 46th session of this Committee.

Mr. Chair,

The State of Qatar fully supports the amendment proposed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Belgica.*

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Belgium really enjoyed the constructive dialogue we had in the Working Groups.

I would like to thank both Chairs, and also the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for submitting the amendment to Item 11 that we have before us now, and we wholeheartedly agree that we need an open mind and creativity to look at the challenges the Convention is facing.

These challenges are manifold and complex, and what is mentioned in Sub-paras a), b), and c) under Para 7 is absolutely pertinent and urgent. But in the longer term, we also need to look at things such as governance arrangements, the frequency and length of Committee meetings, timelines and methods for the evaluation process, the implementation of upstream assistance, and most importantly, the systematic support for the conservation of World Heritage properties.

Chair,

We believe that the Open-ended Working Group that is created can also be the creative forum for the 195 States Parties, Advisory Bodies, Secretariat, and maybe even others, to have a fundamental reflection on the operation of the Convention. We really need this discussion. We have long contemplated whether this should be a Committee-led initiative, or rather something to be organized by the General Assembly, but considering the open character of the Working Group that is established here, if we follow the amendments submitted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, we believe this could work.

But we would like to ask the Secretary to ensure that the General Assembly is involved or, at the very least, kept informed as well.

So, Chair, Belgium will propose an additional Sub-para d) to the revised Para 7 that introduces the idea of starting a fundamental reflection on the operation of the Convention. But considering the complexity and multifaceted character of topics to be discussed, we propose that the Working Group will initially focus on defining the mandate

and working methods for this fundamental reflection. This is what we foresee for the next couple of months. And then, based on the foundations that are laid by mid-2024, the actual fundamental reflection could be launched at next year's Committee session, following, of course, the approval of the mandate and the Working Group working methods as suggested by the Open-ended Working Group.

Again, we believe that these discussions will take some time and we should give it time. Maybe we could look at the 50th anniversary of the first meeting of the Committee in 2028 to present the conclusions of this fundamental reflection.

Chair,

Belgium will also, in addition to this Para [d)], suggest a few technical additions to Para 3 for the sake of completeness.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would like to thank the Member States that proposed amendments of the Draft Decision **45 COM 11**, which pertains to central issues and procedures for the implementation of the Convention.

Our Delegation has actively participated in the discussions of the Ad-hoc Working Group, and we would like to commend the work and progress made in the context of the two Sub-groups meetings, during which a very constructive dialogue has been developed and a fruitful exchange of views and ideas has taken place.

We, therefore, warmly welcome the proposal for the establishment of an Open-ended Working Group to continue this debate, taking into consideration the progress made so far.

Therefore, our Delegation would like to support the amendments proposed by Saudi Arabia, since they cover in a complete way the considerations that have been highlighted in the context of this Agenda item, in the budgetary constraints, and the need for the establishment of a credible, balanced and representative World Heritage List.

Finally, we would like to express our readiness to participate actively in the works of the proposed Open-ended Working Group.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I'll be very brief.

First of all, I would like to express our appreciation to the Chairpersons and the members of the Working Group for their work under difficult circumstances.

Secondly, we would like to coauthor the amendments suggesting to create an Open-ended Working Group.

And finally, I would like to support Zambia's suggestion that Saudi Arabia should take a lead in this regard.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We would like to express our gratitude to both Chairpersons of the Ad-hoc Group for their efforts in conducting the discussion on this crucial matter, and we support the proposal of Saudi Arabia to continue dialogue within the broader Open-ended Group.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Very briefly, just to support the proposal by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the creation of an Open-ended Working Group.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *México*.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to thank the Chairs of these Sub-groups. They did not have an easy task, and we know that all of these meetings took place in difficult circumstances. This is why we appreciate the work that they've provided, and the guidance provided during the sessions.

This is why we welcome Saudi Arabia's proposal to establish an Open-ended Working Group, and we would like to take into consideration the result or recommendations which have already been discussed during the previous Working Groups.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair.

Hoping that the Open-ended Working Group to be established will come up with a practical mechanism of helping those countries that are underrepresented, not only in Africa but elsewhere in the world, we support the amendment by Saudi Arabia, and then we share the suggestions made by the States Parties of Zambia and Japan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

We also wish to support the amendment tabled by Saudi Arabia.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to echo what the Delegate of Belgium has said that we hope that this Open-ended Working Group will go into the fundamentals of the working of the Convention and the next.

How do we see this Convention moving forward? It's already a 50-year-old Convention; we feel it has reached an inflection point. At this point, what are the plans? What is our future trajectory to cover the demands of a growing global South as the per capita incomes of Asian countries, African countries, SIDS, and Latin American countries grow, the demand also increases from Asia-Pacific, from Africa and other parts of the world to see more and more of their properties listed on the World Heritage List? But listing is not the only criteria, the World Heritage Convention deals with the fundamentals of preservation and conservationists. How do we rope in the Advisory Bodies? How do we seek to increase funding for the Advisory Bodies? How do we seek to increase funding for the World Heritage Centre so that more human resources are available to meet these increasing demands that are placed on it? And

I will echo what the Ambassador of Japan has said, that we welcome the amendments presented by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and we would like them to chair it and take lead in this.

Thank you, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was confused when I started my intervention. I thought we are going to come to the resolution of the amendment later on. Therefore, I would like to support strongly the amendment provided by Saudi Arabia and for the chairing it.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Bulgaria would like to commend the work of the two Sub-groups and their Chairpersons, and we would like also to support the proposal by Saudi Arabia to establish an Open-ended Working Group and echo the proposal by Zambia, Japan, and India.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Mali souscrit à l'amendement apporté au projet de décision émanant de l'Arabie saoudite.

Naturellement, nous nous joignons à nos préopinants pour adresser nos chaleureuses félicitations aux deux Présidentes de nos groupes de travail ainsi qu'à chaque membre qui a collaboré à leurs côtés.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do apologize for taking the floor once again.

I would like to join those who are endorsing the idea of letting Saudi Arabia chair this Working Group.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

As our session came to an end... Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Mr. Chairman,

I do apologize for taking the floor once again.

We do endorse the Chairmanship of Saudi Arabia for this Open-ended Working Group.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll be very quick.

First of all, thank you, the Ad-hoc Working Groups, for their good work.

And I would like to support Saudi Arabia's amendment to establish the Open-ended Working Groups on this to take our work forward and also support the proposal by Japan, India, Zambia for Saudi Arabia to take the lead.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, since our session came to an end, and please note that as we didn't manage to examine all the Agenda items that were on our timetable for today, we will reconvene tomorrow afternoon, Friday 22 September, to examine the following items:

- Resume the discussion and adoption of Item 11 on outcomes of the Ad-hoc Working Group;
- 12 on Revision of the Operational Guidelines;
- 15 on Budget of the World Heritage Fund.

The next Bureau meeting would therefore be tomorrow from 2:30 to 3:00.

All other Items 16, 17 and 18, 19 and 20 will be examined on Sunday morning 24 September.

I would like to pass the floor to the Director-General of the World Heritage Centre for general announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

This is just to reconfirm what has been said by my colleague in ending her presentation on the Periodic Reporting results for the Asia and the Pacific. This is just to tell you that at 6:30, there will be a side event on the results, a specific side event on the results of the Periodic Reporting, organized by the Secretariat. So, you are all invited.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So also, I would like to extend the invitation on behalf of the Saudi National Commission about the invitation for tomorrow, about the closing event, which will take place at Prince Noura University, 8:00 pm. It's a musical ceremony, so I urge you; please, to attend and also confirm your attendance to the email sent to you earlier. The busses will leave from the entrance at 6:00 pm., so please confirm your attendance to this.

And then, see you tomorrow afternoon. *[gavel]*

The meeting rose at 6:16 pm. // La séance a été levée à 18h16.

TWELFTH DAY
Friday, 22 September 2023
TWENTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING
3:04 pm – 5:11 pm
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

DOUZIÈME JOUR
Vendredi 22 septembre 2023
VINGT-DEUXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h04 – 17h11
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

I would like to share with you information provided on the 12th meeting of the Bureau, this afternoon, about the timetable for the remaining days of work of the Committee.

As indicated yesterday at the closure of the meeting, we're going to resume this afternoon to complete the examination of Item 11. We will then go through the following items:

- 12: Revision of the [Operational] Guidelines;
- 15: with the Presentation of the outcomes of the Budget Working Group and the related recommended draft decisions.

Furthermore, on Sunday morning we will examine our last Agenda Items:

- 16: Other businesses;
- 17: Election of Bureau of the 46th session of the Committee;
- 18: Provisional Agenda of the 46th session;
- 19: Adoption of the Report of decisions;
- 20: Closing of the session.

Therefore, there will be no session on Monday 25 September, as we would have concluded our entire work on Sunday thanks to your efficiency.

Regarding Item 17 on the election of the Bureau of the 46th session, as you are aware, an invitation to host the next session of the Committee has been extended by the State Party of India. However, I understand that there are still some aspects to be finalized by the later. Consequently, the Committee might not be in a position to constitute a Bureau at this stage.

I would like to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to provide us with some explanations on this matter.

Dear Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Good afternoon to everyone.

Indeed, if the Committee is not in a position, at this stage, to constitute a Bureau for its 46th session, there might be a need to postpone the election of the Bureau to a 19th extraordinary session, which could be held in conjunction with the 24th session of the General Assembly of States Parties, at the end of November 2023. This would also mean that the Committee would need, therefore, to prolong the terms of office of all the current Bureau members until that time.

Mr. Chairperson,

There is a precedent in this regard. At its 41st session in 2016, by Decision **41 COM 16**, the Committee decided to prolong the mandate of the entire Bureau until an extraordinary session that was held during the 21st session of the General Assembly of States Parties in November 2017.

A similar decision could be adopted by the Committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for this explanation.

Are there any comments on this?

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It is a good idea, but we can go to that suggestion if we are not ready. I do not know which region is not ready. I think we can go ahead if we are ready. But I do not know why you envisage that we are not ready to elect the Bureau.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

We did not understand the question of the Learned Delegate from Oman. Can you please help us understand it?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I'll pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to explain the procedure in this matter.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I think what you have explained concerns Item 17, and you reminded the Committee members on the invitation extended by the State Party of India to host the next, I mean, the expression of interest of India to host the next session. So, what we said is that there are still some aspects to be finalized regarding it, which means that this Committee might not be in a position to, at this stage, elect a new Chairperson and to constitute the Bureau. So, the best thing we are suggesting, as Secretariat, is, of course, to prolong the mandate of this Bureau until the next... for an extraordinary session which will take place after the General Assembly.

So, I hope it is much more clear.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Are there any more comments on this?

So now, we will move to our work.

11. FOLLOW-UP TO RECOMMENDATIONS OF EVALUATIONS AND AUDITS ON WORKING METHODS AND OUTCOMES OF THE AD-HOC WORKING GROUP (Ct'd) // SUIVI DES RECOMMANDATIONS DES EVALUATIONS ET AUDITS SUR LES METHODES DE TRAVAIL ET RESULTATS DU GROUPE DE TRAVAIL AD-HOC (suite)

The Chairperson:

As you remember, we have started yesterday afternoon the examination our Agenda Item 11, which concerns the Follow-up to Recommendations of Evaluations and Audits on Working Methods. The relevant document for this item is Document 45.COM/11.Rev.

We heard the reports of the Chairpersons of the 2 Sub-groups of Ad-hoc Working Group, Ms. Yara Al-Ghafri (Oman) and Ms. Chiara Franco (Italy) and started the discussion.

Before we resume and examine the draft decision, are there any comments or interventions on this Agenda item?

So, I would like to invite you, dear colleagues, to examine and adopt Draft Decision **45 COM 11**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received several amendments for this.

The first original amendment was from the Distinguished Delegation of Saudi Arabia, for which yesterday, from the floor, we received confirmation from all the other Committee members. So, all the Committee members are shown on screen.

Besides that, we also received amendments from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for specific points, from Belgium, and from India.

So, we are showing on screen the original amendment by Saudi Arabia, and in grey you will see the other amendments by other Committee members.

I will start with Para 2: "Expresses its appreciation to the Ad-hoc Working Group for its efforts", that's the amendment by Saudi Arabia and other Committee members, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would, along with Mexico, would like to retain the text and "takes note of its recommendations;".

Moving to Para 3: "Recalling Decisions **40 COM 11**". What you see in grey has been suggested by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: "**42 COM 12A, 43 COM 8, 43 COM 12, 44 COM 8, 44 COM 11 and 44 COM 12** adopted at its 40th (Istanbul, *oblique* /UNESCO, 2016), 42nd (Manama, 2018), 43rd (Baku, 2019) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively;". So, it's just additions of more decisions suggested by Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines and supported by Mexico and Belgium.

Para 4: "Taking into account the heavy budget constraints of the World Heritage Fund and the need for an effective management of the increasing size of the List and the call for a more balanced World Heritage List" Here, the amendment from India has suggested to add: "considering the aspirations of the Global South;".

Para 5: "Also taking note of the Global Strategy adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 18th session (Phuket, 1994) to provide a broad framework for an analysis and action programme to reduce the gap in regional representation to achieve a balanced and credible World Heritage List". Here, India has suggested to add: "considering the aspirations of the Global South;".

Para 6: "Decides to create an Open-ended Working Group of the States Parties to the Convention and transfer the mandate of the Ad-hoc Working Group to it and allow the States Parties to the Convention to contribute to the creative discussions to:". Again, there is an addition by India: "Continue contributing to the discussions in order".

- Point "a) Consider the necessary improvement, aiming at reducing the gap of the representation of States Parties on the World Heritage List and enhancing the balance of the List,
- b) Propose solutions to the technical evaluation requirements;". There is an addition by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Mexico to add: "for the nominations, including improving capacity-building activities;".
- "c) Propose sustainable solutions to the financial requirements of the nomination process to implement the above, including the Preliminary Assessment;"
- "d)", there is an addition by Belgium: "Consider the mandate and working methods for an extension of this Open-ended Working Group of the World Heritage Committee, with a view to starting a fundamental reflection on the operation of the World Heritage Convention;". India has suggested to delete "beyond the 46th session".
- "e)", there is an amendment by India to delete the earlier one that says: "Continue dialogue regarding feasible procedures related to Article 11.3 of the World Heritage Convention". Instead of that: "Consider the aspirations of the Global South for increased representation on the World Heritage List, capacity-building, and training programmes;".
- f), g), and h) added by India: "Seek ways to reduce the cost of evaluation per dossier;".
- "Consider human resources issues of the World Heritage Centre in lieu of the increased representation on the World Heritage List, and seeks ways to improve it by generation of additional funding,
- h) Consider increasing funding to the Advisory Bodies to be able to cope up with increased demand, and to explore ways to increase participation of national chapters of the Advisory Bodies into the evaluation process;".

Para 7: "Further decides that the Open-ended Working Group shall work in consultation with the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies and, as appropriate, relevant stakeholders, and submit its report and recommendations to the 46th session of the Committee;".

Para 8: "Calls upon States Parties to the Convention to voluntarily contribute to the creation of this Open-ended Working Group through voluntary contributions." Where in grey, you can see an amendment by India: "Calls upon States Parties to the Convention to create this Open-ended Working Group through voluntary contributions and consider brand value actualization of the World Heritage Centre for maximization of revenue generation to aid the Convention achieve its objective."

Besides this, I think there were suggestions regarding the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group and probably, Mr. Chair, you would like to get the advice of the Legal Advisor for this purpose.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

[interpretation from Arabic] Good afternoon. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

I would like to clarify something, so I have a small speech, short speech, which I would like to say it just before we continue our discussion, if you allow me, Mr. Chair.

Dear Chair, Esteemed members of the World Heritage Committee,

Saudi Arabia would like to express its gratitude and appreciation of the Ad-hoc Group for the works it has done, and according to the advice of the Esteemed Committee members, they would like to assure that all the mandate of the Ad-hoc Group will be taken by the proposed Open Group.

However, there is still a need to improve the balance and reduce the underrepresentation of the States Parties in the World Heritage List. We expect that there are a new contribution and updates that will help overcome the technical and financial obstacles. We expect that the creation of an Open-ended Working Group will help resolve the above-mentioned obstacles in accordance with the mandate of the previous Ad-hoc Working Group, which we will transfer to the proposed Open Working Group.

We thank the Esteemed members of the Committee for the support of this amendment, which we believe will benefit all States Parties to the Convention.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

I would like to ask the Rapporteur to let us know what kind of intervention from the Legal Advisor she wants to hear about the Chairperson of the Working Group.

The Rapporteur:

Mr. Chair,

There was a proposal by several Committee members to propose the name of the Chairperson for the Open-ended Working Group.

I believe there is a process that is followed for this purpose, and probably the Legal Advisor may clarify that.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Legal Advisor.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

From what I've understood yesterday, several members of the Committee had proposed and had welcomed the proposal that Saudi Arabia chaired the Open-ended Working Group. However, I do not see that any amendment to the Draft Decision 11 has been proposed regarding the Chairmanship of the Open-ended Working Group.

I also understand that this Open-ended Working Group, which would be composed of States Parties other than members of the Committee, members of the Committee and other States Parties that are not members of the Committee would participate in this Open-ended Working Group. To that extent, this Open-ended Working Group could be considered to be a consultative body under Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Heritage Committee. Under Rule 20.4, it is said that "Each consultative body shall elect its Chairperson and, if necessary, the Rapporteur". In accordance with the Rule, it would be normal procedure for the Open-ended Working Group to elect its Chairperson. I also understand that this has been the practice for other Open-ended Working Groups and Ad-hoc Working Groups to elect its own Chair.

However, nothing would prevent the Committee from welcoming the proposal of taking note and welcoming the proposal that Saudi Arabia chaired the Open-ended Working Group.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for the clarification.

So, if there are no more comments...

Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

[interpretation from Arabic] Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

Je voudrais ajouter, si on peut ajouter un paragraphe, en disant que « le Comité prend note que l'Arabie saoudite sera le Président de ce Comité lors de première réunion du *Working Group* », s'il n'y a pas d'objection du Conseiller juridique.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Okay, so I'll pass the floor to the Legal Advisor to comment on this edition.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

According to the Rules again, it would be for the Open-ended Working Group to decide on the Chair.

Although it is not specified in the Rules for consultative bodies and subsidiary bodies, the Chair is normally a person coming from a State Party. So, it would be, of course, possible for the Committee to take note of "the interest of Saudi Arabia" or to "welcome the proposal that Saudi Arabia chair the Open-ended Working Group" on the understanding that the Open-ended Working Group will designate a person from Saudi Arabia to chair the Group.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, Qatar, does this reflect your intervention?

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

I do apologize, Mr. Chairman, I did not hear what you said.

The Chairperson:

What we have on the screen right now, does that reflect your comment about the Chairmanship of the Group?

La Délégation du Qatar :

Oui, la phrase actuelle nous convient.

The Chairperson:

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

I would like to add: "Take note of and welcome the interest of Saudi". I would like to add: "and welcome".

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Chair.

I would like also to thank the Qatar and Sultanate of Oman for the additions and the Legal Advisor's opinion.

Chair,

I think this paragraph is legally correct, but I'm not sure it really reflects what happened yesterday during the discussions. What happened yesterday during the discussions is that it was the room that wanted Saudi Arabia; it's not Saudi Arabia that expressed interest. By capturing this, I think, maybe, I can suggest maybe a slight change, of course, subject to the approval of the other members of the Committee and the Legal Advisor opinion.

Then it would be: "Takes note of the Committee consensus in favour of Saudi Arabia assuming the Chairmanship of the Open-ended Working Group *period*." That's it.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

I thank the Distinguished Delegate of Egypt for putting the things in the correct perspective, and India would like to add its name. I think Egypt and Qatar are saying the same thing. They will not disagree with each other. So, we would like to add our names to the final draft, along with Egypt and Qatar, both.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I see no more interventions.

I, therefore, invite you to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

So, for the First Paragraph, we don't have any...

India, you have any intervention?

The Delegation of India:

No, we're just keeping the plate down.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, for the First Paragraph, we don't have any amendment. Do we agree to adopt the paragraph as it is? I see no objections. Adopted. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 2, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 3, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 4, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal?

Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just I would like to ask India about this proposal to add: "considering the aspirations of the Global South". Is it maybe better to say: "considering the aspirations of non-represented and under-represented States Parties in the World Heritage List"?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to echo what the Distinguished Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines just said. So, replacing the Indian proposal by: "non-represented and under-represented States Parties on the World Heritage List". And we may also add: "under-represented regions" if some would like to see that also.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Chair.

Just to support Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' proposal.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you very much, Chair.

We would also like to echo what was already mentioned by the Distinguished Delegate of Belgium, and we would rather prefer the more general wording in the line of "considering the aspirations of non-represented or under-represented countries and regions" as already mentioned.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Good morning to you and Distinguished Delegates.

We agree with the addition from Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines, and we would like to add our name to it.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

We would also like to have Argentina's name put on the list of co-sponsors.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

La Délégation de la Bulgarie :

M. le Président,

La Bulgarie aussi voudrait suivre la proposition de Saint-Vincent-et-les-Grenadines avec la formule la plus générale.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

Japan would also like to echo what the Distinguished Delegate of Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines has presented. I think the issue of this under-representativeness should be addressed.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We would also like to support the proposal by Saint Vincent, in line with the spirit of the paragraph itself.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je vous demande d'ajouter notre nom aussi sur la proposition faite par Saint-Vincent-et-les-Grenadines.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

Nous voulons ajouter l'État du Qatar avec les États en soutien de la proposition de Saint-Vincent-et-les-Grenadines.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Oman.

The Delegation of Oman: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you very much.

We can support the most recent modification as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Ethiopia would like to be included in the amendment made by Saint Vincent and Grenada.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to go back to India.

India, are you okay with this newly proposed text?

The Delegation of India:

No, we are not.

Mr. Chair,

A question was asked to India by the Distinguished Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. At that point in time, I was expecting to respond. She asked: What is the rationale behind it? I was not given an opportunity to answer to that rationale. And we have had this result, what has appeared on the screen.

Now, what is the rationale behind the "Global South"? See, the World Heritage Convention is facing a resource crunch, which we have been hearing time and time again. In the United Nations, there is a South-South Cooperation

Fund available, for which India has also contributed US\$150 million. I'm sure all the Ambassadors and Representatives of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belgium, Mexico, Greece, South Africa, Argentina, Bulgaria, Japan, Italy, Rwanda, Qatar, Oman, and Ethiopia are aware of that. I'm sure everyone is aware of the South-South Cooperation, that the Global South, there is actually a Fund there and UNESCO benefits from it. In fact, if you see the voluntary contributions of Member States as well as regular contributions for the Regular Programme, in addition to that, India also contributed US\$4 million for various African countries, including SIDS. Now, the reason was, considering the aspiration of the Global South, was that in future, I wanted to keep the door open for getting additional funding for the WHC. That was rationale part no. A.

Part no. B, Excellency, is we are seeing these terms called under-representation, non-representation being used quite often. But this term is not a WHC term. It has not been defined. Where has this term been defined? It has been defined in UNESCO with respect to the Human Resource Sector where, in certain countries, nationals are under-represented, and the List has been made on a scientific basis on which the membership is considered as a parameter, the annual contributions are considered as a parameter, the demography of the country, how much population it has, that is considered as a parameter. And then you have under-representation and non-representation mentioned there. What has happened is we have picked it up from there, put it in WHC without even defining it. I feel this exercise of mentioning it like this appears good on paper, but actually does harm to the Convention. Now, no one is against a country that does not have any sites on the World Heritage List to have more of its sites, but that should not deny the other countries from having their sites. If you understand the complex of India, I have 1.4 billion people, 10,000-year-old civilization, 30 provinces. Now, why would anybody be against India's properties coming up on the List? In this particular way, how it is being portrayed sends a very wrong message. My humble request is the Open-ended Working Group is being founded for this reason.

Yes, ADG Culture wanted to say something.

The Chairperson:

After you, Excellency.

The Delegation of India:

So, what I'm trying to say is that..., it's the Open-ended Working Group, Excellency, has been founded for a purpose. Considering the aspiration of the Global South does not mean that we are going to rule right today and suddenly the nominations are going to start immediately. Let us be open minded. The Open-ended Working Group does cover this, even the so-called without even defining what is non-represented, even without defining what is under-representation, we have used these terms. I don't feel these terms should be used without them being defined properly, Excellency.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'll pass the floor to the ADG for Culture and the Secretariat as well to define the variation in terms of terminologies and the standard text usually used.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair, and good afternoon to one and all.

The term "under-represented and non-represented" is used in all of the terminology we've used over the past few years in the World Heritage Committee. It was mentioned in the Working Group throughout the process, and it was also used in other Working Groups. When we define the percentages, we use terminology, and it's not based on human resources. It's based on discussions that were held over 20 years ago within the World Heritage Committee. There are three regions which are under-represented with countries within them which are non-represented. And the terminology you referred to in HR at UNESCO is not what we're talking about here. We're talking about under-represented or non-represented.

As regards the terminology you're suggesting, I've looked for it in all of the documents of UNESCO and I can't find it. I know that some countries use it and refer to it, but if we look at the terminology used by the Committee and UNESCO, which is the Organization within which we're working, what we have here, "non-represented and under-represented", it is something that everyone understands and that we've used in the past. I understand that you want to suggest different wording, but I think that the discussion here, and this is clear to all of us, is to prioritize countries which do not have sites inscribed or have very few sites inscribed in order to prioritize regions who are currently not very well represented, in the order: Africa, the Arab states and GRULAC.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think ADG Ottone answered very well on the comments made by Ambassador of India. When I heard him, I heard the President of the FA Commission speaking about under-represented and non-represented, and of course we understand what he is saying. But I think, here, the purpose is to focus on, to underline the importance to mention the aspiration of non-represented and under-represented States Parties and regions as proposed by Belgium. It is very important. And you know the number of the sites, it is not proportionate for the size of the country. Sometimes, we have small countries who are very rich in heritage.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Qatar.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

Juste, je veux expliquer vraiment notre position par rapport le texte proposé par Saint-Vincent-et-les-Grenadines.

Je veux expliquer par rapport l'approche juridique du texte. N'importe quel texte soit fondé par des termes juridiques très clairs et par des définitions par lesquelles nous décidons pour un besoin. Le besoin qui a fondé ce texte, c'est la situation des "non et sous-représentés" des sites sur la Liste. Donc, à mon avis, avec le grand respect de *Excellency*, l'ambassadeur de l'Inde, que le terme principal de ce texte est le "non et sous-représentés sur la Liste". C'est pour cela nous soutenons vraiment la proposition de Saint-Vincent-et-les-Grenadines et des autres États membres.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

I thank the ADG Culture for letting us know from the past 20 years you have been using this particular terminology. But can you please show me a document where it is defined, and the definition has been accepted?

The Distinguished Delegate of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines made a reference to the FA Commission. The point is, in the HR Sector, these terms are very clearly defined. Now instead of "non-representation", you can have a word "countries having no sites", so, they'll be clear. My contention is if you are... or "countries having less sites", but when you are using the terms of UNESCO "non-representation" and "under-representation", which have been defined, but those parameters are not considered. In the HR Sector, there have been certain parameters which have been considered, there has been a definition which has been accepted, and that terminology is being used. Now, in the World Heritage Convention, just because something has been used for 20 years without really defining it, you have just captured one terminology from the HR Sector and brought it here, and justifying that. My contention is it is not being defined, although it is being used, but it is not defined.

Hence, I will request there are two ways to go about it.

Number one, let us have it as a mandate of the Working Group to have the terms defined. And then we can bring in various parameters in which:

- Countries having no sites, countries having less sites are parameter A;
- B: contributions because everything works on contributions. Contributions made by the Member States;
- C: membership of the Member States; and
- D: the demographic distribution.

The United Nations system, the UN system of which UNESCO is a part, and this programme is being telecast worldwide, I am sure everybody knows that the United Nations system uses a terminology with certain parameters. We are, it is my position, and I am very confident of that position, that we are using that terminology, we are just copy-pasting it without having defined nor utilizing those original parameters. So, if Member States want to really say that, "oh, we know what it means", then let us have the wording what it means. So instead of "non-represented",

you can replace it with "Members having no sites", and for "under-represented" you can say "Member States having less sites". That would be a terminology which will be non-controversial.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I will pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre for some explanations and elaborations on the terminologies used.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I just wanted to, maybe, share with you that almost 30 years ago, and it was in 1994, the World Heritage Committee decided to launch a Global Strategy, and this Global Strategy was for a representative, balanced, and credible World Heritage List. The aim at that time, in 1994, was, of course, to ensure that the List reflect the world's cultural and natural diversity. And it was done simply because, already at that time, the World Heritage Committee had observed that the List was already a List where there was a lack in terms of geographical representativity of it. So, it wanted it, at the same time, balanced and representative because of the fact that there was already an under-representation observed. So, since that time, the World Heritage Committee has continued to set, it has set some objectives. And these are some objectives that had allowed us to work and to support many regions and States Parties where effort needed to be made, to conduct capacity-building, to support nomination dossiers and everything. And so, we have been working in this framework with this understanding of this terminology.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I will pass the floor to the ADG for Culture.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

Only to complement.

I was revising the explanation for creating the Working Group on the Representativity of the World Heritage List on the 23rd session, and the terminology that was used was picked up from the Operational Guidelines starting from Paragraph 59. So, the explanation that you did, that we are using our terminology of the HRM UNESCO, is not true. We started to use it in the World Heritage before having the parameter at the UNESCO level.

Yes, we can start to define everything you want, but I believe that even if you say that we are talking about something that we have been talking about 30 years in the room, everybody knows what is the aim of the Committee, and has been in the last 30 years, to try to balance the List. It doesn't mean the countries that has inscription can continue to present future inscriptions; that's why you have the [Tentative] List. But what is imbalanced is that there is no representativity of some countries that has Universal Value in their countries, and that have not been able to come to the Committee to present their sites. And that should be the principal aims of this Committee. And then you have region that we have heard during ten days, that have more than 40, with all respect, 42% of the site inscribed and the second region that has 20 something. So, you can change the world that you want, but everybody in this room apparently is agreed on something that we all understand, and that what I feel is that to change it today, or to wait one year to redefine it, will come to the same result. I've been in six years at UNESCO and has never changed; everybody knows what we are talking about, but I understand that you have another perception of what is the aim of what has happened during the Ad-hoc Working Group and the purpose that I see in the amendment presented by Saudi Arabia.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

The entire crux of the discussion is: "This particular terminology has been used for 20 years, or what was it for 30 years, and we have been using this terminology, so, we'll henceforth continue using its terminology without even defining it because it's understood, it's assumed that it's understood". But from the perspective, you have to be open minded. I mean, we are having an Open-ended Working Group, but I request you all, please, be open minded.

What I'm saying is a fact. This particular terminology has a legal meaning in UNESCO. This is the basis on which people are hired and they are not or not hired. The entire Secretariat, which is sitting here, has been hired on basis

of whether their nationality comes from an over-represented Member State, a non-represented Member State, or an under-represented Member State. It's a legal terminology being used by UNESCO. The World Heritage Convention has been brought under the Culture Sector, is under the Culture Sector of UNESCO, it cannot be independent of UNESCO. The terminology which has been legally defined in UNESCO, you are using the same terminology here. And the clarification is: "Well, we have been using it for 30 years. Nobody said anything, so let's continue using it". No, these are legal terms. If today someone has raised a view about it, make note of the view. If at all, there is a divergence between the understanding in WHC and the understanding in UNESCO, let's take a step towards bringing the divergence back. Together, we are all on the same side. No one is saying that countries which don't have any sites on the World Heritage List should not have, or we should not take any steps to improve the conditions. In fact, I'm saying precisely we should help them. And that is why I have added the word "Global South" to open the doors to get more funding so that capacity-building in Africa, SIDS and Asian countries increase, and Latin American countries increase because there is a South-South cooperation in the UN system, which provides the funding. But a Member State has said "no", instead of "Global South", we want to add "non-represented" under the terminology. So, if the consensus in the room is to have a specific insecurity addressed, then let us... My humble request is: What will you lose if you replace the word "non-represented" by the word "Member States having no sites"? What will be your loss? And you will move forward. My position is, even today, there is a legal definition in UNESCO for "non-represented" and "under-represented" terms, and that definition needs to be respected, Excellency.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thanks to the passionate expression by the Delegate from India.

Chair,

We understand that the room has got a general consensus around the decision, which is about "non-representation" and "under-representation", notwithstanding whether it is defined or not, it is broadly acknowledging that Global Strategy since 1994 and has been used, and we can't, 30 years later, try to look for a definition.

Secondly is to say that the issue of the "Global South" itself does not necessarily find expression in the Global Strategy, either. In our understanding even of the word "Global South" excludes Small Islands and Developing States also, and therefore will not be inclusive of what we are trying to achieve in respect of ensuring a broader representation and representivity, especially for those States Parties that don't necessarily have sites on the World Heritage List. We understand that the room has reached a consensus, Chair, and we would like to propose that we move from this paragraph.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

I do agree with the views expressed by the Delegate of South Africa, but I want to take the guidance of the Legal Advisor because this is a point we very strongly believe that it has been used for 30 years but not defined. There is a divergence of definition between UNESCO and WHC. Can my point be captured in some manner? Can we capture it as a note somewhere or can we capture it as a footnote so that my views are also captured? I may be in the minority, but that does not mean that I will be forced to change my views.

For consensus, I will agree, although I do not agree with the Delegate of South Africa when she said that Small Islands are not part of the Global South. India, through the South-South Cooperation Initiative, through the UN, funded a UNESCO programme for a SIDS in the Pacific for up to US\$1 million. And this fact is well known in the PAX Sector of UNESCO.

So, moving forward, we are willing to have our amendment deleted. But I want to find if there is a way that my views can be captured.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

So, I see no more interventions...

Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Chair.

Since yesterday, we've been working within a consensus framework when it comes to draft decisions. We've heard all of the different positions, and now we're requesting that if there is a consensus, perhaps we could just note this in the report that the definition of this term was requested.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan.

So, I will pass the floor to the Legal Advisor, now, to respond to the Distinguished Delegate of India about the terminologies and also references.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I do understand the position of the Delegation of India. However, the term "under-representation" has been used both by the Committee and by the General Assembly, in particular at its 12th ordinary session in decisions. I would hope that when the General Assembly and the World Heritage Committee used a term "under-represented", it knew exactly what it was talking about.

It is, at the end of the day, for the World Heritage Committee and for the General Assembly to interpret and to interpret its decisions to facilitate the implementation.

As regards the views of the Delegation of India on this draft decision, the normal practice has been that views which are given by specific members of the Committee could be recorded and recalled in the oral report.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, given that we have a consensus in the room and about the proposed amendment by Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines, and also, maybe, taking into consideration India's point of view on this, maybe we can include it in the Summary Report.

India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

I thank the Legal Advisor for letting us know.

Please, let my view be known and my view is the following:

"The term 'non-represented and under-represented' being used in the World Heritage Convention meetings, reports, General Assemblies is assumed to have been understood without any specific definition ever being decided upon *full stop*. It is my view that the term 'non-represented and under-represented' being used by UNESCO is a legal terminology which impacts the HR Strategy of UNESCO. There is a divergence of the parameters between the term 'non-represented and under-represented' being used by UNESCO and the parameters for these two terms being used by the World Heritage Convention. I have requested and aired my views on this divergence, ADG Culture has mentioned his views, Director WHC has also mentioned his views, and the Legal Advisor has let us know that this terminology has been used from quite some time in the World Heritage Convention *full stop*. But that does not mean that the divergence has been removed. This divergence exists and needs to be addressed by the World Heritage Convention."

Thank you, Your Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

So, given that and also it will be taken into consideration in the Summary Report.

If there are no more interventions or objections with the proposed text or paragraph... I see none.

I, therefore, adopt the Paragraph 4 as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 5, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal?

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

Based on what was mentioned in Para 4, I guess the same views will exist for Para 5 also, so we don't mind our amendment being deleted from here.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chair,

Also, I wanted to remove or replace the "taking into consideration the aspiration", the same wording used in Paragraph 4, please.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, do we all agree with this proposed paragraph?

Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chair,

"considering the aspirations of non-represented and under-represented" because "considering the aspiration" is removed here.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, if there are no comments or objections, the Paragraph 5 is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 6, we have a proposal. Do we agree with the proposed text... with the proposed paragraph and amendments by India?

I would like to pass the floor to the Rapporteur to clarify something.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think the last statement, it says: "and allow all States Parties to the Convention to contribute to the creative discussions to", and then points are mentioned. India has suggested instead of this phrase to, instead of that, to use: "continue contributing to the discussions in order to".

I think there's not much difference between the two except the addition of the term "creative" to "the discussions".

The Chairperson:

So, do we agree with the suggestion mentioned by the Rapporteur?

Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think now I'm confused.

The contribution for me or for us, in Zambia, is a contribution. So, I don't know whether we'll have a negative contribution or an uncreative contribution. So, for me, I think "creative contribution" is just bringing in some ambiguity or, for lack of better terms, I'll say tautology.

I submit, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, I would like to pass the floor to India to clarify this amendment.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

Actually, this is not India's amendment, it was, I think, suggested by Belgium, but they had removed the word "creative". But if you want to put India's name, I think it doesn't make... I would agree with what Zambia said, contribution is contributing, so I'm okay with it.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Rapporteur:

So, maybe we can remove the initial phrase and retain what Belgium, India, and Zambia are suggesting: "continue contributing to the discussions".

The Chairperson:

Thank you. So... *Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya*.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

We still prefer "creative discussions" since India and Zambia would like to keep it as it is. So, we prefer "creative discussions". And since Esteemed member, Ambassador of India, he said it's okay, and also Zambia, I think it's maybe better.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, for having created another confusion.

I think the opposite is true. We wanted the word "creative" to be dropped, and I think if I heard the Distinguished Ambassador from India, he was also in agreement with what Zambia had submitted in terms of dropping the word "creative".

I submit, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I will ask the Rapporteur to update the proposal.

The Rapporteur:

So, we have two proposals. Mr. Chair.

I think the Delegation of Saudi Arabia wants to retain the term "creative", while India and Zambia have suggested to not use the terms "creative".

The Chairperson:

Arabiyya as-Sa'ūdiyya, are you okay with deleting?

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

It's okay, it's okay.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Rapporteur:

So, we'll let go of the previous and we'll see to "continue contributing to the discussions in order to".

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So now, with this new updated text and proposal, do we all agree with it?

So, we will move from Paragraph 6 to Sub-paragraphs.

Then we go to Paragraph a). Do we agree to this Sub-paragraph? I see no objections.

Paragraph b).

I see Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We would just like to ask for a clarification regarding the meaning of this sub-paragraph.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Who would you like to clarify from?

The Delegation of Italy:

To the proponent, I think that was in the original amendment submitted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, if I am not mistaken, and maybe also from the Secretariat.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I'll pass the floor first to Saudi Arabia.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

I prefer if the Secretariat explain, and then if we have any comments, we will tell it to you.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. The Secretariat.

Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you Chair.

We can agree with the text as it is, but just one simple question: Why did we add "for the nominations"? Our understanding is that the gaps in the technical evaluations are far beyond the nominations. Nomination is only part of it, but also doing other studies, Heritage Impact Assessment, etc.

So, I think it would be better without it unless we have an explanation for it.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, the Secretariat...

Qatar.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président,

Le Qatar a mené certaines discussions avec les États membres qui ont proposé ce *draft*.

À l'origine était « l'exigence de l'évaluation technique de la nomination ». *Nomination*. Donc, je propose d'ajouter le terme de la « nomination » dans le Paragraphe b), après « l'exigence de l'évaluation technique », « de la nomination ». Je pense que cela va clarifier le sens de cette proposition.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I'll pass the floor to the Secretariat.

Le Sous-Directeur général pour la Culture :

Non, très brièvement. Normalement, le Secrétariat n'explique pas les amendements des États membres parce que ce sont les États membres qui l'ont proposé. Cependant, puisqu'on est là, on peut vous aider un peu.

Je ne sais pas quel était l'esprit de l'amendement présenté. On comprend le texte, mais effectivement « *technical evaluation* », ce n'est pas, comme vous le savez, seulement lors des nominations, c'est un sujet qui est plus large. Et, si j'ai bien compris, par les discussions entamées hier par les États membres du Comité, l'idée c'est d'avoir une discussion plus large, au moins, c'est l'esprit de ce que j'ai compris de l'Arabie saoudite et ainsi que de la Belgique notamment.

Donc cela dépend de vous, que vous définissiez si vous voulez seulement le mettre spécifiquement pour les nominations.

The Chairperson:

So, do we have any interventions on this?

Egypt.

La Délégation de l'Égypte :

Merci, M. le Président.

Ma compréhension, donc, c'est qu'on peut enlever "*for the nominations*", et on garde le texte tel qu'il était originellement proposé.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, thank you, Chair.

We are also in favour of deleting "*for the nominations*" because it's wider.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, do we have any other comments?

So, it seems we are all okay with the update and proposal by Egypt and Belgium. So, I see no objections.

Then, we move to Paragraph c). Do we agree with the proposed paragraph? So, I see no objections.

Then, we move to the following paragraph, d). We have a proposed text. Do we agree to this sub-paragraph?

I would like to ask the Rapporteur to clarify the deleted text, "*beyond this 46th session*".

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The original para mentioned that "the mandate and working methods for an extension of this Open-ended Working Group" would be "beyond the 46th session". And it seems the Delegation of India has proposed deletion of this line, and the rest of the para stays as is "of the World Heritage Committee, with a view to starting a fundamental reflection on the operation of the World Heritage Convention".

So, I believe it is just leaving the extension open and not mentioning "beyond the 46th session" is what India is proposing. But I think the Distinguished Delegate may want to explain.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, I think the error lies in me.

The document I sent to the Rapporteur, I took the Belgium amendment, and I revised it, and I added the India's views about it. So, beyond the cancellation of "beyond the 46th session", if I'm not mistaken, and I'll request the help of the Delegate of Belgium to please help out.

I think this is your amendment, Belgium. Is that so?

The Chairperson:

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

[first speaker] Yes, indeed, Chair.

This is our amendment, so we will give some explanation about it.

[second speaker] Thank you, Chair.

I think the discussions in this Committee of the last two days have proven that we absolutely need to have a fundamental reflection on the operation of the World Heritage Convention.

We are agreeing to start or to continue that discussion in the renamed Open-ended Working Group. We just fear that by the 46th session, this work would not be completed, therefore, our amendment. But of course, yesterday; we mentioned as well that we were in doubt, Mr. Chair, that this work should be a Committee-led initiative. It might be something that the General Assembly might want to take up. So, Belgium would certainly be happy to redraw this amendment, if that's the feeling of the room of the Committee, and have it included into the Agenda for the upcoming General Assembly.

This is really a fundamental reflection. If we don't start having this reflection, and our Esteemed colleague of India has mentioned some very valuable points as well today, we need to have a fundamental reflection and let's take our time for it.

Thank you, Sir.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Belgica. I would like to...

The Delegation of Belgium:

Sorry, just to add that if we delete this amendment, we would like to emphasize the importance for all States Parties to the Convention to start thinking about this fundamental future of our Convention.

So, you might record our intervention today into the Summary Records, so as to leave some trace of our intervention and the importance we attach to a fundamental reflection on the future of the Convention.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

That also includes the recommendations of the Working Group.

So, I'd like to hear from the room, if there are any.

Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Actually, that is normal, and deleting that phrase is normal because the work, it will come to the 46th session and it will be renewed. It can be renewed.

So, I don't see any harm in deleting it.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Chair.

Can the Secretariat help us? Maybe telling us whether in the last General Assembly meeting, the States Parties meeting, we had a point on the future of the Convention, on a reflection on the future of the Convention. And if so, we will be having already a report for the next November on this same point or not.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. The Secretariat.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

No, I think the answer is no. The answer is no because the last General Assembly did not discuss it, but we will reflect it in the Summary Records.

And of course, I think all States Parties at the next General Assembly, of course, will be able to express their views on the same discussion.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, are we all okay with deleting "beyond the 46th session"?

So, I see no objections or comments.

Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Chair.

Sorry again to get back again for this.

Just first to clarify, we are fine with this paragraph. My intervention is just only to ensure that we are not duplicating, and we are not asking a Working Group that is already having a lot of issues to deal with, with the task that is already being dealt in the General Assembly.

In the last General Assembly meeting, we had a resolution. The name was "Future of the World Heritage Convention" and part of it was about reflections. So, I just, maybe, want to ask again to have a confirmation that there is not another parallel track being dealing with this issue. If so, then I think I would propose Belgium maybe to consider withdrawing it and focus more on the already existing track. If, however, the room is in favour of having this here, we are fine also with it.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, let's hear from the Secretariat first.

Le Sous-Directeur général pour la Culture :

Lors de la dernière Assemblée générale, il y avait la demande pour le 50^e anniversaire de faire des réflexions. On s'en rappelle, ce n'était pas un mandat de l'Assemblée générale, c'était plutôt dans la préparation de ce qu'allait

être le 50^e anniversaire, chose qui s'est déroulée pendant l'année dernière, toute l'année, à partir des réflexions des *50 Minds*, des différentes réunions que nous avons eues, que ce soit à Delphes, que ce soit à Yaoundé, que ce soit à Saint-Petersbourg et d'autres événements qui ont pris lieu, mais ceci était plutôt une réflexion ouverte.

Là, on voit un travail qui est demandé par les membres du Comité et, sans doute, les États parties à la Convention, lors de l'Assemblée, vont réaffirmer la volonté de faire une réflexion qui soit mandatée par vous-même. Donc, dans ce sens-là, je crois que c'était plutôt une réflexion, je dirais globale mais pas mandatée. Je crois que c'est venu le moment de ce que vous êtes en train de faire.

Voilà, merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Egypt, do you agree with this?

The Delegation of Egypt:

It's fine with us. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium, any comments?

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

No, this is fine the way it is formulated and with the clarifications just given to us by ADG Ottone, I think we should absolutely agree with what's on the screen.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you. Chair.

I just want a correction that this has not been suggested by India. So, please remove the word "India" from there.

Thank you.

The Rapporteur:

I would just like to clarify that we did receive the original text from Belgium, which is shown, and the amendment which India had asked us to delete this particular phrase, and the Committee seems to be in consensus for removing "beyond the 46th session". So, if that's agreeable, then we can just delete it.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, it seems, by now... So, if there are no objections or comments, we'll move to the following paragraph, e).

The Rapporteur:

Maybe, we can replace it with what has been agreed by the Committee for the "non-represented and under-represented".

The Chairperson:

Yes, please. India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

In light of the views expressed in this Committee today on India's views, we would like to withdraw our amendments seeking to have increased representation on the WH List, capacity-building, training programme, seeking ways to

reduce the cost of evaluation per dossier, considering human resources issue of the WHC, trying to improve its funding, and consider increased funding to the Advisory Bodies.

I think we would like to withdraw all our amendments.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency.

So now, I would like to ask the Rapporteur to give us an update about the Paragraph 6, now.

The Rapporteur:

Paragraph 6, I think we can start from the top: "Decides to create an Open-ended Working Group of States Parties to Convention and transfer the mandate of the Ad-hoc Working Group to it, and allow all States Parties to the Convention to continue contributing to the discussions in order to:"

- a) is as per the original amendment by Saudi Arabia, with no change;
- b) is also as per the original amendment, the term "for the nominations" is deleted as agreed by the Committee;
- c) also retains the original text of the amendment provided by Saudi Arabia and supported by all other Committee members; and
- d) is replaced by the amendment proposed by Belgium: "Consider the mandate and working methods for an extension of this Open-ended Working Group of the World Heritage Committee, with a view to starting a fundamental reflection on the operation of the World Heritage Convention," which is also agreed by all;
- e) the proposal was to delete point e), and now there is no text in this point, so we can delete it.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Chairperson.

We had, in our intervention statement, made reference to the fact that [6] c) be retained if we can just go up there. So, the sentence that has been struck out, we would like it to be retained.

Thank you.

The Rapporteur:

"Explore the possibility of using additional service providers". We can retain that as per South Africa's suggestion.

The Chairperson:

Okay, so we'll pass the floor to the Secretariat to explain something regarding Sub-paragraph c).

Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Chair.

I'm sorry for taking the house backward.

As a Delegation of Zambia, we have taken note of the fact that the Delegation of India has proposed the striking of all those paragraphs.

My question is: Are those paragraphs not tied to the idea of supporting the whole process, or the paragraphs were only tied to this South-South cooperation aspect?

I submit, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, we have an updated version of Sub-paragraph 6 which is c). Are we all okay with this proposal?

Egypt.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Chair.

I think it might be better, I think, to make "Explore the possibility of using additional service providers" as a separate c), and then we go on d) because it has no... I can't see the linkage between them. Yes.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, are we all okay with the new paragraph updated version c) and d)?

It seems there are no objections and no comments.

So, for the Paragraph 6 as a whole, there are no objections or comments? I see there are no comment or intervention. Therefore, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 7, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal?

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, thank you for giving me the floor.

This is just to respond to the Distinguished Delegate of Zambia.

India had initially mentioned the Global South, and we had given the explanation that there is funding available from the United Nations Programmes for the South-South cooperation, and India had funded various projects in through that programme via UNESCO. India contributed US\$1.1 million to Gambia, we contributed nearly US\$1 million to Cameroon and also to SIDS Samoa, another US\$1million was contributed to the Samoa Education Society through the South-South cooperation.

But now, because of the intelligent intervention of certain Member States, including Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, that gave a beautiful explanation how the Global South is not relevant, we have decided to withdraw the particular amendment that was suggested. We also had multiple... We completely subscribe to the view that a fundamental evaluation of this Convention is required. However, we are seeing that the mood in the house is towards a particular movement, so we don't want to come in the way of consensus. And that's why we have thought to might as well withdraw our amendments. Let the view evolve, if our amendments are going to be accepted, then we can bring them again also, Excellency.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, for Paragraph 7, do we have any comments or objections? I see none.

Therefore, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Paragraph 8, we have a proposal. So, regarding paragraph eight, I would like to give the floor to the Rapporteur to explain there might be a possibility for two paragraphs on this.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

So, we have the first statement which is accepted by all Committee members: "Calls upon States Parties to the Convention to voluntarily contribute to the creation of this Open-ended Working Group through voluntary contributions".

And then, India had proposed the amendment: "Calls upon States Parties to the Convention to create this Open-ended Working Group through voluntary contributions and consider brand value actualization of the World Heritage Centre for maximization of revenue generation to aid the Convention achieve its objective".

The Chairperson:

India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

The rationale behind our amendment was we had submitted a non-paper during the Ad-hoc Working Group seeking to increase revenue for the World Heritage Convention so that more funds are available to the Secretariat, more funds are available to the Advisory Bodies, and more funds are available for Africa, and SIDS countries, and of the Global South. But given the view and the mood in the room, we would like to withdraw our amendment and you may kindly delete it.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, with the Paragraph 8, with the new updated text, are there any comments or objections? I see none.

Therefore, the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

And for Paragraph 9, do we agree with the updated paragraph? I see no objections.

Therefore, the Paragraph...

Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Considering that this idea evolved from Zambia, it would just be prudent that Zambia is added to the proposals of this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to add Rwanda to the list of countries.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Belgica*.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you.

Please add Belgium also to the list.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Chair.

Yes, we also would like to add our name. We did indicate in our intervention that we are available to participate in the WG.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chair,

In the decision there is a consensus. So, should we say that we should put our name? There is a consensus. Of course, we want to put the name of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Yesterday, we have also reflected that we share the idea of the State Party of Saudi Arabia chairing the opening and Working Committee, so our name to be included there.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, since there is a consensus on this, do you agree to put the names listed instead of having the interventions? Bulgaria.

La Délégation de la Bulgarie :

Nous rejoignons ce groupe de pays qui supportent la proposition.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

So, if there are no more interventions or comments or objections, then the paragraph is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

And therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to adopt the draft decision as a whole.

If there are no comments or objections, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 11** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

12. REVISION OF THE OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES // RÉVISION DES ORIENTATIONS

The Chairperson:

So, dear colleagues,

In confirmatory with the specific decisions of the Committee made at previous sessions, a revision of the Operational Guidelines has been inscribed on the Agenda of our session. All the relevant information is enclosed in the in the Document 45.COM/12.

Furthermore, as you will remember in line with the Decision **18 EXT.COM 3** and Annex 2 of the Document 18.EXTCOM/3, this Agenda item will be adopted without debate.

I would like to give the floor to Mr. Alessandro Balsamo, Head of the Nomination Unit, and the Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre to briefly introduce this document for us.

You may have the floor, Mr. Balsamo.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Since the 24th session, in 2000, the Committee started establishing limits on the number of nominations to be examined each year and these limits have changed several times throughout the years.

At its 40th session, the Committee decided that it will evaluate the impact of Decision **40 COM 11** at its 45th session in 2022. In this decision, the World Heritage Committee decided to limit the number of nominations it will examine each year to 35, as well as to limit to one nomination per State Party per year. This is Paragraph 61 of the Operational Guidelines.

The information in the Document 12 reflects the analysis on the limit of nominations to be examined per session, which was undertaken in compliance with the criteria that have been decided in Decision **44 COM 8** by the World Heritage Committee, notably, the following three relevant considerations:

- 1) The heavy budget constraints of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
- 2) The need for proactive management of the increasing size of the World Heritage List including more manageable sessions of the World Heritage Committee; and
- 3) The call for a more balanced World Heritage List.

On the basis of the data analysed and the statistics presented, and the potential impacts of the limits taken into account, the conclusion of the analysis contained in Document 12 shows that both the limit to one nomination per State Party per session and the overall annual limit of 35 nominations are appropriate measures:

- To address the imbalance of the World Heritage List;
- To limit further pressure on the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund; as well as
- To limit the overall workload of the Committee, the Advisory Bodies, and the World Heritage Centre.

However, on their own, these limits do not provide a solution to the issue of balance of the World Heritage List.

Furthermore, based on the analysis regarding the examination of nominations and to relieve pressure from the system, it would be suitable to exempt from the limit of one nomination per State Party per session nominations previously referred or deferred by the Committee.

The exclusion of referred and deferred nominations from the annual limit of one nomination per year per State Party may have positive impacts on several aspects, including removing pressures from the examination of such nominations at Committee sessions.

The related draft decision is on page 12 of both the English and French version of document.

Thank you, Mr. Chair

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Deputy Director.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

[Next slide, please]

So, I'm going to be talking about the revision to Chapter 8 of the Operational Guidelines and Annex 14, following the changes made to the UNESCO logo.

[Next slide, please]

Over several years, UNESCO has undertaken significant steps to strengthen its visual identity and branding. This included the adoption of the World Heritage Emblem in 1978, and you see, here on the screen, a timeline, followed by the development of comprehensive guidelines for the Emblem in 1998. Furthermore, in 2007, the UNESCO General Conference established guidelines for the use of UNESCO's name, logo, and related elements. To implement these guidelines, the Secretariat issued a detailed *UNESCO Logo Toolkit*. In 2015, a "Table of uses" was added to the Operational Guidelines, further emphasizing the importance of symbolic representation.

More recently, in July 2021, UNESCO issued the *[Graphical] Standards and Logo Toolkit* to illustrate the different uses of the UNESCO logo and enhance the visibility of its brand. This builds on the recommendations of the Communications Working Group established as part of UNESCO's strategic transformation process. As for other Culture Conventions, the kit retains the integrity of the UNESCO and World Heritage logos while introducing new logo blocks for improved recognition.

The Organization's transition to the new visual identity and branding has been advancing well over the past two years and UNESCO's programme networks indicate that they prefer the use of a common logo. The integration of the new standard continues, with progressive updating of existing communication materials expected by December 2023, in consultation with National Commissions and Member States.

The main implication for the 1972 Convention is that the former specific logo for each World Heritage site is no longer used and should be replaced by the new generic site logo.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Deputy Director, for this.

Therefore, I invite you, dear colleagues, to examine and adopt Draft Decision **45 COM 12** but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received one amendment for this draft decision from the Distinguished Delegation of India.

The change is suggested for a Paragraph 61, which is in the Annex 1 and mentioned in Para 5 of the draft decision.

So, Para 1 to 4, there is no change.

Para 5: "Adopts the proposed revision of Paragraph 61 of the Operational Guidelines as presented in Annex 1 of Document".

So, we can show you the screen with the amendment proposed in Paragraph 61, and if the Committee decides to accept the amendment, then the amended para can be added to this decision.

Maybe, we can zoom in the screen.

So, the amendment proposed for Para 61:

- Point a), on the left side, you can see the existing para, and this amendment is to "examine up to two complete nominations per State Party". The amendment is what is visible on the right side.
- Then, for point b), where the "set at 35 the annual limit" has been proposed to be changed to "45", number of nominations as the annual limit.
- Again, in Para 3 of this Paragraph 61 point c), the limit of nominations is proposed to be changed from "35" to "45 nominations".
- And point 5, it's retained as is.
- In 6 again, the number of nominations moves from "35" to "45", based on the two nominations per year for each State Party.
- And 7, it's proposed to add: "nominations of properties for natural heritage", "nominations of properties for mixed heritage", and "nominations of properties submitted in the 5th year following the report by the Advisory Bodies on the related Preliminary Assessment as per Paragraph 122 point g)", and these paragraphs refer to the paragraphs in Operational Guidelines.

I think that's the only amendment proposed in the decision.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

I would like to judge the mood in the house because we have already, in the previous Item 11, we have formed an Open-ended Working Group to go into the fundamental workings of the Convention. I think these points are also covered by the Open-ended Working Group.

So, with the advice of the Secretariat, if you could just..., we are willing to withdraw our amendments if we can decide to take a decision on that after the Open-ended Working Group submits its report in the 46th forum, Excellency.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So. I would like to see...

Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We fully agree with the proposal of referring the discussion, just proposed by the Distinguished Delegate of India. We deem that more time is needed, and that is a very, very interesting and important issue that deserves our devotion.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Actually, this came from the State of India, which is... he provided, or they provided this amendment. I think the best solution is to take it now out and to be input for discussion. It needs a more thorough discussion and agreement from all Member States.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Belgium.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Oui, merci M. le Président.

Je pense que c'est un débat que nous avons régulièrement, on a même envisagé d'aller en-deçà des 35 dossiers à un certain moment, et donc, je remercie l'Inde pour sa sagesse et de proposer de retirer son amendement. Je pense en effet que nous avons besoin des résultats du groupe de travail à composition non limitée pour pouvoir réfléchir sereinement à cette proposition.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

Japan also agrees with other members of the Committee to postpone the discussion to the Open-ended Working Group.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair.

We support the idea forwarded by Committee members that spoke before me.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Likewise. Thank you, Chair.

We would also like to have this amendment withdrawn.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Bulgaria.

La Délégation de la Bulgarie :

La Bulgarie supporte la proposition de transférer cette discussion dans le groupe de travail pour une discussion plus approfondie.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *México*.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We also would like to join the consensus.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The State of Qatar approves this suggestion to defer the examination of this topic because it is a highly technical issue, and it needs an Open-ended Specialized Group.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Zambia is also in support.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je dois dire qu'il y a vraiment un consensus là-dessus, et que même le Groupe Afrique a harmonisé sa position y relative également.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to ask the Rapporteur to update...

Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Yes, thank you, Chair.

We just want to join as well.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines supports the change as well.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

South Africa also wants to be listed.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to ask the Rapporteur to update us on the draft decision.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Since India has withdrawn the amendment and there is a consensus among the Committee members, there is no change in the original Draft Decision **45 COM 12**.

I'm not sure if the members would want us to reflect all the names, or the draft decision may be adopted as is.

The Chairperson:

It's preferable to be adopted as it is, I believe.

So, India.

The Delegation of India:

The draft decision is to be referred, not adopted.

The consensus in the room is to refer it and do not adopt it now but wait for the outcome of the Open-ended Working Group because that's evaluating the various technicalities. That has been my understanding. Please correct me if it's wrong.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I don't know, maybe my understanding was wrong, but as far as we understood, the room was in consensus to adopt the decision proposed, and then, to continue reflect on the evaluation of this process because, as far as we understand, what is proposed would be very useful for all the States Parties and will basically extend the possibility to present nominations. So, we would prefer to adopt the decision proposed.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I would like to ask the floor again..., so, we have consensus on the adopt of the decision. And also, we have a view from the State of India about the deferring the adopt of the decision.

So, Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I don't know why we don't adopt that decision, I mean, why it is here? So, I think we have to adopt the decision, otherwise, how can we move? I mean, can we stay for the whole year hostage without adopting the decision?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair.

The reason why we kept quiet, if we adopt it as it is, does it mean that it is open to proceed with our previous discussion? Or do we need one statement that it has been referred to be consulted as based on our previous discussion?

I would like further clarification in this regard from the Legal Advisor.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency,

I was seeking clarification. Are we going to adopt it or... My understanding was that it is going to be referred subject to the outcome of the Open-ended Working Group.

So, I am not taking a position, I'm just asking clarification, right now, because the views expressed in the house by a majority of members was to refer this decision, and that is the reason why I'm asking the question.

So, I'm in your hands, Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

I think it's, as also I understood, is to adopt a draft decision and continue the discussion and the outcomes.

Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We also wanted to express our understanding that we are adopting the decision, and of course, we are in support of continuing the discussion on this very important and complex issue within the context of the Open-ended Working Group.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Italy. Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr. Chair,

I am a little bit confused.

Can we see paragraph by paragraph? Because if we adopt this decision, Paragraph four and five, in the first part, we adopt the proposed revision of Paragraph 61 as in the end of the decision. So, can we see the decision and paragraph by paragraph?

And I agree with Ambassador of India to refer this decision. We need a clarification because when we see the decision at the end after Part 2, we have Paragraph 61 with the amendments proposed by India.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

We wanted to confirm that we would agree to adopt the document if we will look at each paragraph individually, then we will follow your guidance. But we're happy to adopt it and then follow up the discussion later on.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Actually, as was stated before, some of our colleagues are confused.

We are adopting this DR, and this item is within the Agenda for this session. If the majority considers that we ought to defer this issue to the Open-ended Working Group, then we should say that we have agreed on the postponement or the deferral of this issue so that it can be examined by the Open-ended Working Group after a thorough examination.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. Indi.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency.

I concur with the views of the Qatari Ambassador.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Egypt.

La Délégation de l'Égypte :

Merci, M. le Président.

Notre compréhension, c'est qu'on va adopter la décision telle qu'elle a été proposée par le Secrétariat, et puis, toute autre modification ou peut-être changement futur sera fait ultérieurement.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'll pass the floor to the Legal Advisor to respond to the question addressed previously.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The decision, as it stands, contains a paragraph by which the Committee would adopt the proposed revision of Paragraph 61. So, if you were to keep Paragraph 5 of the draft decision, you would be modifying Paragraph 61 of the Operational Guidelines in conformity with what is foreseen in the documents.

I would like to say a couple of things in this respect:

- The fact of adopting it now does not mean that you would not be able to review it at a later stage, for example, at the next Committee session or even through the Open-ended Working Group, with the Open-ended Working Group has the mandate to decide on this;
- Another option would be, of course, not to adopt the Paragraph 61 now, but to decide that the Committee will review it at its next session, or even that the Open-ended Working Group will have discussions on it.

But in any event, adopting the Paragraph 61 now does not mean that you can't come back on your decision and review it at the next session.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I'll pass the floor to the Secretariat first for some clarification.

Mr. Balsamo.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Maybe just in complement of what the Legal Advisor just said, I wanted to clarify that, as was said by the Distinguished member of the Egypt Delegation, is that if we are going to adopt what it is now, the draft decision as proposed in Document 12 with its annex, just to clarify that the main substantive difference, as I explained in my presentation of the document, is the fact that if we adopt that starting from 1 February, for instance, next deadline,

we will be able to accept two nominations for States Parties in case one of the two nominations was previously referred or deferred, which is not the case at the moment.

So, with this adoption, there will be this substantive difference that will be adopted. But as it was explained by the Legal Advisor, maybe the Committee may wish to take this decision later on.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Qatar.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

Après avoir écouté le Conseiller juridique en ce qui concerne la clarification entre le rapport et l'adoption, l'État du Qatar vient avec l'adoption le *draft decision* aujourd'hui.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

As has been said by the Ambassador of Qatar, we listened to the Legal Advisor at the Secretariat, and we would prefer now to adopt the decision. It's clear now.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, given that we will adopt the draft decision as a whole and there are no amendments...

So, if there are no objections or comments, I, therefore, declare that Draft Decision **45 COM 12** adopted. *[gavel]*

- 15. PRESENTATION OF THE FINAL ACCOUNTS OF THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND FOR 2020-2021, REPORT ON THE EXECUTION OF THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2022-2023, BUDGET PROPOSAL OF THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND UNDER THE BIENNIUM 2024-2025 AND FOLLOW UP DECISION 44 COM 14 [Report of the consultative body] // PRÉSENTATION DES COMPTES FINAUX DU FONDS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL AU TITRE DE L'EXERCICE BIENNAL 2020-2021, RAPPORT SUR L'EXÉCUTION DU FONDS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL AU TITRE DE L'EXERCICE BIENNAL 2022-2023, PROPOSITION BUDGÉTAIRE DU FONDS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL POUR L'EXERCICE BIENNAL 2024-2025 ET SUIVI DE LA DECISION 44 COM 14 [Rapport de l'organe consultatif]**

The Chairperson:

So, dear colleagues,

As you know the Working Group on the Budget met several times throughout our session, and therefore, I would like to give the floor to the Chairperson of the Working Group, Ms. Yara Al-Ghafri (Oman), to present her report and the draft decision proposed on this matter that was distributed to you.

Ms. Al-Ghafri, you may have the floor.

The Chairperson of the Budget Working Group (Ms. Al-Ghafri):

Thank you, M. Chairperson.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

It is my pleasure to report back today on the results of the Budget Working Group discussions and present the revised version of Draft Decision **45 COM 15**.

First, please allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the Distinguished members of the Committee for the trust that you have placed in me by electing me as the Chairperson of the Budget Working Group.

The Group met twice, on 18 and 19 September 2023, for two hours of discussions overall. In total, we had 36 participants over those two days, representing eight Committee members, eight States Parties non-members of the Committee, and the three Advisory Bodies. I would like to thank all the Delegates of Committee members and States Parties as well as representatives of the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies who attended and actively

participated at the meetings of the Budget Group. The inputs and cooperative spirit of all participants allowed us to conclude our work efficiently and earlier than expected.

The work of the Group started with a very comprehensive presentation of the budget document by the Secretariat, which allowed for participants to make general comments and ask for some clarifications or explanations.

Some of them were about the financial aspects of the Preliminary Assessment and on private sector partnerships. A few questions were also answered regarding the operating reserve and funds allocated to the Advisory Bodies.

A clarification was required about the different options for voluntary contributions presented in Para 14 of the Draft Decision **15**. It was reiterated that these options, which were already endorsed by the General Assembly, were optional and any contribution within this framework would be completely voluntary.

Comments were also made on the necessity to have a wider discussion on the working methods of the whole World Heritage System, including its financial aspect, potentially by creating a Working Group that could reflect on this matter. It was suggested to tackle this proposal under Item 11 as it encompasses aspects that are beyond finances.

The Group then moved to examine the draft decision. Globally the original text of the draft decision was retained, with only two amendments made:

- 1) One on Para 4 to specify that both compulsory and voluntary contributions are assessed;
- 2) The other amendment on Para 9 called on States Parties to pay voluntary contributions to the sub-account dedicated to the evaluation of nominations in line with Paragraph 168bis of the Operational Guidelines.

No other amendment was brought forward, although one State Party noted that some discussions under certain items may have financial implications and could require additional amendments to this draft decision in the Plenary.

Finally, allow me to reiterate my thanks to all those who contributed to this Group. I hope the distinguished members of the Committee will adopt this draft decision, which is the outcome of the collective work of the Group.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Allow me also, on behalf of the Committee, to congratulate you for your excellent achievement in chairing this Working Group.

I understand that this is a consensual decision by the Working Group. I trust that members of the Committee are all in agreement with this text on the screen.

And before we move to the examination of the draft decision, I would like to know if there are any comments regarding this Agenda item.

So, if there are no comments or interventions, I, therefore, invite you, dear colleagues, to examine and adopt Draft Decision **45 COM 15**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have received the amendment proposed by the Budget Working Group, as already explained by the Chairperson of the Group.

The amendment is to Para 4, where the term "assessed" is now used both for "compulsory and voluntary contributions", and the rest of the para is as is.

Then, Para 9: "Recalling Paragraph 168bis of the Operational Guidelines, calls on States Parties to pay voluntary contributions to the sub-account dedicated to the Evaluations of nominations to support the submission of Preliminary Assessment requests and nomination dossiers, and requests the World Heritage Centre to report on the use of sub-account dedicated to the Evaluations of nominations and on the use of the operating reserve at its 46th session;"

And then Para 12, there is just a slight correction of the document with ".Rev".

Rest of the decision is as per original.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

So, I invite you, dear colleagues, to examine the draft decision paragraph by paragraph.

So, from Paragraph 1 to Paragraph 3, we don't have any amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. [gavel]

Paragraph 4, we have a proposal. Do we agree with this proposed text? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel] From Paragraph 5 to Paragraph 8, we do not have any amendment. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. [gavel]

Paragraph 9, we have a proposed text. Do we agree with this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel]

Paragraph 10 and Paragraph 11, we do not have any amendments. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. [gavel]

Paragraph 12, we have a minor amendment. Do we agree to this proposal? I see no objections. Adopted as amended. [gavel]

From Paragraph 13 to Paragraph 16, we don't have any proposal or amendment. Do we agree to adopt them as they are? I see no objections. Adopted. [gavel]

Dear colleagues,

I invite you to adopt the draft decision as a whole and if there are no comments or objections, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 15 adopted** as amended. [gavel]

So, for the next Bureau meeting, it will be on Sunday morning from 9:30 to 10:00.

And also, I would like to remind you all about the closing event for today. All busses will be waiting you at the entrance and giving that, I thank you all for your efficiency and... that assist us in advancing in our work.

I would like to ask the Director of World Heritage Centre if there are any announcement.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

There is no announcement for today, and I'd like to thank the members of the Committee for their efficient work of today.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I wish you a lovely evening. [gavel]

The meeting rose at 5:11 pm. // La séance a été levée à 17h11.

THIRTEENTH DAY
Sunday, 24 September 2023
TWENTY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING
10:14 am – 12:04 am
Chairperson:
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

I would like to share with you the information provided to the 13th and last meeting of the Bureau this morning about the timetable and remaining days of work of the Committee.

On Friday, we have completed the examination of Items 11, 12, and 15. We will therefore be convened this morning to complete the examination of the following Items:

- 16: Other businesses;
- 17: Election of the Bureau of the 46th session of the Committee;
- 18: Provisional Agenda of the 46th session;
- 19: Adoption of the Report of the decisions;
- 20: Closing the session.

As we will have finished all the items of the Agenda, there will be no session tomorrow, 25 September.

Please, do also note that a copy of the Provisional Agenda of our 46th session of the Committee as well as a copy of the Report of the decisions taken at this session have been transmitted to you and also have been distributed to the room.

Regarding Item 17, I would like to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to provide us with some more information.

You may have the floor, Mr. Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Good morning to all.

I hope you enjoyed your trip yesterday.

Mr. Chairperson,

I want to provide the Distinguished Committee members with some information regarding the election of the Bureau.

So, allow me to recall that on 20 July last, we received a letter from the Permanent Delegation of India informing the World Heritage Centre that India would like to host the World Heritage Committee in 2024. However, further details regarding this hosting are still awaited, and therefore, the Committee is not in a position to constitute a Bureau for its session at that stage. Consequently, as already indicated, it could be suggested to postpone the election of the

TREIZIÈME JOUR
Dimanche 24 septembre 2023
VINGT-TROISIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h14 – 12h04
Président :
Dr Abdulelah Al-Tokhais

Bureau of the 46th session of the Committee to a 19th extraordinary session, which could be held in conjunction with the 24th session of the General Assembly of States Parties at the end of November 2023. So, this would also mean that the Committee will need, therefore, to prolong the terms of office of all the current Bureau members until that time.

Mr. Chairperson,

As I indicated in the Bureau, there is a precedent in this regard. At its 41st session in 2016, the Committee decided, by its Decision **41 COM 16**, to prolong the mandate of the entire Bureau until an extraordinary session that was held during the 21st session of the General Assembly of States Parties in November 2016. So, a similar decision could be adopted by this Committee, also taking note of the generous invitation of the State Party of India to host the 46th session.

So, Mr. Chairperson, a draft decision has been prepared in this regard, reflecting the above-mentioned elements, when you come to this item for examination.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, dear Director.

Also, indeed, the Bureau is in agreement with this process.

Are there any comments on this matter?

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Good morning, everyone, and I hope that we finalize our Agenda today as early as possible.

Regarding this issue, Mr. Chair, we are in total agreement. However, we know that the election is for the new Committee is going to be during the General Assembly. So, this meeting of the extended session of the Committee should be before the election of new members. That's what I understood.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, I would like to pass the floor to the Director of World Heritage Centre also to clarify it further.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

As some of you remember that after the election, there is always an extraordinary session because this is the moment where, with the new members of the Bureau coming and the end of mandate of the others outgoing, we organize an extraordinary session to complete the Bureau. So, the suggestion is, of course, to hold this extraordinary session the day after the General Assembly has completed its work.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, dear Director. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

It is only for clarification.

So, the extended session, it will be both the exiting and the new, or only the new? That's what I want to know.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, I'll pass it to the Legal Advisor for some clarifications.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

At the next session of the General Assembly, the General Assembly will elect new members of the Committee. It is for the Committee to decide on its Bureau, to elect its Bureau. So, the new Committee members, the new Committee in its new composition, pursuant to the General Assembly elections, will hold a 19th extraordinary session just after the General Assembly to elect its Bureau.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Your Excellency, I hope it is clear now. Thank you so much.

And I see no more questions.

16. OTHER BUSINESS // QUESTIONS DIVERSES

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

I would like to know if you have any other comments or proposal under Item 16, devoted to Other Business.

So, I see no interventions.

Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Just good morning, Gentlemen.

When will be the time for us to get a chance to have final remarks?

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

It will be on Item 20.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, I see no more questions, and therefore invite you to proceed to the next item.

17. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON, VICE-CHAIRPERSONS AND RAPPOREUR OF THE 46TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE // ÉLECTION DU PRÉSIDENT, DES VICE-PRÉSIDENTS ET DU RAPPOREUR DE LA 46^E SESSION DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We will now have to examine Item 17, which concerns the election of the new Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee and of the Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee.

Following the explanation by the Director of the World Heritage Centre, I would like to ask the Secretariat to put on screen Draft Decision **45 COM 17**.

So, dear colleagues, do we all agree with this draft?

Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Good morning.

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor.

Yes, Japan also agrees with the draft decision, and also welcomes the thanks to Indian authorities for their interest to host, and we will wait for their final decision.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no comments or objections. So, therefore, this draft decision is so decided.

Item 17 is now closed. *[gavel]*

18. PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE 46TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE // ORDRE DU JOUR PROVISOIRE DE LA 46^E SESSION DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

I would like now also to invite Mr. Eloundou Assomo to present the Provisional Agenda of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee.

You may have the floor, Mr. Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

In addition to the regular standing items, the Committee will have to examine next year, including the state of conservation reports and nominations to the World Heritage List, the following items have been included to the Provisional Agenda resulting from the decision you took during this current session. In fact, in addition to the current items that you are organizing, there are three new items that will be included in the Agenda of the following session:

- 1) First of all, you'll have Item 5C, following your request to examine a progress report on the World Heritage Strategy for Africa at its 46th session;
- 2) You also have a new item which has been included, concerning the reporting by the Category 2 Centres. Remember that in the past, the Category 2 Centres were not given the opportunity to report to the Committee on their activities. You decided to do so. So, there will be this new item that will now give the opportunity to the Category 2 Centres to report to you;
- 3) And of course, there is another third item which is Item 11, following the decision on the Open-ended Working Group that was established. So, there will be a report of this Open-ended Working Group at the 46th session, following the Decision **45 COM 11** that you have taken.

So, these are basically the new items that have been included.

To summarize, the Provisional Agenda is divided in the same way it has always been done:

- That is, the opening session, which always happens, where you will be adopting the Agenda and the Timetable for the conduct of the work;
- And then you will have a part on a series of reports, including the one on the Category 2 Centres, which I also mentioned to you;
- And of course, then you'll have the examination of the state of conservation of the properties and, with the two parts, one

on the 56 sites on the List in Danger and then the other one also.

- And of course, you'll have one part on the establishment of the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger following the examination of the nominations, and the decisions either to inscribe a site on the World Heritage List in Danger or not;
- And there will be one part on the discussion of the Global Strategy, where you will be discussing Upstream Process;
- And of course, there will be one part on Periodic Report, the same way it happened here. And this time, you will have the report on the results of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting exercise for Europe and North America, which is ongoing;
- And also, the Committee will discuss the working methods and tools as usual. And this is exactly the new item that has been included on this one, on the Open-ended Working Group, with the mandate that you have given to this Open-ended Working Group;
- And as usual, we will have a number of two items regarding financial and administrative issues. That is, of course, we will you will examine international assistance, but you will also examine the report on, first of all, the final accounts for the biennium 22-23, but also the report on the execution of the budget that you approved;
- And then, again, we will close the meeting with a number of items, the Election of the Bureau for the 47th session, but also the adoption of the Provisional Agenda for the 47th session and the adoption of the Bureau.

I think this, in a nutshell, what is in the new Provisional Agenda.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, dear Director.

Are there any comments concerning this provisional Agenda?

Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thanks to my colleague, Mr. Lazare.

I think a lot of effort is being put on this.

I have no comment regarding the content of the Agenda, future Agenda, but I have a question regarding the arrangement. Because during the session, sometimes, we jump from 3 a), b), c) to d), then we come to a), then we go to c), what is the rationale? Because I don't know. That is a little bit...

maybe it makes confusion during the session. If there is any way that we stick..., even if you change, for example, because sometimes you do put information at the last moment, we can be understood, but can we go straight away at chronological a), b), c), d) instead of jumping?

This is my comment only, but it might be a rationale in that there.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I will also pass it to the Secretariat for further explanations.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

No, thank you very much.

I think the comment made by His Excellency the Ambassador of Oman is quite valid.

What also you should know that, at this stage, this is a Provisional Agenda, so we will take your comment into consideration. But what you also need to know is that the Bureau, when we are preparing a timetable and then the arrangements regarding how this timetable is being followed is also the responsibility, in a way, of the Bureau who is helping the Committee in his conduct of the session, taking sometimes into account how we advance in the discussion. But thank you so much because we will take your comments into consideration.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more questions or comments.

Then, I, therefore, declare Draft Decision **45 COM 18 adopted**. *[gavel]*

19. ADOPTION OF DECISIONS // ADOPTION DES DECISIONS

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues, dear Committee members,

I hope that you've had good rest yesterday and that you were able to further discover the rich heritage of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the city of Riyadh.

We now come to our final task, the formal adoption of the Report of Decisions. We will go through the report, which has been prepared on the time and circulated to you in three parts. Allow me to congratulate the Rapporteur and the Secretariat for such a professional work.

Before I give the floor to our dear Rapporteur, I would like to recall that the decisions included in this Report have already been adopted by the Committee over the past two weeks, and therefore the task we have before us today is essentially an editorial one. We will

not reopen the debate on the content of the decisions.

I would like to invite our Rapporteur, Ms. Shikha Jain, to briefly explain the process of preparation of the Report and provide additional guidance for you to consider as you review it.

You may have the floor.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will try to be as brief as possible in my summarization.

It has been a very enriching experience for me as the Rapporteur for this extended 45th session of the Committee, which is probably the longest live session in the history of the Convention.

During this extended 45th session, the Committee has adopted a total of 374 decisions, of which 85%, that is 312, were adopted without debate, and the remaining 15%, that is 55 decisions, were adopted with amendments. We inscribed 42 properties and adopted 260 state of conservation reports, a decision of which 26 were opened. We also looked into updating several very important policy decisions on climate change and sustainable development, and others. Most importantly, the Committee also emphasized on the need for reflections related to the Convention's future vision, including concerns of credibility, balance, and representativeness with completion of the 50 years of the Convention. We went through more than 40 documents at the preparation of this session and produced 517 pages of decisions report in English and 500 pages of decisions report in French.

I have to extend my thanks to the World Heritage Centre and its team for this endless work on the documents shared with the Committee for this session, Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Director of the World Heritage Centre, for his encouragement at crucial moments, Ms. Hosagrahar, Mr. Balsamo, Ms. Frédérique Aubert, Mr. Richard Veillon for their valuable feedback at various times during the session, Luba and Anatole, the most critical members of the Rapporteur team, who seamlessly merged the boring amendments from the Committee members so that we could present the draft decisions on the screen, Olivier and Jean-Marc, who were the magic hands on the screen, simultaneously incorporating all suggestions of the Committee members. And it was with all this support that I could review the final adopted decisions with the team at the end of every Plenary for any final checks.

I hope we have captured the pulse and dynamism of this Committee in these adopted decisions presented to you today, alongside all typographical and grammatical checks. I truly felt that the amendments, debates, and decisions of the Committee flowed and settled as smoothly as the ripple desert sand in the vast sand dunes of Saudi Arabia's timeless landscape.

Before I conclude, Mr. Chair, I would like to convey my heartfelt compliments on your able leadership of

this session, my sincerest thanks to the Host Country, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for their outstanding hospitality and for allowing me to experience a glimpse of your tangible and intangible culture.

Shukran jazeelan and thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Afwan jazeelan, thank you very much.

I would now ask whether, in order to be as efficient as possible, the Committee members could indicate to us whether they have identified editorial errors which should be corrected so that we can deal with those now. Also, please note that formatting issues will be fixed at a later stage by the Secretariat during the finalization of the Report.

If there are no comments or suggestions, so I would ask we adopt the Report, section by section.

For the First Section, I hope you had the chance to review it, for the First Part, covering Agenda Items 2 to 7A.

If there are no comments or objections or remarks on this part? So, I see none.

The First Part of the Report of Decisions is, therefore, adopted. *[gavel]*

We now move to Part II of our Report which covers Agenda Item 7B. If there are no objections, I suggest we adopt the whole Part II.

Do we have any comments, suggestions, objections, remarks? So, I see none.

The Second Part of the Report of Decisions is therefore adopted. *[gavel]*

We now move to Part III of our Report which covers Agenda Items 8 to 19. If there is no objection, I suggest we adopt as a whole the Section III.

There're no comments, objections or remarks? I see none.

The Third Section and the last part of the Report of Decisions is therefore adopted. *[gavel]*

I now propose that we adopt the Report of Decisions as a whole.

Are there any comments or objections? I see none.

Therefore, I declare the Report of Decisions of the extended 45th session of the Committee adopted and Item 19 closed. *[gavel] [applause]*

An amazing job, over 500 pages.

20. CLOSING SESSION // SÉANCE DE CLÔTURE

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We now come to an end of our work, but before we close, allow me to say a few words.

Dear members of the Committee, Distinguished Ambassadors,

It is with my mixed feeling that I am addressing you today. Indeed, we have spent so many days together that I will be almost sad to see you all go. It has been, for my country and for me, a great pleasure to welcome you in Riyadh, city of sharing.

I hope you have had the opportunity to discover my country's rich heritage during the many activities that have been organized around this session. We have at a heart to share with you the best the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has to offer.

Dear friends,

This has been the longest session of the World Heritage Committee ever. It was not only for us the occasion to meet for the first time in four years in an *in praesentia* session, but also to underline the full commitment of the international Committee to the principle that lies at the heart of the Convention, our shared responsibility for humanity's heritage of Outstanding Universal Values.

You have had a busy Agenda for this extended 45th session, and I think the Committee achieved very good results and we can be proud that the Committee reached consensual decisions in every matter.

Furthermore, we have continued to reflect on the follow up to the action undertaken to consolidate dialogue and cooperation between the States Parties, the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat, on the result of the Convention's implementation over the past years, and on our future actions in the many crucial fields, including Priority Africa and sustainable development.

You have also decided to look into questions of our function, notably regarding working methods, essential elements which will enable us to strengthen our joint action and ensure that the Convention is implemented effectively and in a way that is recognized by all. You wanted this reflection to be broader to enable all States Parties to the Convention to participate. And I think this is essential decision that will provide an opportunity to future exchange and debate together, and identify innovative solutions to consolidate our actions towards the implementation of the Convention.

Indeed, the World Heritage Convention is a truly unique international instrument which brings together nature and culture, States Parties and local communities, the scientific expertise and the political and local governance. It is now, with the recent ratification by Tuvalu, an almost universally ratified normative instrument. However, it is also fragile. It is facing many challenges and many obstacles, from the questions of credibility and representation of matters related to its financial sustainability.

As we all fulfil our role as guardians of our global heritage, we must also be the guarantee of the Convention credibility, implementation and perception. This is a more important task than it might seem. In this regard, our main purpose should be to ensure that the fundamental principle of transparency

in all processes of implementation of the Convention is respected and promoted.

Dear friends,

By electing me Chairperson of the Committee, you have entrusted me with a great responsibility, and I took it this role very serious. I hope I have been able to establish and maintain a dialogue with you, the Committee members, States Parties and other stakeholders on crucial issues so that, at this session of the Committee, we could take informed decisions, and that is help in consolidating the spirit of cooperation and dialogue.

Saudi Arabia was extremely proud to host the session of the World Heritage Committee. I hope you will take some of the warmth and hospitality of Saudi Arabia with you. I wish you all a very safe trip back to your respective countries.

Last but not least, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Minister of Culture, the Chairperson of the National Commission, His Highness Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan, also the Assistant Minister of Culture, the General Supervisor of the Saudi National Commission, His Excellency Rakan bin Ibrahim Al-Touq, also the Secretary General of the Saudi National Commission, His Excellency Ahmed bin Abdulaziz Alblihed, for their great support to ensure that the implementation of this session goes smoothly. Also, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my dear colleagues at the National Commission, also the Permanent Delegation and Heritage Commission, and all involved stakeholders and parties in the Ministry of Culture for their great support and efficiency in executing this session. Also, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Rapporteur, also to the interpreters and organizers and the volunteers for their hard and dedicated work to ensure that we come here every morning, every afternoon with a smile and comfort. They accommodate us during this session. Without them, that would not be possible.

Lastly, I would like to also congratulate the Secretariat and extend my sincere gratitude to their valuable work during this session, in terms of preparing the documents, preparing also the Agenda and assisting the Committee members in taking all these decisions, under the leadership of the Director of World Heritage Centre, Mr. Lazare.

So, with this, I will now give the floor to the Committee members if they have any wishes or comments to take the floor. Maybe, we will start with Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson,

First and foremost, I would like to commend the State Party of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for successfully organizing and hosting the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee. This session is conducted during the historical time whereby the Kingdom was celebrating the 93rd National Day, yesterday, as this great nation coming together to honour its identity,

culture, and salute the continuous nine decades of progress and prosperity.

Moreover, Mr. Chairman, I would like to appreciate the way you steer our meeting in the last two weeks, and as you have said properly now, we would like to extend our appreciation for the way you manage our meeting effectively and efficiently.

Mr. Chairperson,

I take the floor to inform that, at the end of the year, Ethiopia will complete its membership to this Committee. Our membership to the Committee was an honour and a rewarding, and has been a stepping stone to many milestones in the implementation of the 1972 Convention. We appreciated the cooperation and support extended to us throughout our time on the Committee. We thank the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, the States Parties and members of the Committee for their outstanding cooperation.

Furthermore, we would like to extend our special gratitude to the African States Parties members of the Committee for their collaboration, experience and knowledge-sharing during the time of our membership. Although it is an undeniable fact that a lot still needs to be done, we, therefore, encourage the remaining Committee members to continue with similar spirit. Ethiopia is confident that the remaining Committee members and the incoming ones next year will continue building up the good work and move forward from where we have left.

Chairperson,

Ethiopia will always remain in a good working relation with the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies, and all States Parties in the full implementation of the Convention.

Finally, Chairperson, since its ratification to the World Heritage Convention in 1977, Ethiopia has been committed to establishing and continuously improving the legal framework, administrative structure, and management system for heritage conservation, and would like to underscore its commitment not only as an outgoing Committee member, but also as an active State Party to the Convention, that has been implemented for a half century, which I believe brought us together with the entire world.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

Japan, as a member of the Japanese Delegation, would also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting us for this 45th Committee, as well as to express great thanks to the Chair for smooth running of the meetings, as well as..., with your guidance, we achieved very much fruitful outcomes. And thank you very much once

again for your outstanding Chairmanship. And also, I'd like to commend members of the World Heritage Centre for organizing this event.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

Zambia, just like the rest of the Delegates who have started contributing, we'd like to join them by congratulating the Host Country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for the wonderful work they have done, not just to Zambia but to the rest of this Body which is sitting today, and even those who have left.

Mr. Chairperson,

As a State Party of Zambia, we would also want to appreciate your wisdom in guiding this whole session up to this very end successfully.

Mr. Chairperson,

In addition, Zambia would like to commend the World Heritage Centre for the wonderful work that they have done in taking us through this whole process. In addition, we want to appreciate the works that have been undertaken by the Advisory Bodies, and even the Category 2 UNESCO Centres, because it would not have been easy for us to reach this far if it wasn't for their work.

Mr. Chairperson,

I would like to also, even as I am about to conclude my speech, I appreciate the fact that, yesterday, you took some of us out of this place. We flew in a very beautiful plane, landed at a beautiful airport, went into some good heritage sites, and we had a lot of sightseeing, a lot of exchange of experiences, we had a lot of excitement in the field.

Mr. Chairperson,

We would want to really appreciate, as a State Party of Zambia, the experience that we have been able to draw out of this session. Making a maiden appearance at this wonderful conference, it has really been a good experience for the State Party of Zambia Delegation, and we want to say, as we go back to Zambia, we are going to also contribute to marketing Saudi Arabia as a tourism destination, a heritage destination.

And Mr. Chairperson, even as I conclude my speech, I would like to submit, Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you very much. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Our Delegation would like to warmly congratulate the Host Country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for the excellent organization of the 45th extended session of the World Heritage Committee, which has been a unique experience for all the participants.

We would like to express our deep appreciation for the most generous and warm hospitality, the kindness of all people involved and their hard work 24 hours per day during the last 15 days, always smiling and eager to help us on everything.

My country, Greece, having the experience of organizing numerous international conferences, as recently was the case of Delphi International Conference to celebrate the 50th anniversary of World Heritage Convention, commend Saudi Arabia's authorities for the efficient way they conducted this long and demanding event.

It goes with great enthusiasm and anticipation that our country took part in the important discussions of the Committee concerning the present situation and the future of some of the most emblematic cultural and natural monuments of the planet. Additionally, during this session, thanks to the joint efforts of the members of the Committee, supported by the excellent preparation made by the World Heritage Centre, the wise guidance of ADG Culture, Mr. Ottone, the well-documented scientific contribution of the Advisory Bodies, and the support of UNESCO Legal Advisors, we note with satisfaction that a great progress has been made for the identification and protection of our common heritage.

It is also of great importance that during the present session, the Committee made one more step towards the establishment of an inclusive approach concerning heritage. The inscription for the first time of the category of sites of memory is clear evidence of the dynamic character of our Convention, its evolution over time, and its capacity to adapt to new heritage perceptions for the benefit of monuments, as well as of people and communities that recognize the values linked to them as part of their history and identity.

Finally, we would like to assure you that our country will continue the work for this Committee with the same enthusiasm and devotion, and the consensual spirit in view of the next Committee session.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I should like to congratulate the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Sites and His Majesty the King and the Crown Prince. We would like to congratulate the Saudi people for their National Day.

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude for your wisdom, Sir, and the way you managed this session.

We have enjoyed a great deal of hospitality during this session. Yesterday, we spent the whole day at AlUla, and we were able to see the utter interest of Saudi Arabia in its Outstanding Universal Value sites. In Saudi Arabia, we were able to see the hospitality and the generosity, which is not strange for our brethren in Saudi Arabia.

We would like to reiterate our thanks for your hospitality, and this is not strange for us, we believe that Saudi Arabia is rich in terms of heritage and in terms of human values.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *Belgica*.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

[première oratrice] *Shukran jazeelan, Said Rais.*

Je voudrais, au nom de la Délégation belge, remercier le Royaume d'Arabie saoudite pour son excellente hospitalité, très généreuse et dont le voyage hier à Alula n'a été que le point culminant d'une très longue série d'introductions à la très riche culture saoudienne.

Je voudrais vous remercier également pour le dynamisme que vous avez insufflé à nos débats. Je voudrais également vous remercier pour la direction que vous avez imprimée à la réflexion sur notre Convention.

C'est la première session en personne à laquelle la Belgique participe en tant que membre depuis son élection, et elle restera certainement dans nos mémoires, non seulement parce qu'elle a été la plus longue de l'histoire mais aussi parce qu'elle a été d'une qualité exceptionnelle.

Merci beaucoup.

[second speaker] Mr. Chair, if I may?

Thank you, Sir.

On behalf of Belgium and its regions, I would like to thank our gracious and generous hosts, the National Commission for Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for making us feel welcome and at home these last two weeks.

Every Olympic games used to finish with a statement about the best Olympic games ever, but today, Mr. Chair, I will not go as far as to describing the sessions as the best ever simply because it was my first, but I was told by colleagues who are in a position to compare that Riyadh 2023 is certainly up there with the best of all 45. We had not had a regular in-person meeting of the Committee since 2019, but we certainly picked up where we left off in style and with a renewed energy that seems to be so typical for this beautiful country and its magnificent people.

I would also like to thank you personally, Mr. Chair, for the leadership, thoroughness, diplomacy and efficiency with which you have conducted our discussions. Together with our extremely skilful and dedicated Rapporteur, you have been an important and integral capstone of the success of this 45th session and, on behalf of Belgium and its region, I would like to wholeheartedly congratulate you on the job exceptionally well done.

Our heartfelt acknowledgements also go out to our good colleagues of both the other Delegations, the World Heritage Centre and the Secretariat, and most certainly, our interpreters, who have been with us for the whole duration of the session and without whom our debate would certainly not have gone as smoothly as they did.

Last but certainly not least, Mr. Chair, a very special word of gratitude to the many young and talented people that greeted us every single moment of the day, with their broad smile and genuine kindness. They all went out of their way to make our lives and tasks, here in Riyadh, as easy as possible, especially the Leaders Officers assigned to the Delegation of Belgium, whom we will cherish in our hearts for a very long time to come.

In short, Mr. Chair, many, many thanks from an extremely grateful Delegation of Belgium.

Shukran jazeelan, Said Al-Rais. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Afwan jazeelan.

That means a lot to us.

Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you, Chair.

Mexico would like to thank the unique hospitality and generosity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was an absolute privilege for us to be able to discover and enjoy this Kingdom's heritage.

We would like to thank you for your efficiency and able steersmanship of this meeting as the Committee did its work. We'd like also to acknowledge the excellent work of the Secretariat when it comes to preparing the documents and running the meeting, and similarly, we should like to commend the Secretariat, and Rapporteur for all of her work.

We think this has been a professional and productive session, with excellent input from all members in this unique extended 45th session of the Committee covering two years' worth of work.

Mexico would like to reiterate its commitment to the 1972 Convention and its commitment to safeguarding humanity's natural and cultural heritage. We feel that as the List grows, it will be bolstered by the Global Strategy and consolidate all of the work over the last few years.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina: *[interpretation from Spanish]*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The words that I have are of gratitude, much gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for this extraordinary session. The way that they've hosted us, treated us, spoiled us, the way that they've shared their country's heritage with us.

And we also, Mr. Chairman, wanted to thank everybody up on the podium, the Advisory Bodies, the Secretariat, the Bureau, the Centre, the Rapporteur. They've been working behind the scenes day by day, and without them, we would never have been able to achieve everything we did.

This has all been consensus building work, which means dialogue, discussion, input. It means working in a more broader way than we might have done in the past.

And that is why we'd like to recognize that the 12 sites that we have inscribed, and in particular this latest site of memory, has done much to enrich the heritage, not only of my country but of the world. That's why we'd like to extend our thanks to UNESCO.

For Argentinians, for all of us, we're very, very grateful to the States Parties, but also to the Observers, because each and every Observer who takes the floor gives us other perspectives.

We should like to reiterate our firm commitment to UNESCO and to World Heritage. And the only thing we can say is thank you. Thank you for us, for our Delegations, for us in Argentina, for everyone who cares about our cultural heritage. This has been a most important meeting.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Muchas gracias. Sultanate of Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Good morning, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Sultanate of Oman, we should also like to express our gratitude to our sister country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, its Ministry of Culture, the National Commission of Education, Culture and Science. We would like to thank them for their hospitality and everything they have done to ensure that this event of global importance was such a success. Congratulations also go to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and His Majesty, King Salman, the Crown Prince, and everyone for their National Day celebrations, yesterday. And our gratitude to you, Mr. Abdullelah Al-Tokhais, as Chairman of this meeting, for your way of conducting our meeting, for your passion throughout our discussions.

I wanted to thank ADG for Culture, Mr. Ottone, thank the Director of the World Heritage Centre. Thanks to

the Secretariat and all of our colleagues, our interpreters and the technical teams that have made this possible. And thanks to all of those young Saudi men and women who have supported us, kept us safe and worked so hard to make us feel welcome.

I wanted to thank the Delegations, their Heads and all of the members of the Committee. We are probably going to be wrapping up our work in this Committee here today, but we remain at your disposal.

And I should like to extend my apologies if there have been any misunderstandings during the course of our meeting. Our thanks to the Rapporteur and to all of the Advisory Bodies for their input. Most of the time we agree with what the Advisory Bodies say, but every now and then, when we do take a step back, it's not because we don't appreciate their work as being insufficient, it's just that we have diverging points of view.

I should also like to thank the experts who supported us and accompanied us in the lead up years, and all of the experts in my team who supported me.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you very much. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]* Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We'd you like to join the voices of other Delegations to express our gratitude to everybody, starting from you, from your leadership, full of wisdom and very helpful for this *[inaudible]* works of this Committee, and also our gratitude to all the elements who made it great job: of course, the ADG Ottone, the Director of the Centre, the Secretariat, and everybody, the Rapporteur, everybody who made possible for us to work. It is a great team, and we are very glad to be part of it. We feel privileged to be part of it. So, thank you very much to and thank you to everybody.

And last but not least, thank you for the great hospitality. Thank you to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the warm, great hospitality gave us. We felt very well, and we felt, in some way, at home. That is why also the works and all our job went well, I think.

So again, thank you and thank you. Thank everybody for this exceptional session of the Committee.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Sorry, thank you. It's too early for me this morning.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

What can I say? It has been an extraordinary two weeks of this session, and we have done so much

during this past two weeks. As you said earlier that you hope that Saudi Arabia has shown us some of the best they have. Yes, indeed, you have shown us the best in every dimension. For that, I would like to thank you, first of all, Chair, for guiding us through this very important session in an impeccable manner. I know that sometimes that are very difficult issues that we had to go through, but we did it smoothly, so well done for that.

I also would like to thank each and every one of the Secretariat, Mr. Director and all of your staff, who worked tirelessly every single day to pull through this session.

I would like to also thank the Government of Saudi Arabia for their exceptional hospitality. It's really hard to match, and, you know, it's been the best, I think, in everything you have done for us these two weeks. It's been incredible.

Thank you to all the members of the Committee who have worked with us through this, not only these two weeks, but the whole sessions and through our tenure as a member of the Committee. We appreciate your effort and your partnerships in this endeavour.

This session has been very constructive. We have done so much in terms of working together to go through all the state of conservation reports. We have inscribed so many sites around the world, as well as making new history by inscribing some of the sites of memories. So, in all of this, we have done in the true spirit of the Convention. So, in that, I would like to thank everyone. This has been an incredible session.

I would like to end by saying: Happy 93rd National Day of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Shukran jazeelan.

The Chairperson:

Afwan jazeelan, thanks a lot. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Shukran, Said Al-Rais.

There is a lot that could be said about this session, but the first thing I would like to start with is to express our most sincere gratitude to the host, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their extraordinary hospitality and support, to the people of Saudi Arabia, whose delicate attention and smiles healed us with energy for long working days. We will leave Riyadh full of impressions of the beautiful sights we had the opportunity to visit, full of memories of the people, of all the people we saw and met here in Riyadh.

It is a session meeting that stands out to us as one where we have worked positively in the constructive atmosphere of respectful dialogue and which this atmosphere was made possible also by excellent stewardship of this meeting. So, we thank you, Mr. Chair, for your outstanding leadership of this universal assembly, which we all value very much. And you have shown yourself as a worthy guide who led our caravan day by day through the difficult places of the desert to a green oasis. And like many

centuries ago, we, travellers, peoples of different from different countries, we have left valuable inscriptions for future generations, not on the rocks as our ancestors, but on the World Heritage List.

We want to express our appreciation to the World Heritage Centre, its Director, Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo, and to the Advisory Bodies for the huge amount of work they have done and still do throughout the course of the year. Our gratitude also goes to the Rapporteur, Ms. Shikha Jain, whose patience and meticulous work have contributed to the accurate recording of our debates.

Since it's the last meeting for the Russian Federation as a State Party to the Convention, we would like to thank all the States Parties members of the Committee, for the constructive discussions we have had during our mandate. Of course, our views and opinions don't always coincide, but that is normal. The Delegations were correct in standing by their positions, but they were also flexible in taking into consideration opposing views, and that is important. We are leaving the Committee and would like to wish all the best to those who stay and to those who will come. All the best in their efforts to preserve the constructive work at the next World Heritage session.

For the part of the Russian Federation, being committed to the spirit of the Convention and its values, we will continue to promote the Convention by contributing to the work of the Open-ended Working Group and other formats of dialogue, and with the aim to create a representative, balanced, and credible World Heritage List.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. [interpretation from Arabic] Egypt. [end of interpretation from Arabic]

The Delegation of Egypt:

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation should also like to extend its most sincere congratulations not only to you, but also to our sister country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on the day after its National Day. We wish you every happiness, we wish you happy celebrations and our best wishes go to the people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We wish them continued progress under the leadership of His Highness the Crown Prince.

We want to thank you for your hospitality and smooth organization of this extended 45th session of the Committee. All the members of the Committee concur when it comes to describing the unequalled success of this event. We've also been able to see with our own eyes some of the World Heritage sites inscribed by Saudi on the World Heritage List, and we have seen how very much the country has evolved in several areas. We want to thank them for the excellent organization of this meeting. But the success was also, I think, shown through your stewardship. [end of interpretation from Arabic]

Chair,

Today, as we conclude this session, we reflect on moments that have made it truly exceptional. Beyond the warm hospitality that we were immersed in, this gathering holds unique significance. It is our first since celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Convention. We have witnessed the nation inscribing its inaugural sites onto the World Heritage List. Together, we have achieved a remarkable milestone in inscribing heritage sites in Africa. Additionally, this session has registered sites tied to recent conflict memories following intense discussions among States Parties and experts, followed by many individuals worldwide.

As my country's term in this Committee concludes, allow me to raise briefly the following points:

- Firstly, a notable highlight of this tenure has been the unity in addressing the common challenges facing the African and Arab regions. The common challenges confronting these regions in the Convention implementation, including the vital task of authentically representing our narrative in the Convention, have only reinforced our resolve to continue this path to safeguard the Arab and African heritage;
- Secondly, the World Heritage Convention grapples with a multitude of challenges, from climate change to insufficient funding for site preservation, conflicts, security risks, and the imperative for capacity-building. Addressing these challenges necessitates strategic reflection and possibly review of all our methods of work. Sometimes we must step back to see the broader landscape rather than becoming entangled in the details;
- Thirdly, it is imperative to foster the already existing enhanced dialogue and understanding, embracing inclusivity, representation, cross-cultural understanding, and profound respect for stakeholders and the unique context of each culture and each site.

[interpretation from Arabic] So, thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

Allow me to conclude by invoking some rather important issues that we've been able to discuss. Can we preserve the past without overcoming the development challenges and promoting the way forward? How to strike a balance between development and heritage? World Heritage isn't only a reminder of the past, heritage is a living thing, and it requires our input. We'll not be able to protect it unless we take a proactive stance. It's the driver, the custodian of heritage, this Committee, and that is why we have a duty towards the men and women who work towards heritage. And that is why we need to promote their capacity-building so that we can together safeguard heritage and catalyse our heritage or going forward. But we also need human resources if we're going to build that capacity. And

so, protecting heritage needs to be seen as no longer in contradiction with development.

And so, Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank you once again. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

Lastly but not least, Mr. Chair, I extend once again our gratitude for your exceptional leadership. This was an extraordinary session, not only because it was merging two sessions but also because we had an extraordinary Chair, and we had an extraordinary country hosting arrangements and also an extraordinary Secretariat and extraordinary Advisory Bodies.

We remain committed to actively strengthening the Convention, and you can count on us on the future during the upcoming discussions of the Working Group.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Also, we have extraordinary Committee members.

Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

On behalf of the Bulgarian Delegation in Riyadh, I would like to express our gratitude for the wise and positive manner in which you conducted our work these last two weeks, which led to a productive and constructive dialogue during the session.

We are amazed also by the level of hospitality the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia offered to us, and this allowed us to discover its rich, tangible, and intangible cultural heritage and its magnificent people. And speaking of the amazing Saudi young people we met, we would like to thank our Liaison Officer who was there with us at every moment with smile, professionalism, and dignity.

We extend our gratitude to the World Heritage Centre and its Director for their hard work and positive approach. We congratulate also the Rapporteur for her outstanding dedication. We also appreciate the timely comments by the Legal Advisor and well-prepared presentations by the Advisory Bodies.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes also to our colleagues in the World Heritage Committee, with whom we shared days of intensive discussions but in a transparent and respectful way in our common objective, preserving the World Heritage.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mali.

La Délégation du Mali :

M. le Président,

Tout d'abord, nous vous reitérons nos très vives et chaleureuses félicitations, à vous, aux autorités et au

peuple saoudiens, au nom des membres de la Délégation malienne ainsi qu'en mon nom propre pour l'efficacité de la présidence saoudienne dans sa façon remarquable de conduire nos travaux, y compris ceux du début très difficile de nos deux sessions extraordinaires tenues à Paris. Ensuite, nous n'exprimerons jamais assez notre gratitude pour, à la fois, la qualité de l'accueil à nous réservé et les excellentes commodités ayant caractérisé cette 45^e session élargie du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

C'est le lieu de remercier l'ADG Culture, le Centre du patrimoine mondial, l'ensemble des membres de son Secrétariat, toutes les Organisations consultatives, et toutes celles et tous ceux dont le travail assidu avant et pendant ces deux longues et studieuses semaines, y compris surtout les interprètes, nous ont valu d'aboutir à des résultats probants dont il faut ici se réjouir.

Sont associés à ces sincères remerciements, les membres du Comité du patrimoine mondial et leurs experts, ainsi que l'ensemble des États parties à la Convention de 1972. Une mention spéciale revient au Fonds du patrimoine mondial africain et à sa Direction exécutive, dont le dynamisme n'a d'égal que son engagement et son professionnalisme. Toutes choses qui ont permis de parvenir à l'inscription d'un nombre historique de sites africains sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Mesdames et Messieurs, chers collègues,

Comme vous le savez, le mandat du Mali au Comité du patrimoine mondial arrivera à son terme à la fin de l'année et, heureusement, les perturbations des quatre années écoulées se terminent en toute beauté à Riyad. Depuis Bakou et tout au long de notre mandat, nous n'avons ménagé ni notre temps ni nos efforts et avons étudié les questions soumises à nos sessions, défendu les différents dossiers et apporté notre soutien selon la pertinence des éléments avancés. Ce fut donc pour nous une exaltante mission réalisée dans un esprit de réelle solidarité, avec la conviction que la défense du patrimoine mondial demeure un devoir incombant à l'humanité tout entière, sans distinction aucune. Nous sommes donc persuadés de la nécessité de multiplier les initiatives et mutualiser les énergies pour défendre le patrimoine culturel et naturel face à la funeste volonté des forces du mal engagées dans des destructions de nos biens précieux, y compris ceux classés au patrimoine mondial de l'humanité, ainsi que dans des violations systématiques des droits de l'homme. Les malheureux événements qui se sont déroulés à Tombouctou et dans le nord du Mali en 2012, de même que le saccage des bibliothèques, des manuscrits et musées de Mossoul et Palmyre, doivent continuer à nous interpeller sur l'impérieuse nécessité de défendre et de renforcer notre Convention, celle de 72. Ne perdons jamais de vue les circonstances de son adoption, notamment le sauvetage extraordinaire des pyramides d'Abou Simbel d'abord, et de Philae plus tard. Les mêmes circonstances existent et continuent de se multiplier dans le monde. Notre réponse ne doit alors point varier. Mieux, elle doit se renforcer et drainer plus de monde.

Mesdames et Messieurs, chers collègues,

Il me plaît de terminer en félicitant l'ensemble des pays ayant inscrit un bien sur notre Liste du patrimoine mondial. Cette prouesse réalisée les engage désormais en leur qualité de dépositaires ou gardiens d'une partie du patrimoine de l'humanité. Mon pays, le Mali, en sa qualité d'État partie, continuera à s'engager de manière constructive dans nos discussions futures et contribuera davantage à relever les nombreux défis qui nous interpellent pour l'avenir.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Nigeria.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Salaam Aleykum.

Let me start by thanking you, *Said Rais*, for the manner in which you conducted the affairs of the Committee for the past two weeks. We appreciate your wisdom and calmness throughout the session.

We thank again Saudi Arabia for the exceptional hospitality in every sense of the word. ADG Culture, Director World Heritage, the Rapporteur and the Secretariat for their wonderful work that brought the report of this session.

Nigeria is appreciative of the decisions taken on the floor of this session and hope that our contributions as Committee members will bring positive progress to its work in the coming years.

We are leaving Saudi Arabia with very exciting memories, particularly yesterday's trip to AIUla, which consolidated the unique experience we had so far.

Finally, we are going to miss the friendliness, the smiles of everyone we meet at every point, which makes us also smile even when we are not in the mood. Nigeria will continue to appreciate this experience we had in Saudi Arabia, and we wish it will happen again and again.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

The South African Delegation, as Vice-Chair of the World Heritage Committee and Chair of the Africa Group, would like to extend a word of appreciation and gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the excellent hosting of this extended 45th session in this beautiful city of Riyadh. We are short of gratitude to the Kingdom for the beyond expectation, above imagination hospitality, true to Saudi culture. From the opening ceremony to the closing ceremony, we were exposed to the richness of the heritage and the people. We have added a few stones from

scrumptious, wholesome meals that have been overflowing throughout and everywhere we went, and we carry home memorable gifts which may not fit in our luggage. To top it all, yesterday we experienced the influences of ancient civilization in Hegra, a World Heritage site. What more could we have asked for on Saudi National Day?

Mr. Chair,

You have demonstrated excellent leadership and great in guiding the session notwithstanding that this is your maiden World Heritage Committee meeting. You handled very difficult discussion with precision and demonstrated true loyalty of duty to reach balanced decisions, from the de-listing of the Tombs of Buganda to listing of sites of memory, thus implementing decisions of the 18th extraordinary session. The decisions of this session have achieved remarkable historical firsts.

As South Africa celebrates its National Heritage Day today, in which we celebrate diverse culture, traditions, and the 12 official languages, including sign language, to paraphrase the international icon, Nelson Mandela, it is not our diversity which divides us, it is not our ethnicity or religion or culture that divides us, but as demonstrated in this session, we were gathered here for the common cause of safeguarding World Heritage.

The diversity and unity in the session, from the east, the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta in Indonesia and its Historic Landmarks through the Ha Long Bay - Cat Ba Archipelago of Viet Nam, and the Andrefana Dry Forests of Madagascar to the Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj of Guatemala in the west, and the Cold Winter Deserts of Turan of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in the north, a Nyungwe National Park in Rwanda, the south, we have managed to cover the four corners of the Earth with inscriptions.

In the history of this Convention, Africa now has more than 100 sites listed, and we look forward to more through the implementation of Priority Africa with adequate resources.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, we would like to thank the Director-General for her continued leadership and the Assistant Director-General for Culture, the Secretariat, the Advisory Bodies, the Rapporteur for the excellent work in the smooth operation of this session, including the African World Heritage Fund for coordinating the Africa Group, ensuring that we make lasting contribution as a region.

The Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the organizing Committee and the partners for the swift logistics, and all the other officials that have made our stay here memorable, especially the ushers, the personal aides, my personal aide was Omar, thank you very much, Omar, hospitality staff and drivers, interpreters and technical support staff, and tour guides in all the sites that we visited.

We would like to wish the Kingdom well in their bid to host World Expo 2030, as we understand the decision is in 2030 and hope to be here also for the World Expo in 2030.

Although this is the last time for South Africa in the Committee, be assured of our continued enhanced contribution from the back benches and even in the Open-ended Working Groups. We look forward to the next session with enthusiasm, where we hope to bring two new dossiers for consideration by the World Heritage Committee.

I thank you. *[message in the State Party main languages]* These are the main South African languages.

Merci beaucoup, muchas gracias, shukran, thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Afwan jazeelan. Saint Vincent and [the] Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines had the honour of sitting at the World Heritage Committee for the first time, and cooperating with you and the States Parties to make this session fruitful and successful. As a Small Island Developing State in the Caribbean, some of the objectives was to highlight the high importance of the protection and the conservation of the heritage for sustainable development, and also the role of all stakeholders, including communities, in this task. And we witnessed this session the inscription of many sites, which includes community as the site of Ethiopia, Guatemala and others, and it is very important to highlight their role in the conservation and protection of heritage.

Strengthening cooperation is more necessary than ever to work together to achieve some of the objectives, for a more balanced and credible World Heritage List, climate action on properties, exchange of knowledge and expertise between States Parties, respecting the principles and the aims of the Convention to preserve its credibility for the international community.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is looking forward to working closely with the Delegation of Saudi Arabia in the Open-ended Working Group to propose solutions in an open mind for the operation of the Convention as that it continues to evolve, taking into account the lessons learned and the challenges raised during this session.

Mr. Chair,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would like to thank the Secretariat, the Rapporteur and the Advisory Bodies for their support. Our gratitude to you, Mr. Chair, for your Presidency and wisdom during this session. And I would like also to thank all the organizers and, as has been said by our colleague from South Africa, for all the organization provided in this session.

[interpretation from Arabic] Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and our thanks go to Saudi Arabia. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Chairperson:

Afwan jazeelan. Rwanda.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Sorry, sorry. Mr. Chair.

Can you give the floor to expert, Ms. Myers?

The Chairperson:

Indeed.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

[first speaker] Thank you.

[second speaker] Thank you, Mr. Chair, and happy National Day to Saudi Arabia.

Riyadh 2023 has come to a close, and I must congratulate the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the exceptional organization of this event. But I would like to focus on the intangibles, the many attendants' volunteers, for their excellent service, welcoming attitudes, and support. Our personal aide, Anas, is exceptional. Their warm and welcoming smiles and greetings serve as a good start to our long days, and a lift to our tired bodies at the end of the day.

Thank you to the many cultural artists for the professional performances we witnessed, to the chefs and hospitality personnel for the excellent snacks and meals, and to all others who made these last 15 days possible, unforgettable, and enjoyable.

All in all, thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Riyadh, thank you to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Shukran.

The Chairperson:

Afwan, afwan. Rwanda.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Said Rais, Excellences, chers collègues, chers Délégués,

Je voudrais commencer par féliciter le peuple et le Royaume d'Arabie saoudite d'avoir organisé avec succès la 45^e session élargie du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

M. le Président,

Ce succès témoigne de l'engagement de votre nation en faveur du multilatéralisme dans son ensemble et de l'UNESCO en particulier. Nous apprécions et admirons votre leadership au cours de ces deux dernières semaines. Vous avez présidé notre Comité de façon magistrale, et nous vous remercions de nous avoir permis d'atteindre d'excellents résultats.

Je me joins également aux autres Délégations pour remercier l'ensemble du personnel du Secrétariat, sous la direction du Directeur, Lazare Eloundou, pour leur professionnalisme et leur efficacité. Nous connaissons les difficultés liées à la tenue et à

l'organisation de telles réunions et toute la logistique que cela représente. Nous remercions tous ceux qui, dans l'ombre, ont travaillé nuit et jour et sans relâche pour le succès de cette session et qui ont accompli un travail extraordinaire.

Nos félicitations vont également aux États parties qui ont fait inscrire de nouveaux biens sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial et aux États parties qui continuent à travailler pour conserver la valeur universelle exceptionnelle de leurs sites.

Nous sommes heureux que, sous votre présidence, le Comité ait également inscrit sept sites du continent africain sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

La Délégation rwandaise a été très heureuse d'inscrire les deux premiers sites sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial de l'humanité au cours de cette session et se joint à moi pour vous remercier infiniment pour tout le soutien qu'elle a reçu au cours des derniers jours.

M. le Président,

Au cours de ces derniers jours, nous avons été témoins de discussions passionnées, d'échanges constructifs et de décisions cruciales pour la préservation et la valorisation de notre patrimoine mondial. Le patrimoine mondial ne se limite pas aux monuments, il ne se limite pas aux sites ou aux biens culturels et naturels que nous avons inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Ce patrimoine incarne notre histoire commune, nos identités, nos valeurs et notre responsabilité envers les générations futures. Il est notre héritage collectif. Un pont entre le passé et le présent, le passé, le présent et l'avenir. Nous ne pouvons donc ignorer les défis auxquels notre patrimoine est confronté, les menaces, telles que le changement climatique et la perte de la biodiversité, qui continuent de peser sur de nombreux sites. C'est pour cette raison, M. le Président, qu'il est impératif que nous intensifions nos efforts pour conserver notre patrimoine culturel et naturel commun.

Je vous remercie pour votre attention. *Shukran jazeelan, Said Rais.* *[Message dans la langue de l'État partie]*
[applaudissements]

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. *[interpretation from Arabic]* India. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving India the floor.

As I have done during this meeting, let me wish everyone *Namaste* and *Salam*.

This was a historic period for my country wherein India's spacecraft Chandrayaan-3 mission landed on the South pole of the Moon, and the Leaders' Summit of the G20 under the Indian Presidency concluded with the Delhi Declaration.

On behalf of the Indian Delegation, I would like to express our appreciation for the Government of Saudi Arabia, the organizers and to the wonderful people of Saudi Arabia for hosting the extended 45th

session of the World Heritage Committee and for your warm hospitality. My Delegation would like to thank Saudi Arabia for an excellent knowledge trip to the ancient Nabataean sites of Hegra and Dadan, in Alula, and to other archaeological sites and museums.

We would also like to thank you, Mr. Chair, for the efficient manner in which you have chaired the meeting throughout the past two weeks.

I also thank the ADG Culture, Mr. Ottone. My special thanks to Mr. Lazare, Director, Deputy Director, Ms. Jyoti Hosagrahar, Mr. Balsamo, the World Heritage Committee, the Secretariat, the staff, the technicians, the Bureau and the Rapporteur, Ms. Shikha Jain, who have done an excellent job.

We would like to make a special mention of the interpreters for the work they have done because we know how difficult it is to chase our words.

During this conference, many important items and issues were discussed, and important decisions were taken. We look forward to working in the new Open-ended Working Group that has been formed.

For India, we are very happy and grateful that two of the iconic properties, Santiniketan and the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas, were inscribed on the World Heritage List.

We would like to congratulate all the States Parties whose properties were inscribed on this List. The world is now richer, with 1,199 World Heritage properties, whose preservation and conservation is a shared responsibility of all States that have ratified the Convention.

I congratulate the World Heritage Committee members whose tenure ends.

Last but not the least, India looks forward to welcoming the World Heritage Committee and the States Parties to India, next year. We would like to greet you all with the spirit and philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, which means "The World is One Family", and we look forward to hosting you.

Thank you and *Jai Hind*. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. *[interpretation from Arabic]* Saudi Arabia. *[end of interpretation from Arabic]*

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia: *[interpretation from Arabic]*

Your Excellency, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Director of the World Heritage Centre, Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of the States Parties,

May the peace of God be upon you.

We, in Saudi Arabia, we were pleased and delighted to welcome this 45th session. We were happy to have you amongst us. We would like to thank you for the spirit you have shown. It's a team spirit and cooperation spirit. All of you were keen to work in order to reach the lofty goal, namely, the protection of the World Heritage.

We would like to seize this opportunity to congratulate all States Parties that put their sights on the World Heritage List.

I would like to thank all those who were behind the success of this session. We look forward to welcoming you once again in Saudi Arabia.

We wish the next sessions full success and thank you and welcome again in our country.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Shukran jazeelan. ICCROM.

ICCROM:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I make this intervention on behalf of all three Advisory Bodies, IUCN, ICOMOS and ICCROM.

The work of this Committee has been intense over the past few weeks. We've inscribed new sites on the World Heritage List, made decisions on state of conservation, Periodic Reporting, etc. These have led to important results for conservation through the decisions taken. We hope that this intense work of these weeks and the positive results have demonstrated that dialogue between the Advisory Bodies, the Committee and, indeed, all States Parties has continued to improve over these past years.

Nevertheless, the Advisory Bodies express our desire to continue to improve our dialogue with all in order to continue to improve the implementation of the Convention. We also thank our partners at the World Heritage Centre under the direction of my very good friend, Lazare Eloundou.

We note, however, that the value of this World Heritage Committee session does not rest only on what takes place in this room. Associated activities, such as the Young Professionals Forum, the Site Managers' Forum and all of the side events that have taken place, have served to continue to build networks and to exchange information on good practice for conservation of World Heritage properties.

We, as Advisory Bodies, look forward to continuing to work with the Committee, States Parties and the World Heritage Centre on the implementation of the Convention to ensure the protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage.

Finally, Mr. Chair, and most importantly, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your wise leadership of this session and the Delegation of Saudi Arabia, and indeed the entire team involved in the organization and implementation of this meeting for the hard work and fantastic results. As stated, this is probably the longest in-person session that this Committee has ever had, and it was organized in a comparatively short amount of time. And yet, everything went perfectly, and we are immensely grateful to every person who worked with us at each step of the way. The warmth, the smiling faces of all,

the willingness to take care of any issues or any problems will remain with us for a long time to come.

This is also amazing given the fact that this took place also around Saudi National Day, yesterday, and so, once again, we would like to thank you and all of the people of Saudi Arabia for being with us during this Committee meeting on Saudi National Day.

Mr. Chair,

Unlike the Distinguished Delegate of Belgium, this is not my first Committee meeting, and with all respect to States Parties who have organized meetings in the past, I can confirm his impression that the organization of this meeting was one of the best that has taken place in the last 25 years. Dare I say it, we can advise that the work of the Saudi organizing team rises to the level of Outstanding Universal Value for this Committee.

So, we would like to thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and all of the team.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

It's good to be endorsed by the Advisory Bodies.

So, I would like to pass the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo for final remarks.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished members of the Committee,

It is with lots of emotion and a deep sense of pride that I take the floor as I was entrusted this responsibility as a Director of World Heritage, to serve you as the [Secretariat] of the World Heritage Committee, by Audrey Azoulay, the Director-General of UNESCO. Over the last past two weeks, the longest session ever, and you said it, Mr. Chairperson, and my very first as a Director of World Heritage and your [Secretariat], as I said, we have engaged in what I call a shared journey to take decisive actions to protect and preserve our world's most cherished cultural and natural treasures. And by doing so, we have celebrated the rich diversity, the rich tapestry of human history, and the unparalleled beauty of nature.

Mr. Chairperson,

I want to start, now, by first extending, on behalf of all the Secretariat, my heartfelt best wishes for continued success and happiness to all the people of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of the 93rd Saudi National Day celebrated yesterday.

Before we conclude this session, I mean, before you conclude this session, Mr. Chairperson, which gathered over 1,350 participants from 131 countries *in praesentia* for the first time, as you said, since 2019, I want again to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our Host Country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for

its warm hospitality, which all of you, Distinguished members of the Committee, have applauded, for the meticulous organization, for your unwavering commitment to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage. And here, my sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Culture, to the National Commission, to the Heritage Commission, and to my friends, Ahmed Abdulaziz Alblihed, to Dr. Jasir, and to all of you, my friends in Saudi Arabia.

The city of Riyadh has welcomed us with open arms, and we have been enriched by the cultural experiences since our arrival here, the traditions and the kindness of everyone of Saudi Arabia, in Riyadh, the kindness of the Saudi people.

So please, I think you will agree with me, Mr. Chairperson, and you will understand that we want to express, here at this moment, our profound affection to this gracious nation.

During this session, we have had the privilege of reviewing and discussing numerous nominations to the World Heritage List, reflecting on the Outstanding Universal Value that binds us as a global community. We have examined over 50 documents, deliberated passionately, tersely, and adopted over 350 decisions that will impact, at various levels, the course of history for generations to come. 500 pages of decisions, as it was said by the Rapporteur, and the debates that, Distinguished members of the Committee, you have had bear testament to the dedication and hard work of each of you, as well as all the experts who have been accompanying you and all the stakeholders who have contributed with their knowledge and experience, including the civil society, the NGOs who have been here in this room, and whom we would like to recognize. Our collective commitment to preserving and protecting World Heritage sites is a testament to our shared understanding of the value they bring to our lives.

Therefore, the Secretariat will not spare any effort to continue assisting the World Heritage Committee to remain steadfast in its dedication to ensuring that this exceptional World Heritage sites placed under your governance are safeguarded, cherished, and passed on to future generations.

And in this spirit, let us acknowledge the achievement of this session again:

- You have added 42 new sites to the World Heritage List, recognizing their unique value and the need to join efforts for their protection;
- You've also monitored and supported the conservation effort of 263 already inscribed properties, the largest number ever ensuring that they continue to thrive;
- You have decided to remove one property from the List of World Heritage in Danger, the Tombs of Buganda Kingdom, demonstrating and recognizing the effort of one of the State Party and this State Party, after 13 years of hard work to safeguard this important heritage.

In doing so, you have taken meaningful steps toward fulfilling the ideals of UNESCO, which seeks to force the international cooperation and promote peace.

As we look ahead to the challenges that lie before us, we must remember that our work is far from finished as some of you have said. The threats of climate change, biodiversity loss, uncontrolled urbanization, armed conflict, and unchecked development are ever present, requiring our continuous, unwavering dedication.

In closing, Mr. Chairperson, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to each and every one of the Committee members for your commitment to the cause we hold dear.

I would like to particularly thank the outgoing members of the Committee, hoping that you have been satisfied by the work conducted with the assistance of the Secretariat.

I would like to thank the Assistant Director-General for Culture, Ernesto Ottone, for his great support, the confidence is placed on me, and his full trust. Thank you, Ernesto.

I would also like to thank my incredible colleagues from the Secretariat, and the Legal Advisors, Santiago Villalpando and Chantal Clarkson-Proust, who are here, my Deputy Director, Jyoti Hosagrahar. All of them, their professionalism has been key to the efficient running of this meeting. The interpreters who accepted to work longer than expected, sometimes. My colleagues, Fred Aubert and her team, Alessandro Balsamo and his team, the Chiefs of Units of the regionals, Muhammad Juma and his team, Himalchuli Gurung and her team, Berta de San Cristóbal and her team, Guy Debonnet and his team. Mauro [Rosi] and his team, and May Shaer and her team, you, guys, have been all amazing, and thank you for trusting my leadership.

A big thank you, like you said, to all the staff, the security officers, and all the volunteers from the Saudi Arabia who have worked, as you have said, tirelessly, with a smile every day, behind the scenes and in the room to make this session a success. Riyadh will forever hold a special place in our hearts as the Host of this historic session.

I will not end without thanking our Rapporteur, to whom we regularly appealed to guide us in the adoption of the decisions, particularly the most complex ones. I will say it in Hindi: "*Dhanyavaad*, Dr. Shikha Jain".

Let me also thank the Advisory Bodies, ICOMOS, IUCN, and ICCROM. Thank you for the excellent cooperation we had.

Now I want to turn to one particular man who's here in this room, Mr. Jo King from ICCROM. Jo King, this is your last Committee with us as Representative of ICCROM. I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all the members of the Committee and the Secretariat, to thank you for the past 30 years, and even more, that you have dedicated to the World Heritage. You will never be forgotten. You've trained so many of us, you have trained so many Africans in this room. You've contributed to the training and the

capacity-building of the World Heritage, the Global Strategy since 1994. This is something we will never forget. The work of World Heritage is also about human history, and you have played your part. Thank you so much, Joe. *[applause]*

Now, my last word go to you, Mr. Chairperson.

You started your function as Chairperson a few weeks ago, but your conduct of the Committee's debate has been like if you have been in this position for many years, unbelievable. The Secretariat and I, we are amazed by the way you have managed in only such a short time to understand all the items and to lead us in the way to bring the Committee find always consensual decisions. We have had no vote and that is amazing. Thank you again for having had trust in me and for having trust in the whole team of the World Heritage Centre and UNESCO.

Thank you. *[applause]*

Thank you so much. *Shukran jazeelan.* *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you, dear Director of the World Heritage Centre.

Now, there is no room for words, and having said that, I now declare the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee closed. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

The meeting rose at 12:04 pm. // La séance a été levée à 12h04.