**Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage**  
**Implementation Non-Paper (Australia)**

The Open-Ended Working Group on Climate Change and World Heritage is tasked with finalising the Policy Document on Climate Action and World Heritage (Policy Document), and developing proposals for its effective implementation, for consideration at the 24th session of the General Assembly of State Parties (24GA) (Refer to Resolution 23 GA 11 at Attachment A).

**This non-paper includes an implementation proposal from Australia for consideration by the Open-Ended Working Group.**

The World Heritage Committee made several recommendations in relation to implementation of the Policy Document, once adopted by the General Assembly of States Parties (Refer to Decision 44 COM 7CatAttachment B). This includes requesting the World Heritage Centre, jointly with the Advisory Bodies to:

* elaborate proposals for a revision of the Operational Guidelines to translate the principles of the Policy Document into actual operational procedures (Paragraph 10);
* develop education and capacity-building initiatives that would be needed to enable wide implementation of this Policy Document (Paragraph 10);
* consider preparing a Guidance Document to facilitate effective implementation of this Policy Document, (Paragraph 12); and
* present a progress report on the implementation status of the Policy Document after four years of implementation (Paragraph 17).

The World Heritage Committee decision also recommends that Category 2 Centres and UNESCO Chairs prioritise issues related to the implementation of the Policy Document within their capacity-building and research initiatives (Paragraph 16), and urges States Parties to:

* along with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies disseminate widely the Policy Document once adopted, through appropriate means to the World Heritage community and the broader public, including in local languages, and to promote its implementation (Paragraph 13);
* urgently integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation actions in risk preparedness policies and action plans, in order to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of all World Heritage properties, in line with the "Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage” (Paragraph 15).

In line with World Heritage Committee recommendations and the resolution by the General Assembly of States Parties, **Australia proposes an implementation proposal from the Open-Ended Working Group to 24GA** that includes:

* States Parties will determine their own approach to implementing State Party and World Heritage Property level actions (in the Policy Document);
* Establish an informal advisory group (or similar) for States Parties, stakeholders and experts to contribute to the implementation of World Heritage Committee level actions (in the Policy Document), and input on reforms to address policy issues considered by the Panel of Experts for the Open-Ended Working Group (Refer to Attachment C);
* World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies will work collaboratively with States Parties to identify and address key knowledge and resources gaps in the World Heritage system relating to climate change; and
* States Parties will promote the Policy Document and its implementation, and where possible take practical actions to support education, knowledge sharing and capacity building initiatives.

To support discussion on implementation at the next meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group, Australia has identified the following **questions for consideration**:

* Are there any additional implementation requirements for the Policy Document, beyond those identified by the General Assembly of States Parties and the World Heritage Committee? (Refer to Attachments AandB**)**
* What type of guidance and capacity building is needed to support States Parties in their implementation of the Policy Document?
* What further consideration is needed on the policy issues considered by the Panel of Experts to the Open-Ended Working Group? (Refer to Attachment C)
* How can we best share tools, methodologies and resources for assessing and addressing climate vulnerability and risk from all States Parties and share these to allow for knowledge and capacity building?
* What are the resourcing requirements needed to support the implementation of the Policy Document at the World Heritage Committee level?

Australia would welcome discussion on implementation of the Policy Document at the next Open-Ended Working Group meeting.

**Attachment A:** Resolution 23 GA 11

Policy Document on climate action for World Heritage

The General Assembly,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/21/23.GA/11 and WHC/21/23.GA/INF.11,
2. Recalling Decisions **40 COM 7**, **41 COM 7**, **42 COM 7**, **43 COM 7.2**and **44 COM 7C**, adopted respectively at the 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 42nd (Manama, 2018), 43rd (Baku, 2019) and extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions of the World Heritage Committee,
3. Thanking the State Party of the Netherlands for having funded the project to update the 2007 Policy Document on the impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage properties, and expressing its gratitude to all stakeholders of the World Heritage Convention who contributed to this process,
4. Noting the debate on this item that took place during the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee (Fuzhou/online, 2021), as well as the comments expressed by the Committee members on this draft through a written consultation process,
5. Noting that the World Heritage Committee has endorsed the draft "Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage”, as presented in Annex 1 of Document WHC/21/44.COM/7C, at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021), and recommended its review in line with the principles mentioned in paragraph 7 of Decision **44 COM 7C**,
6. Takes note of the “Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage”, as endorsed by the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee, and decides to establish an open-ended working group assisted by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, with the mandate to review and develop its final version taking into account Decision **44 COM 7C**, as well as proposals for its effective implementation, for consideration by the 24th session of the General Assembly of States Parties;
7. Recommends that the panel of experts as agreed in Decision **44 COM 7C**, be convened before March 2022, with a mandate to:
   1. consider revisions to the Policy Document and its unresolved policy matters, and
   2. report to the open-ended working group established in paragraph 6, to inform its consideration of the Policy Document and proposals to implement it;
8. Encourages States Parties to provide extra-budgetary funding for the open-ended working group.

**Attachment B**: Decision 44 COM 7C

Draft Updated Policy Document on The Impacts Of Climate Change On World Heritage Properties

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC/21/44.COM/7C,
2. Recalling Decisions **40 COM 7**, **41 COM 7**, **42 COM 7** and **43 COM 7.2**, adopted at its 40th (Istanbul/UNESCO, 2016), 41st (Krakow, 2017), 42nd (Manama, 2018) and 43rd (Baku, 2019) sessions respectively,
3. Takes note with satisfaction of the wide range of climate change-related activities undertaken by the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies;
4. Thanks the State Party of the Netherlands for having funded the project to update the 2007 Policy Document on the impacts of Climate Change on World Heritage properties, and expresses its gratitude to all the experts and representatives of States Parties, of the World Heritage Centre and of the Advisory Bodies who contributed to the meetings of the Technical Advisory Group;
5. Takes note with appreciation that a wide diversity of stakeholders of the World Heritage Convention (States Parties, site managers, Advisory Bodies, World Heritage Centre and representatives of local communities, indigenous peoples, academics, NGOs and civil society) were able to contribute to the updating process through the online consultation launched by the World Heritage Centre;
6. Takes note of the new title proposed for the updated Policy Document to become “Policy Document for Climate Action for World Heritage”;
7. Endorses the draft "Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage”, as presented in Annex 1 of Document WHC/21/44.COM/7C, and requests the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, to revise it by incorporating views expressed and amendments submitted during the extended 44th session and, as appropriate, to consult Committee members, especially concerning the following points:
   1. the fundamental principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), which is one of the basic pillars of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),
   2. the alignment of climate change mitigation actions with the CBDR-RC and the Nationally Determined Contributions accepted under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, except on an entirely voluntary basis,
   3. the need for support and capacity-building assistance, as well as the encouragement of technology transfer and financing from developed to developing countries;
8. Recalls Decision **41 COM 7** and reiterates the importance of States Parties undertaking the most ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement of the UNFCCC, and strongly invites all States Parties to ratify the Paris Agreement at the earliest possible opportunity and to undertake actions to address Climate Change under the Paris Agreement consistent with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of different national circumstances, that are fully consistent with their obligations within the World Heritage Convention to protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of all World Heritage properties;
9. Decides to transmit the draft "Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage”, following final revisions, for review and adoption at the 23rd session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the Convention in 2021;
10. Also requests the World Heritage Centre, jointly with the Advisory Bodies, once the "Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage” is adopted by the General Assembly of the States Parties and within the available resources, to elaborate proposals for specific changes to the *Operational Guidelines* that would be required to translate the principles of this Policy Document into actual operational procedures, and to develop education and capacity-building initiatives that would be needed to enable wide implementation of this Policy Document, and calls on States Parties to contribute financially to this end;
11. Further requests the World Heritage Centre, in parallel with the processes outlined in Paragraph 10, to convene a panel of experts drawn from the ad-hoc Working Group, World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and other qualified experts in the field of climate science and heritage to meet by March 2022 and also calls on State Parties to contribute financially to this end;
12. Requests furthermore the World Heritage Centre, jointly with the Advisory Bodies, and subject to available resources, to consider preparing a Guidance Document to facilitate effective implementation of, and support for, the actions, goals and targets of this Policy Document, which could include indicators and benchmarking tools for measuring and reporting progress towards achieving the World Heritage Climate Action Goals, and further calls on States Parties to support this activity through extrabudgetary funding;
13. Encourages the States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to disseminate widely the "Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage”, once adopted, through appropriate means to the World Heritage community and the broader public, including in local languages, and to promote its implementation;
14. Recommends that the "Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage” be interpreted in the context of the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement (2015) and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, and in conjunction with the Policy Document for the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention (2015);
15. Urges States Parties and all stakeholders of the Convention to urgently integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation actions in risk preparedness policies and action plans, in order to protect the OUV of all World Heritage properties, in line with the "Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage”;
16. Further recommends that World Heritage-related Category 2 Centres and UNESCO Chairs prioritize issues related to the implementation of the "Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage” within their capacity-building and research initiatives;
17. Finally requests the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, to present a progress report on the implementation status of the "Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage” at its 48th session, after four years of implementation.

**Attachment C:** Policy Issues considered by the Panel of Experts to Open-Ended Working Group on Climate Change and World Heritage

This extract is from the Panel of Experts Report in relation to Decision 44 COM 7C concerning Climate Change and World Heritage 30 March - 1 April 2022 (Pages 4 and 5).

*The main unresolved policy matters identified and addressed during this Panel of experts meeting referred to the three questions, which were originally posed in Annex 2 of the 2007 Policy Document, and which were reiterated in Paragraph 36 of the updated Policy Document with the intention that the updated Policy Document doesn’t provide responses to those, but rather calls for a dialogue. The three questions are recalled below:*

* *“Whether a property should be inscribed on the World Heritage List while knowing that its potential Outstanding Universal Value may disappear due to climate change impacts;”*
* *“Whether a property should be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger or deleted from the World Heritage List due to impacts beyond the sole control of the concerned State Party (i.e., threats and/or the detrimental impacts on the integrity of World Heritage properties associated with the global impacts of warming from anthropogenic GHG emissions);”*
* *“The reality that for some natural and cultural properties, it will be impossible to maintain the “original” Outstanding Universal Value for which they were originally inscribed on the World Heritage List, even if effective adaptation and mitigation strategies are applied, and this may require an “evolving” assessment of Outstanding Universal Value.”*

Other issues noted by the Panel of Experts in their Report (Pages 8 and 9) include:

* Notion of Integrity
* Impacts beyond the sole control of the States Parties
* Capacity of the World Heritage system