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World Heritage Convention

Convention du
patrimoine mondial

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**UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**

**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**

**Eighteenth extraordinary session
Dix-huitième session extraordinaire**

**Paris, UNESCO Headquarters / Paris, Siège de l'UNESCO
24-25 January 2023 / 24-25 janvier 2023**

SUMMARY RECORDS

RÉSUMÉ DES INTERVENTIONS

The text contained in the present document is a transcription of the debates of the 18th extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee held on 24-25 January 2023 at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris. It is therefore to be considered as a verbatim.

Le texte contenu dans le présent document est une transcription des débats de la 18^e session extraordinaire du Comité du patrimoine mondial tenue au Siège de l'UNESCO, Paris, du 24 au 25 janvier 2023. Il doit donc être considéré comme un verbatim.

N.B: *The languages used for the verbatim of the 18th extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee are English and French.*

Les langues utilisées pour le verbatim de la 18^e session extraordinaire du Comité du patrimoine mondial sont l'anglais et le français.

AGENDA

1. Opening of the session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Organization of the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee (dates, venue, provisional Agenda)
4. Outcomes of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory associated with recent conflicts
5. Any other matter: Nominations to the World Heritage List – Nominations to be processed on an emergency basis (Item proposed by Japan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece and Italy)

INTRODUCTION

The session was chaired by H.H. Princess Haifa Al Mogrin, Chairperson of the 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.

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

ORDRE DU JOUR

1. Ouverture de la session
2. Adoption de l'ordre du jour
3. Organisation de la 45^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial (dates, lieu, ordre du jour provisoire)
4. Résultats du Groupe de travail à composition non limitée sur les sites de mémoire associés à des conflits récents
5. Toute autre question : Propositions d'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial – Propositions d'inscription devant être traitées en urgence (point proposé par le Japon, la Belgique, la Bulgarie, la Grèce et l'Italie)

INTRODUCTION

La session a été présidée par S.A. la Princesse Haifa Al Mogrin, Présidente de la 45^e session 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 (UICN), ont également assisté à la session.

La session s'est déroulée en deux langues : anglais et français - les deux langues de travail du Comité.

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

The following 97 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, which are not members of the Committee, were represented as Observers:

Afghanistan; Albania; Andorra; Angola; Armenia; Australia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Belarus; Benin; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Botswana; Brazil; Burkina Faso; Cabo Verde; Cambodia; Canada; Chile; China; Colombia; Côte d'Ivoire; Croatia; Cuba; Cyprus; Czechia; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Denmark; Djibouti; Ecuador; El Salvador; Eritrea; Finland; France; Gabon; Georgia; Germany; Grenada; Holy See; Hungary; Iceland; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Iraq; Ireland; Israel; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Kuwait; Latvia; Lebanon; Libya; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Mauritania; Monaco; Mongolia; Montenegro; Morocco; Mozambique; Myanmar; Nepal; Netherlands; New Zealand; North Macedonia; Norway; Pakistan; Palestine; Paraguay; Peru; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Korea; Romania; Saint Lucia; Serbia; Singapore; Slovakia; Spain; Sri Lanka; Sudan; Sweden; Switzerland; Togo; Tunisia; Türkiye; Uganda; Ukraine; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United Republic of Tanzania; United States of America; Uruguay; Uzbekistan; Viet Nam; Yemen; Zimbabwe.

Les 97 États parties à la Convention du patrimoine mondial suivants, qui ne sont pas membres du Comité, étaient représentés en tant qu'observateurs :

Afghanistan ; Albanie ; Allemagne ; Andorre ; Angola ; Arménie ; Australie ; Autriche ; Azerbaïdjan ; Bangladesh ; Biélorussie ; Bénin ; Bosnie-Herzégovine ; Botswana ; Brésil ; Burkina Faso ; Cabo Verde ; Cambodge ; Canada ; Chili ; Chine ; Colombie ; Côte d'Ivoire ; Croatie ; Cuba ; Chypre ; Danemark ; Djibouti ; El Salvador ; Équateur ; Érythrée ; Espagne ; États-Unis d'Amérique ; Finlande ; France ; Gabon ; Géorgie ; Grenade ; Hongrie ; Islande ; Iran (République islamique d') ; Iraq ; Irlande ; Israël ; Jordanie ; Kazakhstan ; Kenya ; Koweït ; Lettonie ; Liban ; Libye ; Lituanie ; Luxembourg ; Mauritanie ; Monaco ; Mongolie ; Monténégro ; Maroc ; Mozambique ; Myanmar ; Népal ; Macédoine du Nord ; Norvège ; Nouvelle-Zélande ; Ouzbékistan ; Pakistan ; Palestine ; Paraguay ; Pays-Bas ; Pérou ; Philippines ; Pologne ; Portugal ; République de Corée ; République populaire démocratique de Corée ; République tchèque ; République-Unie de Tanzanie ; Roumanie ; Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord ; Saint-Siège ; Sainte-Lucie ; Serbie ; Singapour ; Slovaquie ; Sri Lanka ; Soudan ; Suède ; Suisse ; Togo ; Tunisie ; Türkiye ; Ukraine ; Uruguay ; Viet Nam ; Yémen ; Zimbabwe.

FIRST DAY
Tuesday, 24 January 2023

FIRST MEETING

10 am – 1:12 pm

Chairperson:

H.H. Princess Haifa Al Mogrin

PREMIER JOUR
Mardi 24 janvier 2023

PREMIÈRE RÉUNION

10h00 – 13h12

Présidente :

S.A. Princesse Haifa Al Mogrin

1. OPENING OF THE SESSION // OUVERTURE DE LA SESSION

Unidentified Speaker:

Hallo? Non.

Chairperson:

Hello. Hello. It's very low.

Unidentified Speaker:

Hallo? Hallo.

Chairperson:

You can hear us.

Speaker 1:

But the room cannot hear us.

Indistinct talking and tapping on microphone

Unidentified Speaker:

Hello? Nous allons commencer. S'il vous plait.

Unidentified Speaker:

It's like a schoolyard.

Chairperson:

Good morning. Can you all be seated so we can start our session? Please.

Good morning to all. I hope you all had safe trips back here and that you're in good health. I realize that there's some kind of a virus going on. Not COVID, hopefully. But everyone is getting sick recently because of the weather. So, I hope that you are all who came here today in good health and that you have enjoyed your new year with your families and friends. And I hope that you continue to have a prosperous year in 2023.

We start this day with enthusiasm to achieve results, and I am honored to be here with you today, and looking forward to a constructive meeting where we all try to reach consensus and get the decisions that we have met here today for. With that, I would like to start.

Dear members of the Committee, dear colleagues, dear friends. I am very pleased to welcome you in this 18th extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee. I also take this opportunity to wish you all again a very blessed and prosperous new year. May 2023 be a year of great accomplishments and achievements and that it will bring success to our Committee, and above all, a year of peace and solidarity. As you know, the sessions of the World Heritage Committee are also open to States Parties to the Convention that are not members of the Committee as observers, and due to the capacity of the room we are in, a number of participants are following the discussions in an adjoining room or via webcast.

I am very happy that we are able to be gathered here today in presence, and for the first time for a Committee session in the past three years.

Dear colleagues, you will recall that during our 17th extraordinary session held on 12th of December 2022, considering that we were already mid-December and for obvious reasons, including logistical and technical ones, the Committee considered that the conditions to hold its 45th session in 2022, as foreseen in Decision **44 COM 16**, were not met. And hence, in order not to contravene its Rules of Procedure, which require Committee to meet in an

ordinary session at least once a year, the Committee decided to suspend Rule 2.1 of its Rules of Procedure for the 2022 ordinary session. On this occasion, the Committee also decided to meet again in another extraordinary session in January 2023.

Dear colleagues, before we move further in our session, allow me to recall that due to the time constraints, I will apply Rule 22.2 of the Rules of Procedure, which grants the Chairperson with the possibility to limit the time allowed to each speaker if the circumstances make this desirable. Therefore, the time for interventions will be limited to 3 minutes for Committee Members and 2 minutes for observers or for observer States Parties. In this regard, please note that a timer system to gauge interventions is in place, which will provide an indication whenever a speaker is exceeding the recommended time limit. And I highly advise you to use your time wisely to avoid being interrupted in the middle of your intervention. In order to save time as much as possible, I also appeal to you not to repeat what other delegations have already said. I would also ask to transmit official statements, declarations 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, as was indicated in a communication to you, received from the Secretariat, 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 in writing by email, at the email wh-rapporteur@unesco.org. Preferably showing the changes proposed in track changes using the appropriate form which has been sent to all Committee Member delegations. While Committee Members are entitled to submit an amendment at any moment until the decision is made, oral amendments made during the examination of an item concerned should remain, as far as possible, small changes to the wording of the Draft Decision.

Furthermore, 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 copy of the email exchanges, and their names should appear in the box entitled "Amendment submitted by Delegation of" and then with the co-authors. Alternatively, Committee Members can take the floor during the Plenary to express its support for a proposed amendment. The early submission of substantial proposals of amendment would greatly facilitate the organization of the debates and an informed decision-making process. The Secretariat will upload written copies of the submitted proposed amendments on the web page dedicated to this 18th extraordinary session and will inform Committee Members accordingly in a timely manner. Thank you very much for your support.

I see Botswana. You want to take the floor, Your Excellency? Okay. Before we start Item 2. I see Russian Federation raise their flag. Please, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Since it's the first time I take the floor, and it's also my first participation as Head of Russian Delegation, I would like to congratulate you upon your designation to this important position, and assure you that our Delegation will provide you every support during your mandate for the benefit of 1972 Convention and all its stakeholders. I'm sure that your wise leadership and various experience during the sessions of the Executive Board will help our World Heritage crews to navigate through deep waters to a quiet port.

Being in first time present in this forum that has its long-standing tradition, I hope I could benefit from expertise of yours, dear colleagues, and the World Heritage Centre, as a guardian of institutional memory, to take legally sound and informative decisions on the important matters we need to consider today. Before we go to the next point, I would like to say that I sent a letter to Her Royal Highness Princess Haifa Al Mogrin yesterday, questioning the procedure for the preparation of today's session. Namely, this session has an extraordinary character and as extraordinary session, the Provisional Agenda as per Rule 9.3 of an extraordinary session shall include only those questions for the consideration of which the session has been convened. The session was decided to be convened during the 17th extraordinary session, with a clear paragraph enumerating the matters that shall be decided upon and conceded in this session. The decision in this session is foreseen for only two items: Date and Venue, and Memory Sites. According to the Rules of Procedure that governs this Committee, Member States can propose items to be included into the Provisional Agenda only for the ordinary session. Therefore, the Provisional Agenda, as circulated for this session, is not prepared, in our opinion, in conformity with the rules, Madam Chair. I would like therefore, to seek an opinion of Legal Advisor and bring this matter to the attention of the Committee Members. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. Indeed. I have received a letter from the Russian Delegation with this concern, and I have conveyed this concern to the Secretariat requesting the legal opinion and the reply according to our Rules of Procedure. I would like to give the floor to the Secretariat and then maybe to the Legal Advisor. Mr. Lazare, would you like to take the floor and then maybe give the floor to the Legal Advisor? You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Before I start, also, let me wish everyone, of course, a happy new year and successful deliberation. Madam Chair, Distinguished Members of the Committee, of course, the letter sent to the Chairperson was copied to the Secretariat. So, we did receive it. So, I would just like to, of course, say that you will recall again that in conformity with Rule 9.3 of the Rules of Procedures of the World Heritage Committee, which states, of

course, that the Provisional Agenda of an extraordinary session shall include only those questions for the considerations of which the session has been convened.

You'll recall that the Committee decided at its last 17th extraordinary session in December to include on the Agenda of its 18th extraordinary session an item concerning "any other matter". And that it was discussed that the content of this Agenda item be further defined depending on possible written request by Committee Members. And after having received information from those Member States requesting such an addition, it has been included under Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda in the spirit of the above-mentioned discussions held during the 17th extraordinary session of the Committee. And of course, in line with Rule 10 of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee shall adopt its Agenda at the beginning of each session. That's what I wanted to clarify, Madam Chair, and maybe our Legal Advisor may wish to complement.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Mr. Legal Advisor, if you would like to give us more clarification on that, you have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Good morning to you and to all Members of the Committee and observers. Madam Chair, there is a procedural custom in the host country by which, if I understand correctly, I learned this upon coming to France, that you are allowed to say happy new year until the end of the month of January. So, let me wish you, Members of the Committee and Members of UNESCO in general and States Parties a very happy new year.

In response to the question that was asked to me, I do confirm what was the provision that was quoted by the Distinguished Delegate of the Russian Federation, which is Rule 9, Paragraph 3, which reads as follows: "The Provisional Agenda of an extraordinary session shall include only those questions for the consideration of which the session has been convened." End of quote. By its Decision **17 EXT.COM 3**, the Committee decided to convene the current session and defined the questions, for the consideration of which the present session was to be convened as follows, and I'm quoting: "To take a decision on the date, the venue and the outcome document of the Open-ended Working..." Sorry. "To meet again in extraordinary session in the course of January 2023 to take a decision on the date, the venue and the outcome document of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory associated with recent conflicts and consider the Provisional Agenda of its 45th session as well as any other matter." End of quote. The Provisional Agenda, as was distributed to States Parties under number COM/2 includes under "Any other matter" nominations to be processed on an emergency basis, proposed by a number of Members of the Committee upon a communication that you, Madam Chair, received from them in that regard. It is under that item, as decided by the Committee, that this was included in the Provisional Agenda. Of course, this is without prejudice to Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, which states that the Committee shall adopt its Agenda at the beginning of each session, which is what the first point in the Agenda is today. At that time, if it so wishes, the Committee may of course, decide to add, amend or delete any items included in the Provisional Agenda. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and I remain at your disposal for any further questions. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you for the clarification. I would like to give the floor to the Russian Federation. Does this answer your concern?

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. And I would like to thank the Distinguished Director and the Legal Advisor for their insight. But I would also ask Legal Advisor, where do you see in the Decision of the 17th session of the Committee the words "nominations to be proceeded on the emergency basis"? The Decision of the 17th session of the Committee reads, and you read it, that "the Committee would meet to take a decision on the date, the venue and the outcome document of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory associated with recent conflicts and consider," not decide, "consider the Provisional Agenda of its 45th session as well as any other matter". Therefore, Secretariat, in strict application of this Decision, should have distributed the Provisional Agenda with those items reading "Any other matter", because Member States are entitled to propose only for the Provisional Agenda of the ordinary session. That is, of course, without any prejudice to their right to amend or to do whatever they want in the session, but not in the time of the preparation of the Provisional Agenda. Provisional Agenda shall reflect word to word what Committee decided, and it's not up to any Member State or to the Secretariat to interpret it. Because the Committee in its 17th session did not decide that Member State would propose. It decided what it decided. And the wording of its Decision should be transferred into the Provisional Agenda and distributed as such to Committee Members. I therefore appeal to you to apply strictly the Rules of Procedure if we are to adopt sound and legally-based decisions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Distinguished Representative of Russian Delegation. Since there is a request for a reply from the Legal Advisor, I would like to give you the floor again, and to answer the questions that were raised. Please. You have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. In reply to the question, the direct question asked by the Distinguished Delegate from the Russian Federation, there is no reference indeed in the Decision **17 EXT.COM 3** to nominations to be processed on an emergency basis. On the other hand, there is a reference to "Any other matter", and insofar as this reference was included and insofar as the Chairperson received a communication from several States Parties requesting that the Committee consider at the 18th extraordinary session nominations to be processed on an emergency basis, this matter, this question, was included under the item in the Provisional Agenda entitled "Any other matter". Madam Chair, I was not present at the 17th session, but my understanding is that the addition of the terms "Any other matter" where the subject matter of a lengthy discussion among Members in which indeed the possibility and the need for consultations and consultations with capitals was requested, was raised in order for the preparation of the 18th session, which was the justification for which the terms "Any other matter" were added in the Agenda. I believe, Madam Chair, it is my view, that the inclusion of this in the Provisional Agenda is not in breach with the Rules. However, I do also reiterate my point that in taking its Decision on the adoption of the Agenda today, the Committee may decide to amend the Provisional Agenda, which is nothing but a working document in front of the Committee. In so doing, it may add, amend or delete any items or matters that have been included in the Provisional Agenda. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you for your explanation and reply. You want to floor again? You have the floor, Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, and all Distinguished Members, Delegates and Member States, once again, I don't agree, I'm sorry to say so, with you, Distinguished Legal Advisor, because nominations or whatever any other matter is interpretation of the words "Any other matter". You see what I mean? Any other business is a standing point of many Agendas, but it is not interpreted at the time of the preparation of the Provisional Agenda. However, in session, any Member State can bring any item to the attention of the Distinguished Delegates and discuss it and, provided that there is support, can include. What I am questioning, I am questioning that the Provisional Agenda could not include things proposed by Member States. And this is specifically written in the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, because it is specified that questions proposed by Member States can be added to the Provisional Agenda of the ordinary session. So, by saying that Member States had the right to add, you just now say that this session turns to be an ordinary session and not an extraordinary session. Because the Provisional Agenda, yes, because the Provisional Agenda shall reflect on only, it even says "only", only those questions for the consideration of which the session has been convened, only those questions. So, the question is, as I told you, and this should be reflected in the Provisional Agenda. Moreover, if you read carefully the decisions of the 17th session, you would see that the Committee decided that it would take a decision on the date, venue and the outcome document. Take a decision. And then consider. Consider without taking a decision, consider Provisional Agenda and "Any other matter". You see, it is specifically in two different parts where you take a decision and what you consider, and the item as proposed by a group of countries requires a decision. And the decision that we should take, there are only two decisions that we should take, according to the decisions of the 17th session of the Committee.

And another point that I would like to make. Before that, in another extraordinary session, when my Delegation wanted to add an item of a technical nature to a Provisional Agenda, we were told very rightly by the previous Director of the World Heritage Centre, with the support of the Legal Advisor, that we are not entitled to do so, but we may, however, bring our item to the Agenda of the Committee Members when in session. So, my question is, do we have the rules being changed depending on who is the Director of the World Heritage or who is the Member State that is proposing the item? Or do we follow the same rules for all the sessions, and the rules are equitable and equal for everybody, and all Member States have same rights? Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you for your questions. Since you have posed clear questions to the Legal Advisor, I would like to give him the floor and maybe also touch upon this with the Director of World Heritage as well. Maybe I would like to give the floor to the Director of World Heritage to answer some of your questions and then move to the Legal Advisor. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I don't know if there was a direct question to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, but what I'd like to say just very quickly, to assure all the Members of the Committee, is that we have proposed to add the information that was received by the Member States of the Committee requesting this addition in light with the discussion of the 17th session and the fact that in this decision, of course, the Members of the Committee who were in the room have agreed in their decision to add "Any other matter". And this is simply what the Secretariat has done. And again, as I said very clearly, it is the Committee, in line with Rule 10, to adopt its Agenda. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much, The Director of the World Heritage Centre. And I'll give the floor to the Legal Advisor also to answer the questions that were raised by the Distinguished Representative of the Russian Delegation in this regard. Thank you.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would like to clarify that my previous legal advice was very precise and at no point in time did I compare, nor made a confusion between the rules that apply to the Provisional Agenda of an ordinary session and those that apply to an extraordinary session. Indeed, I only quoted Paragraph 3 of Rule 9 that concerns that matter. Madam Chair, just to be clear on the current situation, the Committee, when it made the decision to convene this session, identified a number of matters, questions that needed to be considered at the present session. These matters included, among others, and I'm quoting "Any other matter". The verb that applies to "Any other matter" is unclear in my view from the decision. It is not clear whether the verb that should be related to it is "to take a decision on" or "consider". That is, in my view, an ambiguity of the Committee, which I would have trouble in elucidating, but fortunately we are at the Committee and the Committee is the master of its own decisions and may interpret its own decisions authoritatively, if it so wishes. The Secretariat, when put in front of the situation in which a number of States, following the inclusion of the terms "Any other matter", had requested the nominations to be processed on an emergency basis, be included in the Agenda, decided to prepare the Provisional Agenda by including the matters for which the present session was convened. And those are five points, you see them in the Provisional Agenda, which include, among other, Item 5: Any other matter; Nominations to the World Heritage List; Nominations to be processed on an emergency basis, item proposed by Japan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece and Italy.

It is, in my view, for the Committee now to decide whether it agrees with it or not. It may decide to take out from the Agenda this item. It is something that it may decide to do now by simply amending the Provisional Agenda and adopting an Agenda that does not include that item, or it may, of course, decide to retain that question under "Any other matter" if it so wishes.

The situation, Madam Chair, is different from the one that was referred to by the Distinguished Delegate of the Russian Federation last time. At that session, when indeed an item was included in the Provisional Agenda and in the Agenda of an extraordinary session, the decision of the Committee had been to convene the extraordinary session for a very specific purpose, which did not open any other possibility, in particular did not contain anything similar to "Any other matter". If I recall correctly, what happened at the time was that the Russian Federation presented a letter that was circulated to Members of the Committee. If I'm not mistaken, that letter was received after the distribution of the Provisional Agenda. But my colleagues from the Secretariat may be able to specify that. And the Committee made the decision to include that item, in other words, to amend the Provisional Agenda to include that item and to consider it at that extraordinary session. That does nothing but confirm my prior legal advice in that regard, namely, once again, that the Committee is free today upon adopting the Agenda, to add, amend or delete any items it may so wish for the purposes of the present extraordinary session. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much for your reply. I would like to give the floor before to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, also referring to the case that was raised by the Distinguished Russian Delegation. And then I will give you the floor, Your Excellency. You have the floor. Mr. Lazare.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Just quickly to just confirm that on this particular matter, of course, the letter that was circulated by the Delegation of Russia was received after the adoption, after the circulation of the Agenda, and it was received on 18 March. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Russian Delegation, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I would ask several questions to the Distinguished Legal Advisor. Please refer to the rule that specifies that Provisional Agenda of an extraordinary session may include questions proposed by Member States. That's my first question. I haven't found such a rule.

Secondly, I think that there is a big misunderstanding. I am now speaking about the preparation of the Provisional Agenda. I am not questioning the right of the Committee or Committee Members to write, amend, etc. etc. when in session. We are just speaking about the preparation of the Provisional Agenda and in the preparation of the Provisional Agenda, the Secretariat should have taken to the letter of the Decision of the 17th session. You all referred to a kind of a discussion which we do not recall, and even if there were such a discussion, it was not reflected in the Decision. The Decision says what it says. It says "Any other matter". Should the Secretariat be strictly applying the Decision, it would just put such an item without any specification, you see, and it would be up

to Committee Members to bring, then, the item when in session. Because I read and read rules, and I didn't find a provision that would allow Member States to propose matters to be added to the Provisional Agenda. And the case you refer, our letter was sent to the World Heritage Centre then, before the circulation of the Provisional Agenda. And the Provisional Agenda was then circulated, only, as per Rule 9.3, for the matter the session was convened, and as any other Member of the Committee, we had the right to bring the matter before the Committee Members in the session. And then in the session we put this matter to the table and with the agreement of everybody in the Committee, with the consensus, the item was included. But it was not included into the Provisional Agenda, as you mentioned, Distinguished Legal Advisor, it was not included into the Provisional Agenda. It was included in the Agenda as adopted, but not into the provisional.

So, therefore, the right procedure would be that the Secretariat circulates new Provisional Agenda without the item brought to our attention by a group of countries. And then this group of countries, should they wish to do so, they can do that and amend the session, propose to amend the Provisional Agenda, as properly prepared by the Secretariat, in the session.

Another question that I have, as for the preparation of this extraordinary session, Madam Chair. We adopted a decision to convene it back on the 12th of December. Today we are the 24th of January. The rules specify that the Director General shall notify the States Members of the Committee the date, place and Provisional Agenda of its session, at least 30 days in advance in the case of extraordinary session, if possible. In our humble opinion, that was possible because the Decision was adopted back on the 12th of December. So, the question is what were the impediments that prevented Secretariat from circulating the Agenda and notification 30 days before? Moreover, Distinguished Madam Chair and Distinguished colleagues from the Secretariat, we as Russian Federation never received any notification signed by Director General, not 30 days, not 2 minutes before the Committee. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you for your questions. I see here a number of issues that are raised, and I think we have a number of procedural questions being raised. There was specific question for the Legal Advisor about the Agenda itself and the preparation. And then there are other questions that I would like to address to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, but I would like to give the floor to the Legal Advisor so that we can at least finish the discussion on the Agenda and then move to the other issues that were raised by the esteemed Representative of the Russian Federation. If you can please answer the question, Legal Advisor, and I would like to have at least a statement that you have said before. But again, just to clarify now so that we can move forward with our meeting. Is writing and drafting the Provisional Agenda as it is right now, and as was reflected in the meeting of the 17th extraordinary session, is it in violation of the Rules of Procedure, yes or no? Maybe that will solve the issue on the Agenda item and then we can move to the other issues. You have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The answer to your question is no. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. And I will give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to give explanation on the issue of the availability of the Agenda on time and the other questions raised by the Distinguished Representative of Russian Federation. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Without explaining again the role of the Secretariat, which is to facilitate the work of the World Heritage Committee by making available and preparing all the documents, of course, Rule 3.2 of the Rules of Procedure, it's quite clear, and of course says that "if possible", and that the Secretariat in this has done its utmost effort to have the documents prepared well in advance in all the languages. And the documents were, of course, circulated on 12 January for all the Committee Members to be able to have them in advance for this extraordinary session. And I think the Secretariat will continue to do its effort to make sure that the World Heritage Committee has all the necessary documents to be able to work properly and take the decision for the interests of the World Heritage Convention. And I think we have done our work in line with Rule 3.2 of the Rules of Procedure. Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Distinguished Representative of Russian Federation, does this address the concerns that you have raised? You have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Since the Legal Advisor gave, to my biggest surprise, answer "no" to the direct question of, Madam Chairperson, I would like then to ask him: According to procedure specified in which particular paragraph of the Rules of Procedure, or specified in any other Decision, text of a Decision, of the given Committee, the item, as demanded by a group of countries was included? I could not find such a procedure.

I would like also to say that Secretariat never circulated any letter asking Member States to propose. Of course, because it had no right to do so. Because Member States cannot propose items to be included into the Provisional Agenda of the extraordinary session. So, my question is, under which procedure, where it is established and where it is written in the Decision? And, being very legal as you are, I think that, the very evident answer would be that the Provisional Agenda should reflect word for word, letter per letter, the text of the Decision as adopted by the 17th extraordinary session. That's my first part.

And second part to the Distinguished Director of the World Heritage Centre. I, maybe I didn't understand, actually, why it was not possible to circulate everything 30 days in advance. And I also didn't understand why we never received a letter signed by Director General, as it is specified in the present Rules and Regulations. At least our Delegation never received any notification signed by Director General. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I would like to give the floor to the Legal Advisor to answer the questions and to Mr. Lazare. But before that, if I can just kindly ask everyone to be precise, to the point, so that we can manage our time wisely. So, please, Legal Advisor, you have the floor. And then, Mr. Lazare. When I go back to you again, the Representative of Russian Delegation, can we please also define, to consume less time, define exactly what are the questions and then have an answer for them? Legal Advisor, you have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Madam Chair, the answer to the question is that the item "Any other matter" was included in the Provisional Agenda on the basis of Rule 9.3 of the Rules of Procedure. The addition of the reference to nominations to be processed on an emergency basis was added, it is my understanding, on the basis of the fact that a number of Members of the Committee had requested that under that item that question be included in the Agenda.

Madam Chair, my opinion and the divergence it may have with a Member of the Committee, of course, is not the point at this stage. It is, as I always said, the Committee that is master of its own procedure and may interpret its Rules of Procedure. If the Committee is of the view that this item, that under the item "Any other matter", the question of nominations to be processed on an emergency basis is not to be included in the Agenda, then a proposal could be made by any Member of the Committee for that reference to be deleted, and then the Committee may decide on that. It may decide on that by consensus or if needed, as provided for by the rules, through a vote. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you for your answer. Director of World Heritage, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson. And of course, the Secretariat worked under Rule 9.3 for the, and also under, if I can, you can just allow me to, to take the exact article. Rule 3.2 of the Rules of Procedure. And the Distinguished Delegate of Russia was quite right to say that, of course, the Secretariat informs the Member States, if possible, 30 days before. And I think the World Heritage Committee was quite right to add this "if possible". We have seen in the past, when the extraordinary session was convened immediately after the election of the Members of the Committee in the past, that is, you know, one day after. And I think those are some of the issues that need to be taken into consideration. So, I think what we have done is that the invitation letters were sent on 12 January, which is not one day before the extraordinary session, which is quite some time. Maybe not 30 days, but at least we did our maximum to send the invitation letters to all the Committee Members to convene the session. And I think we did really our best. And we will continue to do it. As we have always done. The Secretariat sends the invitation to all the Members of the Committee, and this is what we did by sending the invitation letters to the session, to all the Members of the Committee and all the States Parties. And I don't know if we should not now do it, but this is what we have always done and we will continue doing it. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson:

Thank you for your answer. I think we have exhausted a lot of questions and answers in this regard, and we have got extensive replies from the Legal Advisor, Director for World Heritage Centre, detailed questions from our colleague from the Russian Federation. And I would really like us to, for the sake of time, to move on. And I would like to ask the Russian Federation, because they requested the floor, to give their final reply to this so we can move on. You have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Actually, I didn't receive an answer from the Legal Advisor: in accordance with which procedure established under which paragraph of the Rules of Procedure or established, and which Decision of the Committee, Secretariat included nominations into "Any other business"? There is no such procedure that could have possibly permitted Secretariat to interpret the Decision of the Committee and to include an item under "Any other business" or under any other item. You see? Because the Provisional Agenda should correspond to the letter

of the Decision of 17th session. So, it may have "Any other matter", but it's not up to the Secretariat to interpret it. First thing.

Second thing, you didn't give me any provision, any paragraph, any decision onto which the notifications received from a group of countries were considered, proceeded and added to the Provisional Agenda. Secondly.

Thirdly, you're quite right that it's up to Committee to delete and etc., etc., but the procedure should be the other way round. The other way round, meaning that the Provisional Agenda should have corresponded to the Decision of the 17th session, including "Any other matter", point. Point. Without any interpretation of it. And then it's up to any Committee Member to say, I want to include under "Any other matter", the Memory Sites as a separate item in whatever form, i.e., every country is sovereign to propose whatever it deems appropriate to the Provisional Agenda as prepared per the Decision of the Committee of the 17th session, this and this and that. And then Committee would have considered this.

I think that there is a little bit of misunderstanding. I'm talking about the Provisional Agenda, not the Agenda that could be discussed and finally adopted, but the provisional. And this should have been circulated 30 days in advance, and Secretariat had all the necessary tools to circulate it, even if maybe less if they were too busy. But it looks like, from explanation that we heard, and I draw a conclusion, that Secretariat knew that a Member State or several Member States would be proposing. They were waiting, they were not circulating Provisional Agenda, as asked by the Committee, and waiting and then added, with no procedure behind. So, therefore, I appeal to re-circulate Provisional Agenda as per the Decision of the 17th session, and then any Member States...

Chairperson:

I'm sorry. I have to cut you short because it's been more than three minutes and I promised to cut everyone short after their allocated time. I would like to thank you for raising the concerns that you have in a legal manner and asking the questions that you feel right, that can reply to the concerns that you have. And in my capacity as a Chair, I have received your letter and I have conveyed it yesterday, and I have given the floor to you to raise all your concerns and given ample time and space for the Legal Advisor and Director of World Heritage to reply to your concerns.

Now, to question intentions is not my mandate. I don't think it is the mandate also of the Committee to question intentions behind actions rather than talk on the action. If they are according to the procedure, we can adopt and move forward. If they are not, then we leave the decision to the Committee to decide that. Now you have raised your concerns and I don't feel that there are going to be any different answers. We will be going in circles. You'll be again explaining and we'll get the same answer. And if I can summarize this, your question was to the Legal Advisor, is it in line with the Rules of Procedure? Is it violating the Rules of Procedure? The answer was no. And this was. I'm giving you the answer to your question and your answer.

Another question is that if possible, and then the answer was there. If you find the answer of the Director of World Heritage satisfactory, then I think we should move on so that we can adopt the Agenda, change the Agenda, whatever we want to do with it, but move forward. Other than that we will be going in circles. And I think, I don't believe that we will get different answers or different questions from the questions that we have raised before. I would like to give you the floor and please be precise. Thank you.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for your excellent summary of our discussion. But I regret to say that I didn't receive an answer from the Legal Advisor. Under which procedure and provided by which paragraph of the Rules of Procedure, the letter from a group of countries was taken on board and included into the Provisional Agenda of this session? Under which procedure? Which rules entitles Member States to bring questions to the Provisional Agenda of an extraordinary session? I did not find such a rule, and I would be very grateful if you can read me this rule. Thank you.

Chairperson:

I would like to give a final reply to the Legal Advisor, and I would like us to move on. If there is any decision to be raised in this regard let's decide it and move forward for the sake of time. Legal Advisor, please provide an answer to the specific question by the Russian Federation. You have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the rule that was and that is the reference for the preparation of the Provisional Agenda is Rule 9.3, which reads: "The Provisional Agenda of an extraordinary session shall include only those questions for the consideration of which the session has been convened", which was read by the Secretariat in conjunction with Decision **17 EXT.COM 3**, but in which the Committee decided to meet again in extraordinary session in the course of January 2023 to take a decision on the date and venue and the outcome of the Open-ended Working Group of Sites of Memory associated with conflicts, which are items 3 and 4, and consider the Provisional Agenda of its 45th session, which appears also in Item 3, as well as "Any other matter" which appears under Item 5. In order to give a fair deal to the expression "Any other matter", this was the only way for the Secretariat, to take into consideration the communications that you, Madam Chair, had received from a number of

Members of the Committee. I should underline once again that it is nevertheless for the Committee. This is a working document, it's only a working document. That's why it is entrusted to the Secretariat and not to anybody else. So, if the Committee considers that that matter should not be considered under the item "Any other matter", it may decide to delete it from the Provisional Agenda and adopt an Agenda that does not include that matter. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you, Legal Advisor. I think now I should propose a time limit to the intervention of the Secretariat as well, so that I can manage the time properly. I think we give this discussion an hour now of our time. Russian Federation, I see that you are raising the flag here. But I want us to move forward. We want to move forward from this answer, move forward. So, I would like to get your comment on that, and then we want to move. Thank you.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Legal Advisor just now has admitted that putting the newly proposed item to under "Any other matter" was the only possible way to take, to deal with this. Right? He also read the Decision that says, and then he enumerated the points that were in the Decision and should have been in the Provisional Agenda. And in the Provisional Agenda, "Any other matter" should be full stop, without any interpretation. The Secretariat could not proceed the letters received from the group of States and led this group of States to propose in the Committee session. So, Madam Chair, I would propose that we recirculate Provisional Agenda as adopted, I mean, as foreseen by the Decision of the 17th session. And then, when it's recirculated, it could be done very quickly, a group of countries can propose in the floor the matter to be added. And then we discuss the amendment to the Provisional Agenda. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you for your reply. I would like now to hear from other Members if they feel strongly about this and, since we heard from the Legal Advisor that it is not in violation of the Rules of Procedure, we heard from the Director of World Heritage, the narrative of the discussion that took place in the 17th session and the discussion that took place there, with the presence of all Members and understanding that it ended on. I believe that we have exhausted the answers, so that we can move on. I want to hear from other Members if they would like us to stop this discussion or to move forward with it. And if you would like to have the floor.

So, is everyone in agreement to move forward or would you like to recirculate? If anyone wants to recirculate the Agenda item, please let me know. Other than the Russian Federation. After hearing the explanation. Do you want to take the floor? I see that after hearing the explanation of the Legal Advisor, Russian Federation, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe I made a proposal that would have everybody be assured that we are following strictly the Rules of Procedure. And I believe my proposal to be sound, legally sound and reasonable. That would permit us to move forward. And I haven't heard any objection to that. So, I think that we should proceed this way. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Distinguished Representative of the Russian Delegation. I still don't understand when you say we don't, we should go in this way. So, after hearing the Legal Advisor's explanation and I see no Member here objecting to that, and after hearing the narrative that every Member of the Committee were in, in the discussion when we added the "Any other matter", as per what I understood here today, your request is to? Clarify, please, so that I can hear from other Members, and then we can agree on something and move forward. Your specific request.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

My specific request is that the Provisional Agenda shall contain only things as listed in the Decision of the 17th. Meaning that you can have "Any other matter" as a point, but without any specification. The thus circulated Agenda constitutes a basis for our discussion. Then of course any Committee Member is entitled to bring any matter for the consideration, and we discuss the amendment by this Member State to the Committee, and that would keep us all following the rules strictly. Because if we stay with the option where a Provisional Agenda contains a proposal by a number of countries to include into the Provisional Agenda, we are running the risk of violating the rules and creating a dangerous precedent for the future extraordinary sessions. And I also would like to recall once again that my country was in the same situation, two or three sessions back. And the answer we got from the Secretariat, including from the World Heritage and Legal Advisor, was different, not the one that we received today. And our request came before the Provisional Agenda was circulated. Nonetheless, our item was not included because the Agenda should stay as decided, and it was decided "Any other matter", point. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russian Federation. I believe in the spirit of making sure that every Member is being heard and every concern is being addressed. I think we gave this discussion a very long time, and your request was heard clearly by all Members here. And we got a clear reply from the Legal Advisor, a clear reply from the World Heritage, that everyone has heard. And if everyone feels that we should stop at this point and apply the suggestion and the request from the esteemed Member of the Committee, then we should. And if we feel that we should move forward, then let's move forward. And I would like to see if there is any objection to move forward after hearing the reply. I see. I saw your objection, Russian Federation. We heard the Legal Advisor reply, and I'm listening to the floor now. And since there is a guarantee of no violation of the Rules of Procedure by the Legal Advisor, and listening also to the floor, I don't see any objection. And, apart from your request. And with that I would like us to move forward, to look at the Agenda item and to save time, and then maybe we can discuss the issue. And also I see some amendment presented by your Delegation in this regard. With that, I would like to thank you for your patience and deliberations and replies, and I would like to move to the next item.

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

Chairperson:

Dear Members of the Committee, dear colleagues, I now invite you to adopt the Agenda of the 18th extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee contained in Document WHC/23/18.EXT.COM/2, which was transmitted to you on the 12th of January. As you know, and as I have indicated earlier on, during its 17th extraordinary session, the Committee decided to meet again to take a decision on the date, the venue, the outcome document of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory associated with recent conflicts, and to consider the Provisional Agenda of the 45th session, as well as any other item.

As you have been informed by letter on 11th January last, I have received a request from several Members of the Committee, namely Japan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece and Italy, to add to the Agenda of our 18th extraordinary session the examination of nominations to the World Heritage List to be processed on an emergency basis. This matter has therefore been included under item "Any other matter" in the Provisional Agenda you have received, and I requested the Secretariat to already prepare the relevant documents in this regard. We have received an amendment by the Russian Federation as it is here outlined. And if I maybe, like to look at the Decision on the screen...

Unidentified Speaker:

We have to see the...

Chairperson:

We have to see the Agenda, please. Can you scroll up a bit?

Unidentified Speaker:

Yes.

Chairperson:

In English and French. So, we see here the Agenda, the amended Agenda. Can we? Is there a way to put them next to each other so that Members can see them both?

Unidentified Speaker:

It is.

Chairperson:

Yes. And in which language?

Unidentified Speaker:

English and French.

Chairperson:

Yes, I know. What I'm saying is that the Agenda and the Decision next to each other.

Unidentified Speaker:

[unclear speaking]

Chairperson:

Is there a possibility or we can just have a look at the Agenda, give some time to read, and then we can move to that Decision? It's okay. It's okay if it's. I want to give enough space for Members to read. Let's have a look at the amended Agenda items by the Russian Federation and then we're going to move to the Decision. It's okay. Let's go back to the amended Agenda. Yes, thank you. Thank you very much. And in French as well. Thank you. I will give you two minutes to have a look at the amendment.

India. You have the floor Your Excellency, and Happy New Year.

The Delegation of India:

Good morning to you. Can I request you one thing? Can we have the Agenda items in a static manner rather than in animations out there? So, because it's difficult really to follow when it's constantly being moved in the two minute deadline that you have given us. Thank you, Excellency.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. I suffer from the same thing. I just sometimes get seasick whenever I see the screen moving. So, far, it's static right now. I will give you some time to read it, and then we'll move to the consideration of that Decision.

Is it possible to move to the Decision and consider the Decision? Thank you. You have seen the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation. It was circulated to you by email as well right now. But I'm, I know that you're here in this session, so it's really hard to read it, but I hope you had the time to read it, and to adopt. And I want us to look at the Decision as amended by the Russian Federation. Maybe we'll start para by para. So, if we look at Paragraph 1, can we adopt it as is? I see no objection from the room. It is adopted.

Now we have an amendment in Paragraph number 2 by the Russian Federation. Can we adopt the Decision as amended by the Russian Federation? I see Belgium. You have the floor.

La Délégation de Belgique:

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente. Ceci étant ma première intervention ce matin, je voudrais vous souhaiter, au nom de ma Délégation, plein succès dans votre mandat de Présidente du Comité du patrimoine mondial. J'espère que cette session sera un prélude constructif à votre mandat. Concernant le Point 2 de notre ordre du jour, ma Délégation souhaiterait soutenir le Projet d'ordre du jour tel qu'il figurait dans le Document /18EXT.COM/2, sans amendements. Merci.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium. I don't see any other requests for the floor. Italy, and Japan. Italy you have the floor.

La Délégation de l'Italie:

Merci, Madame la Présidente. Moi aussi, je me joins pour vous féliciter de votre Présidence et garantir notre soutien, notre soutien de la Délégation d'Italie pendant ces travaux. Nous soutenons la proposition de la Belgique. Donc, pour nous aussi, c'est bien de garder les projets d'Agenda qui ont été proposés par le Secrétariat. Merci, Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Japan, then Greece. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much Madam Chair.

I would also like to echo my colleagues in congratulating you for your work. I know that you are a very good Chair and I hope we have a good fortune today to finish it early. Now, on the issues at hand, yes, we support what was proposed by Belgium. And, if the discussions are stuck here, I propose to go for a vote. Thank you.

Chairperson:

So, I will hear it from Bulgaria and then I'll come back to you, Japan, for your request. Bulgaria, you have the floor. Sorry, Greece and then Bulgaria. Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Since it's the first time I take the floor today, our Delegation would also wish you all the success, and we trust in your wisdom so that we can complete our works today in due time. Our Delegation also supports what was already mentioned by Belgium and Italy, and we support the Provisional Agenda as it was circulated before, without the Russian amendments. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Greece. Bulgaria, you have the floor.

La Délégation de Bulgarie :

Je vous remercie. Comme c'est la première fois qu'on prend la parole, on se joint aussi aux autres pour vous féliciter, pour vous souhaiter plein de succès dans les travaux, et vous pouvez, bien sûr, être assurée de notre soutien. On se joint aussi à la Belgique, l'Italie et la Grèce pour demander de voir le Projet de décision tel que proposé par le Secrétariat. Je vous remercie.

Chairperson:

Thank you, I see no more requests for the floor, and I see growing support towards having the Agenda as it was originally proposed. Can we adopt at the original Agenda, as it was originally proposed? Russia, you have the floor and then. Then, maybe I'll go back to Japan. Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Of course, we cannot support this for various reasons I've explained before, and with the opinion that I remain, and I ask the Rapporteur to reflect the previous discussion we had in the Report, and to have it in the Summary Records of this Committee.

Moreover, Madam Chair, you said yourself that there was a request to add a new item to the Agenda from the States concerned, which is also reflected in their letters. So, thus it contravenes the Rules of Procedure for the preparations of the extraordinary session, the Provisional Agenda of the extraordinary session, and that was said and written by them. So, we, because we don't agree and because this item should not be figuring on the Provisional Agenda, we are proposing the amendments as we are proposing, and we appeal to everybody to support them. Then, there was no explanation at all from those countries who are proposing why they want to have it in this session. And then there is a procedural matter, if I'm not mistaken, but what I've heard is that the Ambassador of Japan asked for a vote, if I'm not mistaken. Can you confirm then?

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russian Federation. With regard to the request for the points raised, it will be reflected by the Rapporteur in the report. Now, with regard to the concerns you have raised with regard to the Rules of Procedure, I don't want to indulge again in the circle of questions and answers that happened before. I think we exhausted this discussion.

And with regard to the vote, as I recall correctly from our colleague from Japan, it was: if we don't agree, we would like to reach a vote. That's why I wanted to give the floor to everyone. As you can see now, we see a majority, mostly, I mean, I see Belgium, Italy, Japan, Greece, Bulgaria. They wanted to keep the original. Russian Federation wanted to keep the amendment. I did not see any other requests for the floor. And I would like to give the floor to Japan right now. We heard the reply of our Distinguished Representative of Russia not accepting the original text, and I would like to give you the floor to Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It is clear that we have spent considerable time in this particular point, and it is not very likely that we can come to a consensus on this item. We have a lot of things to discuss today, and therefore I would like to propose a vote, a roll call vote on this issue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Your Excellency.

With regard to the roll call, vote by roll call, it is, according to the Rules of Procedure, it needs to be seconded by another Member of the Committee, Members of the Committee. If not, we can just have a show of hands. I see Belgium. I see Greece here. I see Russia. Okay, Belgium and Greece supporting the vote by roll call. Russia, is there is a procedural objection or we can move forward with the vote? Is there a procedural objection?

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

I would like to seek a clarification before the vote starts, from the Secretariat. An opinion of the Secretariat. Are all the provisions of the Operational Guidelines of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention respected or observed if we go to the consideration of the item as proposed by a group of countries? That's my first question.

And another question, to the proponents of the item. Why they didn't propose to consider state of conservation of those sites who are already in danger? And then the procedural matter is: should we go for a vote? Amendments should be voted first. Thank you.

Chairperson:

I would like to answer the questions that you have raised, but since there was a request for the vote and it was seconded, I think we should respectfully move to the vote. The vote will be on the amendment as it was circulated. I would like maybe also explanation from the Legal Advisor, as indeed it is on the amendment. And, so now I would like to start with this process. There is a request for the vote, has been requested by the Delegation of Japan, Greece, Belgium, supported by Greece and Belgium. And, as you know, according to Rule 40.3, a vote by roll call shall also be taken if it is requested by not less than two States Members before the voting takes place.

In this regard, we saw the request and the support. And then maybe we should move forward with the vote. The question to be requested here. I would like now to give the floor to the Legal Advisor also. Maybe if there was, how can we vote on the amendment, and what kind of question should we pose in this regard? You have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. As was rightly pointed out by the Distinguished Delegate of the Russian Federation, Rule 25, Paragraph 1 foresees the following, and I'm quoting: "When an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first." Therefore, indeed, my understanding is that since no consensus was reached, the Committee has decided to go to the vote. Pursuant to Rule 40, Paragraph 3: "A vote may be taken by roll call if it is requested by not less than two States Members before the voting takes place." I believe that this has also been acquired at this stage.

The question I believe that should be asked is whether the Committee agrees with the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation, which consists of amendments to Paragraph, well I don't have them in front of me, but at the amendments that were shown on the screen. So, that would be the question, whether they agree with the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation. Yes, if the member agrees. No, if the member does not agree. Thank you very much Madam.

Chairperson:

Thank you for this explanation. And so far, the question will be: Are you in favor or are you in support of the amendment that is proposed by the Russian Delegation? If yes, then you support the amendment by the Russian Delegation. If no, then you want to have the original Agenda as proposed. So, with that, I would like to give the floor to the Secretariat to explain the procedures of the conduct of the vote by roll call during the session. Mr Eloundou Assomo, you have the floor, please.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I think the Legal Advisor has given some clear clarification on the Rules of Procedure. And, of course, you have also already mentioned Rule 40.3. And I think, and you've also explained regarding the vote. So, I just would like to recall again Rule 39, regarding counting of votes, which said that States Members present and voting shall mean State Members casting an affirmative or negative vote. Therefore, States Parties abstaining from voting shall be regarded as not voting. And furthermore, Madam Chairperson, allow me to underline that which has already been said, that according to Rule 37 of the Rules of Procedure, of course, only decisions of the Committee on matters covered by the provisions of the Convention shall be taken by a majority of two thirds of its Members present and voting. Thank you very much. And the other decisions are taken, of course, by simple majority, which is the case for this specific vote.

Chairperson:

Would you please kindly start? We're starting now the vote by roll call.

And I'm asking the Director of World Heritage to start the vote, calling the names of the countries. And please give your reply with a yes or no. In favor of the amendment proposed by Russia or not in favor of the amendment proposed by Russia. Now you have the floor, Mr. Lazare.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson. So, I will now call the Committee Members in alphabetical order, in English alphabetical order, to be precise. So, Argentina?

The Delegation of Argentina:

No.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Belgium?

La Délégation de Belgique :

Non.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Bulgaria?

La Délégation de Bulgarie :

Non.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Egypt?

The Delegation of Egypt:

Abstention.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Ethiopia? We didn't hear. Can you use your microphone, please?

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Abstention.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Greece?

The Delegation of Greece:

No.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

India?

The Delegation of India:

Abstention.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Italy?

The Delegation of Italy:

No.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Japan?

The Delegation of Japan:

No.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Mali?

La Délégation du Mali :

Abstention.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Mexico?

La Délégation du Mexique :

Non.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Nigeria?

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Abstention.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Oman?

The Delegation of Oman:

Abstention.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Qatar?

The Delegation of Qatar:

Abstention.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Russian Federation?

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

In favor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Rwanda?

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Abstention.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines?

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Abstention.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Saudi Arabia?

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Abstention.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

South Africa?

The Delegation of South Africa:

Abstention.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thailand?

The Delegation of Thailand:

Abstention.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

And Zambia?

The Delegation of Zambia:

Abstention.

Chairperson:

Okay. I would like to have your attention, please. Dear colleagues, as a result of the voting by roll call which has taken place, the results are as follows:

Number of Committee Members present is 21.

Number of Committee Members present and voting is eight.

Number of abstentions, 13.

Votes in favor of the proposal, one.

Votes not in favor of the proposal, seven.

Majority required with simple majority, which is five.

Therefore, the proposal of amendment is rejected and we shall go to the Agenda and adopt. I see a request by the Russian Federation. You have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

I'm sorry, Madam Chair. Am I to understand that the Decision is adopted as, or not?

Chairperson:

Yes, indeed. I just gave you the floor in case there was a procedural issue with the voting. So, okay. Therefore, if you allow me to return now to the decision, and since by vote by roll call, the proposal to amend was rejected by vote, then we propose to adopt it now, the Agenda as proposed initially. So.

It is then adopted. Thank you. Russian Federation, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Russian Federation considers the adopted Agenda as legally null and void. As we explained, the procedure for the preparation of the Provisional Agenda was not in line with the Rules of Procedure of the Committee. The Provisional Agenda of the extraordinary session could not include the questions proposed by Member States of the Committee.

Moreover, no explanation whatsoever was provided by those who were proposing this item to be added to the Agenda. No explanation was provided from the Secretariat as to visibility for the Committee to deal with this item of the Agenda. Adding this item to the Agenda contravenes the provision of paragraphs 23, 150, 161 and 168 of the Operational Guidelines of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention concerning the process for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List. The publication of the documents less than 10 days before the Committee meeting does not allow proper examination of the nomination files, thus preventing the Committee from taking decisions based on objective scientific considerations.

As stipulated in Operational Guidelines, such decisions depend upon carefully prepared documentation, through and consistent procedures, evaluation by the qualified experts. Very short period left after the announce of the possibility to include the review of nominations in the Agenda didn't allow for many States Parties, Members of the Committee, to organise the arrival of the experts in Paris, thus preventing the Committee Members to appoint their representative person qualified in the field of cultural heritage, as recommended by Article 9.3 of the Convention and the Rule 5.2.

The extraordinary character of the session doesn't allow for representatives of developing countries to benefit from the assistance of the Committee in covering the cost of their participation in session, as per Rule 5.4 of the Rules of Procedure. By this, the Committee is deliberately placed under pressure, pushing it to take rushed decisions, creating a very dangerous precedent, harmful for the credibility of the Convention, the World Heritage List and the image of UNESCO. As from now, "Any other business" para can be always seen as a back door to put additional substantial matters. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russian Federation.

And as clarified before, kindly send your interventions in writing so that they can be also reflected. With that and with the adoption of the Agenda.

3. ORGANIZATION OF THE 45TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE (DATES, VENUE, PROVISIONAL AGENDA) // ORGANISATION DE LA 45E SESSION DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (DATES, LIEU, ORDRE DU JOUR PROVISOIRE)

Chairperson:

Dear colleagues, we have now come to discuss the next item on our Agenda, which is the organization of the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, precisely to agree on the exact dates of the session, its venue, and to consider the Provisional Agenda. Egypt, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Could you please advise if we have the possibility of making a statement for explanation of vote? Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. Very much appreciate an explanation of the vote to the Committee Members, but since we have moved to the next Agenda item, if you can allow me, that we move forward and hopefully we don't need to vote anymore, where we need to explain our votes. Thank you very much for your understanding.

And now, in order to assist the Committee with this work, the Secretariat has prepared a working document which is WHC/23/18.EXT.COM/3, which has been transmitted to you and which presents a possible way to organize the session. Since the publication of this document, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has offered to host the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee from 10th to the 25th of September in 2023, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This proposal was reflected in an addendum to the Document WHC/23/18.EXT.COM/3 that has been transmitted to you on the 16th of January.

Allow me, please, to take this occasion to underline that as an outstanding cornerstone of UNESCO's glorious World Heritage Convention, my country is convinced that it would be an ideal venue to convene the World Heritage Committee, and that it would also present a unique opportunity to showcase the reconciliation between heritage and protection, and sustainable development. As such, the Saudi Government is determined to make this meeting a defining moment for the future of our joint endeavours.

Today's decisions are critical to make the 45th session of the Committee a success. I look forward to a fruitful discussion and consensus-based decisions. With your dedication and expertise, I am confident that we will achieve another productive and efficient session as our previous one. I would like now, with your permission, to give the floor to Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Director of the World Heritage Centre, to present a document. Mr. Eloundou Assomo, you have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente. Comme vous avez pu le voir dans les documents de travail qui vous ont été distribués, c'est à dire les documents 18.EXT.COM/3 et 18.EXT.COM/3.Add, le Secrétariat s'est inspiré de l'expérience passée afin de proposer la tenue d'une 45^e session élargie en 2023. Comme reflété dans l'Annexe 1 du Document 3, l'ordre du jour d'une telle session élargie couvrirait à la fois l'ordre du jour initial de la 45^e session, tel qu'adopté par le Comité à sa 44^e session élargie en 2021 et tous les points dont l'examen était déjà prévu en 2023 par les sessions précédentes du Comité.

En ce qui concerne la durée de la session, étant donné que le nombre de rapports sur l'état de conservation et le nombre de propositions d'inscription seront doublés, la session sera prolongée de quatre jours supplémentaires par rapport à la durée initialement prévue. Afin de limiter cette prolongation à quatre jours, le Comité pourrait décider qu'un certain nombre de points à l'ordre du jour soit recommandé pour adoption sans débat. Les points qui pourraient être examinés sans débat sont d'ailleurs indiqués dans l'Annexe 2 du Document 3 qui vous a été soumis. Et bien entendu, l'Addendum au Document 3 que vous avez donné par ailleurs le lieu et les dates exactes proposés par l'Arabie Saoudite pour la tenue de la 45^e session.

En ce qui concerne les propositions d'inscription, il faut noter qu'en 2022, ICOMOS a dû évaluer 24 dossiers. Étant donné que 32 dossiers avaient été budgétés au titre de l'exercice biennal 2022-2023, cela signifie que le budget restant ne permet d'évaluer que huit dossiers en 2023. Même si nous ignorons encore combien de dossiers seront reçus la semaine prochaine ou dans quelques jours, au 1^{er} février 2023, et si le Comité n'a pas encore pris de décision en ce qui concerne l'évaluation des sites de mémoire, il est évident qu'il y aura plus de huit dossiers à évaluer en 2023. Il est donc proposé au Comité d'approuver une rallonge budgétaire à hauteur de 409 163 dollars pour couvrir potentiellement l'évaluation de 26 dossiers en 2023.

La tenue d'une 45^e session élargie permettrait d'ailleurs de rétablir les cycles statutaires, tels que les propositions d'inscription et les rapports d'état de conservation à partir de 2024. Par ailleurs, la 36^e session du Comité,

initialement prévue en 2023, se tiendrait en 2024 avec un ordre du jour provisoire qui serait adopté par le Comité à la fin de sa 45^e session élargie. Et le Bureau de la 46^e session serait alors élu à la fin de la 45^e session élargie, comme prévu dans le Règlement intérieur.

Madame la Présidente, Mesdames et Messieurs les Distingués membres du Comité, cette 45^e session élargie serait bien entendu conçue à titre tout à fait exceptionnel, étant entendu qu'un tel arrangement ne saurait en aucun cas constituer un précédent pour l'avenir. En outre, il devra être entendu que toute décision dérogatoire que vous pourriez être amenés à prendre de façon exceptionnelle pour permettre la tenue de cette 45^e session ne saurait avoir une quelconque incidence sur les délibérations naturellement futures du Comité. Je vous remercie, Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much for your presentation. Dear colleagues, you have just heard the thorough presentation by the Secretariat and the proposal to hold an extended session from the 10th to the 25th of September 2023 in Riyadh, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with the Provisional Agenda detailed in Document 3, as well as the budgetary implications in relation with the evaluation of nominations in 2023. As just explained by Mr. Eloundou Assomo, the items already foreseen on the Agenda of the 45th session, which would have been held in 2022, and the items already foreseen for 2023 during previous sessions of the Committee, will be dealt with jointly during the extended 45th session. A draft Provisional Agenda is proposed in Annex 2 of the Document 3, and you can also see that several Agenda items are proposed to be discussed without debate in order to have some precious time, or to save some precious time, during the extended session. We have also heard from Mr. Eloundou Assomo that the Committee will have to address the issue of budgetary adjustments. I would like to know whether you have any comment on the suggestion that was just raised now, and I would like to hear from the floor if there is any comment, so we can move forward. I see no comments. Ethiopia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Madam Chair. And if all the 31st, the whole day in January, is to say happy new year, I would like to say also happy new year to all Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates. Just one question, if I want to ask, about the date. And thank you for the explanation by the Director why the date is extended and why a number of items imposes the Secretariat to extend the number of days too, for, the Committee. But, why it is decided to be in September? Usually, just for my understanding, it might be the issue of preparation or it might be the rationale and the preparation for the Host Country. But usually in the last of September, we are approaching to meet to the Executive Board, which is critical for the preparation of the General Conference to be held in November. And at the same time, we have to prepare for November as well. And if you, Chair, if you would like to explain why it is extra? Is it not possible to do it somewhere, sometime in mid-June or at the beginning of July? Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you for your question. And I will get another question from Zambia. And then I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Saudi Arabia to answer. Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

And may I echo the words of many speakers before me in congratulating you in being Chair and the way you are managing the session. My question, observation, was on the budget. I was just wondering whether the 400 will be enough, considering that we had budgeted 900 plus thousand for 32 files and if we're going to have 26, is the 400 going to be enough? Also, considering that you have already stated in the minutes that this meeting is going to be more costly than other sessions.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, for your question. I would like first to address the first question by the Ethiopian Delegation. And as much as I would like to jump in and give the answers myself, I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Saudi Arabia to answer the question. Thank you.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

So, I welcome the valuable feedback regarding the proposed date. However, given the nature, scale and requirements of hosting such a Committee, it usually requires one year for the Host Country to prepare for this event. And Saudi Arabia, in this case, has only around seven to eight months to prepare for hosting. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I hope this answers the question of the Delegation. Thank you. And I would like now to give the floor to the The Director of the World Heritage Centre. Please, please provide the answer to the question raised by the Distinguished Representative of Zambia. You have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup.

Madame la Présidente. Alors, comme, et je remercie Madame la Distinguée Déléguée de la Zambie pour sa question, comme je l'ai dit, le budget actuel, effectivement, pour 2023, donc on parle de 2023, ne permet de couvrir que huit dossiers. Or, il y a à peu près 26 dossiers qui sont prévus pour 2023. Donc il faudrait une rallonge pour couvrir 18 dossiers supplémentaires. Et donc, nous avons consulté effectivement et travaillé à cette mission avec l'ICOMOS. Donc, pour répondre à votre question, oui, effectivement, cette estimation qui a été faite de manière précise, permettra de couvrir l'analyse de tous les dossiers pour 2023. Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Distinguished Representative of Ethiopia and Distinguished Representative of Zambia. Your questions have been answered. If you have any follow-up questions? Or can we move forward? I see no request. Okay. Russian Federation, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. And I would like to thank the Delegation of Saudi Arabia, as well as you, for the generous offer to host Committee session in Riyadh. And we understand that you need time to prepare the session properly. Being a country that once also was proposing the date in September, we understand the rationale behind and the difficulties and impediments and the much work you need to do as a host country.

My question goes to the Secretariat. I remember when we were discussing possible dates in September last year, the Secretariat said to us that it would impede the cycle of nominations to the World Heritage, that they could not cope with the work to prepare a session in August. Therefore, I would like to know whether the Secretariat thought already how to overcome these difficulties, what to do, how to prepare the session properly, and when we would expect, we would like to know, as Member States, when we would expect, when we would see the documents distributed for us also to prepare, because of the holiday season. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. I would like to give the floor to the Director of World Heritage to reply to these specific questions.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Merci Madame la Présidente. Juste très rapidement pour dire que, comme je l'ai déjà dit dans mes interventions précédentes, le Secrétariat sera bien évidemment prêt et, avec la préparation de tous les documents, pour que ce soit distribué aux Membres du Comité, en respect avec le Règlement intérieur pour l'organisation de la session, cette session ordinaire du Comité. Merci beaucoup.

Chairperson:

Does this answer your question? Thank you. Thank you. And I don't see any other requests for clarification. I only hear that there is a fruitful engagement on the phone somewhere. But, thank you all for sharing your views. And, dear colleagues, based on the discussions we have just had, shall I take that the Committee agrees with the holding of its 45th session as an extended session to be held from 10th to 25th September 2023 in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with the Provisional Agenda as contained in Annex 2 of Document 3? And if there is no objection, I would like to adopt the Decision.

You can see the Decision? Yes. We have received. Yes. Secretariat, would you like to explain the? Rapporteur, please, would you like to read the amendment that we have received?

Rapporteur:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We have received an amendment from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines jointly with Oman. Para 1 is amended to include the Addendum document, so it states: "Having examined documents WHC/23/18.EXT.COM/3 and WHC/23/18.EXT.COM/3.Add". Para 2 and Para 3 remain as they are. Para 4 is amended and it states: "Decides to hold its extended 45th session in presential from 10th to 25th September 2023, in the city of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, under the Presidency of Her Highness Princess Haifa Al Mogrin, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Saudi Arabia to UNESCO, designated as Chairperson until the end of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee". Paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 remain as they are. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Russian Federation, I saw that you requested the floor before we displayed the amendments, but I thought you wanted to add more. So, do you want to take the floor?

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

I would like to add to the amendment of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, but if they explained first, I would jump in after.

Chairperson:

Okay. Okay. I would like to give the floor to Saint Vincent before I give the floor to Qatar. I see that they requested also the floor. Saint Vincent, would you like to explain the amendments that you have provided?

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

And happy new year to all. Madam Chair, we add in Paragraph 1 the reference to Document Add, which is normal to add it here. And in Paragraph 4, we add the information given in the Document Add: the dates and the venue, and we found it's obvious now that we know that Saudi Arabia will host the session. It is normal to put the name of the President of the Committee, as we do in all the decisions, formal decisions of the Committee when we precise the date and the Chairperson. It's obvious to put it, and it is for more clarity and to have a clear information in the Decision itself. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Saint Vincent. And Qatar, you have the floor, Excellency.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci Madame la Présidente. Tout d'abord, comme c'est la première fois que je prends la parole, je vous souhaite, et à tout le monde, une très bonne année pour 2023 et plein de succès pour notre Comité. L'État de Qatar a envoyé un mail pour être co-sponsor pour le Paragraphe 4 et la proposition proposée par Saint Vincent et les Grenadines et Oman, et je souhaiterais ajouter le nom de Qatar avec les pays à proposer ce Paragraphe. Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Qatar, and as I have clarified before, it's a co-author, as I understand, and thank you very much for your intervention. And I would like to know, if there is. Maybe, go paragraph by paragraph, or, then, to start adopting paragraph by paragraph. Or if there is any general comments, so that we can move forward with the Decision. Russian Federation, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

We are in your hands, Madam Chair. We are ready to go any way. We just have a small amendment to the amendment by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Chairperson:

We can go paragraph by paragraph, and then you can raise the flag whenever you want to add that amendment, or any other Member.

So, with that, can we start with Paragraph 1, as amended by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and co-sponsored, or co-authored, by Oman? Can we adopt as amended? I see no objection. Paragraph 1, then, is adopted.

Paragraph 2. Can we adopt? I see no objection. Paragraph 2 is adopted.

Paragraph 3. Can we adopt? I see no objection on Paragraph 3. It is then adopted.

Paragraph 4, we see an amendment as read by our Distinguished Rapporteur, from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, co-authored by Oman and Qatar. Can we adopt the Decision as amended? Russian Federation, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And I would like to thank Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Oman and Qatar for bringing this amendment. Indeed, it's very useful and we wholeheartedly support that. Indeed, as per the practice of the Committee, the name of the Chair should be stated somewhere in a Decision of a Committee. And here in this paragraph, we also specify the dates, which is also very important, and the place. So, this is a crucial paragraph.

Madam Chair, we would be proposing editorial change to that. Is to, where we say "under the Presidency of Her Highness, Princess Haifa Al Mogrin". We then, with your permission, put in brackets "Saudi Arabia" after your name, because it's a current practice in this Committee, always to mention a country of a Rapporteur or of a President of the Committee. And then at the end of the sentence, we would like to add "assisted by Vice-Chairpersons". And, in brackets, "Argentina, Italy, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Thailand". Bracket. And "Rapporteur". "Ms. Shikha Jain", in brackets, "India". "...in carrying out her duties". Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russian Federation. I want all of, everyone, to read the paragraph, and I hear that the Secretariat has raised a concern to me with regard to the word "assisted", given the role of the Bureau. I would like just to hear the

explanation of the Secretariat, and maybe then we can also proceed to the adoption of the amendment. Mister Director, please.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente. Je voulais juste effectivement noter que, dans la pratique, effectivement, la question de la Présidente, le Président, dans le passé, n'a jamais, vous n'avez jamais marqué, ou ce n'est pas dans le Règlement intérieur que le Président est assisté par les Vice-présidents. Le Président est le Président, et le Bureau est élu à la fin de chaque session, et le Bureau sera élu à la fin de la prochaine session élargie du Comité, comme je l'ai dit. Donc, je, au niveau de, je ne sais pas comment, parce que le Règlement intérieur est assez clair sur l'Article 13.1, d'abord, du Règlement intérieur et ensuite l'Article 15.2 du Règlement intérieur. Et je crois qu'ici, l'esprit de l'intervention de la Distinguée Déléguée de Saint-Vincent était effectivement de préciser que Son Altesse la Princesse, que vous, que vous, Son Altesse, que vous étiez effectivement la Présidente jusqu'au terme dudit mandat. Merci beaucoup.

Chairperson:

Thank you for this explanation. I still have. I mean. Maybe. I would like to hear from the Russian Federation about the reflection, on what they have heard from the Secretariat, and maybe explain more about their additional amendment. You have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Indeed, I do agree with the Distinguished Director that the Bureau, as you rightly mentioned, is elected and shall remain in office until the end of that session. This is a Regulation 13.1. However, I don't concur with the verb that you just said, that there is no verb "assist" in the Rules of Procedure, which seems to be not correct. Because I would like to cite the Rule 12.1 that says "the Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur shall assist the Chairperson in carrying out his duties". So, that was the inspiration of our amendment, since there was a change. And so that to bring everything in order, so we put, and we recite once again the Rule 12 because, because there was a matter also with the Rule 15.2. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Russian Delegation, for your explanation. I still received some concerns raised from the Secretariat about that. Maybe I would like to give them the floor one more time and then I would like to adopt the amendment. Mr. Lazare, you have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente. Je vais peut-être être un peu plus détaillé. Comme vous le savez, lors de sa 44^e session ordinaire et lors de la 16^e session extraordinaire du Comité, le Comité a élu, comme je le disais, conformément à l'Article 13.1 de son Règlement intérieur, les Membres suivants du Bureau jusqu'à la fin de la 45^e session : Son Excellence Monsieur Alexander Kuznetsov en tant que Président Intuitu Personae. Ensuite, les pays suivants : l'Arabie Saoudite, l'Afrique du Sud, la Thaïlande, l'Argentine et l'Italie en tant que Vice-présidents, et Madame Shikha Jain en tant que Rapporteur, également Intuitu Personae. Suite à la lettre datée du 22 novembre 2022, par laquelle Son Excellence Monsieur Alexander Kuznetsov a informé les Membres du Comité qu'il était dans l'impossibilité de poursuivre son mandat, l'Arabie Saoudite a été désignée, conformément à l'Article 15.2 du Règlement intérieur, a désigné Son Altesse la Princesse Haifa Al Mogrin pour le remplacer en tant que Présidente jusqu'au terme dudit mandat. Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you for this explanation. Can you please read the amendment so that we can go forward with the adoption? I'll give you some time.

Can we adopt the Decision as amended by Saint Vincent? Please. Raise your flag if you have a concern, because I cannot keep replying, yes or no. Belgium, you have the floor.

La Délégation de Belgique :

Merci, Madame la Présidente. Concernant le Paragraphe 4 du Projet de décision. Nous pouvons accepter, en effet, l'amendement introduit par Saint-Vincent et les Grenadines, Oman et Qatar, mais nous ne pouvons pas accepter l'amendement introduit par la Fédération de Russie. Merci.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium. Greece, I would like to hear from you but can you please provide explanation why in favor or not, so that we can have a constructive discussion?

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We also concur with the amendment provided by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Oman and Qatar, and we heard very carefully the explicit explanation provided by the Director of the World Heritage

Centre. For these reasons, we don't find the reason why to establish a new practice and change one of the ways of expressing or, of course, the designation of the Chairperson, the way it is provided, and not to add anything else. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I would like to give the floor to... Before I give the floor to Japan and Italy, I would like to also ask the Russian Federation if they have a question to raise in order to clarify the matter further, because it seems to me that there is a misunderstanding on the reason of putting this forward. So, maybe if you have any questions specifically to the Secretariat, please feel free to ask them. But I will give the phone now to Japan, then Italy, then I will give you the floor, Russia. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you. So, I wanted to say that we support Belgium and Greece. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Japan. Italy, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you Madam Chair. We support also Japan, Greece and Belgium on the same issues. Thank you so much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I still feel that there is a clear case of misunderstanding here. But Bulgaria, you have the floor. Thank you.

La Délégation de Bulgarie:

Merci. C'est vraiment pour souligner qu'on soutient aussi la Belgique, la Grèce, le Japon et l'Italie pour conserver l'amendement original. Merci.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Now, for clarification, Russian Federation, would you like to take the floor to explain the reason behind stating out this, and with regard to the understanding that you have to the extended 45th session and its Bureau? So, please, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much Madam Chair. My understanding that the whole reason behind the initial amendment by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Oman and Qatar was just to fix what is already written in the Rules of Procedure, but just for everybody to understand who is the Chairperson. Right? Because the change of a Chairperson happened in accordance with the Rule 15.2, and it should be so. And in accordance with other rules, the composition of the Bureau remained intact and unchanged until the future election of such a Bureau. So, it means that what I've just proposed and what was proposed before me by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Oman and Qatar, it is just factual. You see? I mean, this is how these things are, according to the Rules of Procedure, and this is how these things would be until a new Chairperson and a new membership of the Bureau is established. So, this is just to reflect how these things are. There is nothing new in that. There is nothing. It is just for the clarity and for the sake of understanding where we are and what happened after the full implementation of the Rule 15.2, whereas the Chairperson was replaced by Vice-Chairperson.

And I have also a question to Distinguished Director of the World Heritage Centre. You cited, or I believe you referred to a decision that I am unfortunate not to have the references, because what you've cited doesn't correspond at all to what is published on the World Heritage site as a decision taken by the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee. I mean the Decision **44 COM 16**. Therefore, I would like to ask you what you've been citing, because the text I have before my eyes is different.

Chairperson:

Thank you for this clarification. Mister The Director of the World Heritage Centre, can you please provide a reply to the question raised?

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, Madame la Présidente. La seule chose que j'ai fait était effectivement de dire que, dans l'explication, d'abord, il était effectivement très clair que, le Président est, effectivement, élu Intuitu Personae. Et les membres du Bureau sont très clairs. Donc je pense que c'est la chose la plus importante que j'ai souhaité ici clarifier. Parce que dans le projet de décision et peut-être effectivement, là, je vais aussi demander à peut-être, une contribution supplémentaire, avec votre permission, du Conseiller juridique sur cet amendement et notamment parce que la question des membres du Bureau ici est liée effectivement à la désignation de son Ambassadeur, de Son

Excellence Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, qui était le Président et qu'il n'est plus dans sa capacité personnelle. Donc, il y a un membre de Bureau supplémentaire dans la lecture que j'émets. Peut-être que le Conseiller juridique peut apporter plus de précisions, avec votre permission.

Chairperson:

Thank you with the members like to hear the explanation of the Legal Advisor? Okay. Please, Legal Advisor, you have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'm always grateful for the Members to be willing to continue to hear my explanations. Madam Chair, the rule that applies for the election of the Bureau is Rule 13, Paragraph 1, which, for the sake of clarity, I would like to quote in full: "The Committee, at the end of each ordinary session, shall elect from amongst those Members whose term continues through the next ordinary session, a Chairperson, five Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur, who shall remain in office until the end of that session". Pursuant to this rule, it is the established practice of the Committee at the end of each of its ordinary session to proceed to an election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur, which it did by Decision **44 COM 16**. Since some of the Members did not continue to be Members of the Committee through the following session, the Committee proceeded to a follow-up election at the extended session, the short session that follows the election, and that's Decision **16 EXT.COM 3**.

From the combination of those two decisions, Madam Chair, the composition of the Bureau until a couple of months ago was as follows: His Excellency Mr. Alexander Kuznetsov from the Russian Federation as Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee. Spain. Sorry, Italy. Saint Kitts. I'm going to. Can you? I had it, but my computer fell down. Give me just one second, Madam Chair. Italy, Argentina, Thailand, South Africa and Saudi Arabia as Vice-Chairs, and Ms. Shikha Jain as Rapporteur. As you may see, the way in which this is presented is different between the Chairperson and the Rapporteur on the one hand, and the Vice-Chairpersons on the others. In the case of the Chairperson and the Rapporteur, there is a reference to a person in particular, and in the case of the Vice-Chairpersons is the name of a country.

This is the reason. The reason for this is that according to the practice and the rules of the Committee, the Chairperson and the Rapporteur are elected *Intuitu Personae*, and that is in their personal capacity, as opposed to the Vice-Chairs who are actually the countries and may be represented by whoever the country is.

Following the communication by which the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr. Alexander Kuznetsov, indicated that he was unable to complete his term of office back, I believe it was, in December, the rule contained in Rule 15.2 of the Rules of Procedure was applied and the Vice-Chairperson in English alphabetical order of States Members of the Bureau commencing by the country of the Chairperson, this is Saudi Arabia, was invited to designate a person that was you, Madam Chair, to replace the Chairperson for the remainder of the term of office. As a consequence of that Decision, the current composition of the Bureau is as follows: the Chairperson is Her Highness Princess Haifa Al Mogrin. The Rapporteur remains Ms. Shikha Jain and the Vice-Chairpersons are Argentina, Italy, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Thailand, which were elected until the end of the 45th session of the Committee.

My understanding is that the amendment intends to make a change to that composition, but I would like to ask clarification for that, if that is the case, that is to change the election. But this would require a clarification from the proposer of the amendment, I believe. I hope this has been clear, Madam Chair, but I remain available to any follow-up as needed.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Is there any follow-up question by Members? Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. The Distinguished Legal Advisor just said that the Rapporteur and the Chairperson, as per the rule, are elected in their personal capacity. Could you please advise us as for the concrete paragraph and the concrete rule in the Rules of Procedure? Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Legal Advisor, you have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I said that as per the practice and the rule of the Committee. The rule is Rule 13.1, but it needs to be read also in combination with rules 15 and 16 of the Rules of Procedure, which, as you may see, provide for the replacement of the Chairperson and the Rapporteur. When one of these individuals are not able to continue their mandate as, respectively, as Chairperson or Rapporteur. There is no such rule for the Vice-Chairs, and for the simple reason that the Vice-Chairs are actually Member States and may continue to be represented by whomever it is. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you for the explanation. Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Distinguished Legal Advisor, for the clarification. I've carefully read the paragraphs you've mentioned. There is nothing that says about the personal capacity. That's my first point.

Second point is that in the Decision where Ambassador Alexander Kuznetsov was appointed as a Chairperson, it is written clearly Russian Federation. As in the case of Rapporteur, which is India. Then, subsequently, Rule 15.2 says "if the Chairperson ceases to represent as State Member of the Committee". That was the reason why my Ambassador couldn't continue as a Chair, because he represented, he ceased to represent the State. But the State exists. Until now. Yeah. And is still the Member of this Committee. And if the Bureau, of the Bureau. If I follow your logic, Distinguished Legal Advisor, then the provision, he is replaced by the Vice-Chairperson should read that he's replaced by a country because Vice-Chairperson is a country. Right? And which is normal and natural because this Committee and the Bureau is an intergovernmental Committee and has intergovernmental nature in these Members States who participate in them. Then shall we read it further? "Replaced by a Vice-Chairperson in the English alphabetical order of State Members of the Bureau. States Members of the Bureau". That is a very clear provision that Members of the Bureau are the States. "Commencing with the country of the Chairperson". Even alphabetical order commenced from Russian Federation. That's why we had Saudi Arabia. Should it commence with K we maybe had a different country. So, you see? "For the remainder of the term of office". So, therefore, because we, with this paragraph, we propose just to, I mean, initially Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Oman and Qatar, and then with that, is just to have. This paragraph is in full conformity with the rules that we have. And this would allow us to move forward and to be on the same waves, you know. Because that's the reading, that's the reading of the decisions and that the reading of the rules. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. I hear you. And I want to ask the Legal Advisor for a reply. But before that, I would like to give the floor to South Africa and then we'll move from there. You have the floor.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Two questions, Madam Chair. And let me join other colleagues in congratulating you and wishing all of us a more peaceful year and a prosperous year. Two questions. Did the Committee in the past ever face a situation of this nature, and how was it handled? One.

Two, Legal Advisor. If there's ambiguity on this matter, isn't it a matter for the Committee to decide? Because we are masters, we create our own rules. If it's silent, can the Committee make a determination? I think those are two questions I wanted to pose. Thanks.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, I would like to give the floor now to the Legal Advisor to answer the concerns raised, the questions raised by the Russian Federation and South Africa. You have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. First of all, to answer the first question asked by the Distinguished Delegate from the Russian Federation. It stems very clearly and in non-ambiguous terms from Decision **44 COM 16** and Decision **16 EXT.COM 3** that the Chairperson and the special, and the Rapporteur were both elected in their personal capacity, as opposed to the Vice-Chairpersons. I would like to actually ask for the indulgence of the Distinguished Delegate of the Russian Federation or any other Delegate, which could point me to any rule in the Rules of Procedure, which explains that in the case in which the Chairperson ceases to exercise his functions and the Rule in 15.2 is to be applied, then the country of the Chairperson continues as the Vice-Chair for the, in the Bureau. This, I do not see any provision to that effect. What I see is Provision 13.1, which says that the five Chairpersons are elected and shall remain in office until the end of that session. I cannot give any other legal advice if I am not pointed to a provision that actually says that the Vice-Chairpersons are replaced, in the case of Rule 15.2.

In response to the question by the Distinguished Delegate of South Africa, I fully agree with what he stated. If there were to be any ambiguity or if there were to be any issue to be dealt with respect to the composition of the Bureau, the Committee may decide. The Committee may decide, for example, to suspend Rule 13.1 and, for example, decide that one or more of the Vice-Chairpersons would not remain in office until the end of the session, and elect other Members of the Committee as Vice-Chairpersons for the remainder of the term, and that is until the end of the 45th session. This is something that, of course, the Committee may be able to do, and it may do so including in this Decision, if it so wishes. I hope this clarifies. Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you. And there's an additional question by South Africa with regard to similar cases. Did this happen before and what was, what did the Committee decide in this matter? Thank you. Would you please provide your reply?

Legal Advisor:

Yeah, I would defer on that point to my colleagues from the Secretariat, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Mr. Lazare, you have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente. J'ai, on va dire, eu, peut-être, le privilège de présider au Secrétariat de plusieurs conventions où les mêmes situations, effectivement, se sont passées. Et il y a eu, effectivement, quand on reprend l'histoire des compositions du Bureau du Comité, il y a eu déjà plusieurs cas où le Bureau, effectivement, n'était pas tout à fait complet. Et notamment, quand on reprend l'histoire, effectivement, le Groupe 2, à plusieurs reprises, n'était pas représenté dans le Bureau, et cela depuis les premières sessions du Comité. Donc c'est pour confirmer effectivement qu'il y a eu des cas où cela s'est passé, et d'ailleurs à plusieurs, à plusieurs reprises. Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you. India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, thank you. I have three specific questions which I would like to pose to the Legal Advisor, given his vast experience in this matter.

Question number 1. In the 44COM, the Decision of the 44COM, is the Russian Federation a Member of the Bureau of the World Heritage Convention? Yes or no?

Question number 2. At this point in time, is the Russian Federation a Member of the Bureau? Yes or no?

Question number 3. The Chair or the President of the Bureau is the Distinguished Representative of Saudi Arabia in her personal capacity. Yet we find that in the mention of the Vice-Chairpersons on the World Heritage Convention site, the mention of the following Member States are mentioned: Argentina, Italy, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Thailand. So, the third question is, is the State of Saudi Arabia, as a State Party, Member of the Bureau at this point of time? Yes or no? Kindly answer these three questions. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. And clear specific three questions, with a yes or no answer. Legal Advisor, you have the floor. Thank you.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I love multiple choice questions. Madam Chair, the Russian Federation was not elected as a Member of the Bureau at the 44th session. The person who was elected, it was His Excellency, Mr. Alexander Kuznetsov of the Russian Federation, who represented that country.

In response to a question that was asked by the Distinguished Delegate of the Russian Federation, I should add that, indeed, for a person to be elected as Chairperson of this Committee, that person must represent a State Member of the Committee. For example, I could not be elected as a Chairperson of the Committee.

Second, is the Russian Federation a Member of the Bureau of the Committee at this stage? The answer is no, because the Russian Federation was not elected as a Member of the Bureau at any point in time.

Lastly, is Saudi Arabia a Member of the Bureau at this stage? The answer is yes. It is a Member of the Bureau, pursuant to the Decision that was taken by the Committee at its 44th session. I am, of course, well aware that this creates a situation that is unusual in the Committee, but that stems directly from the combined application of Rule 13.1 and Rule 15.2, and that is that at, the current stage, there is a Chairperson who is from Saudi Arabia and there is also at the same time a Vice-Chair who, that is still Saudi Arabia. Unless a different decision is made by the Committee, which, in response to what South Africa asked, is something that the Committee may be able to do, probably with a suspension of Rule 13.1. I believe this answers the question, Madam Chair, but of course I remain available for further questions.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much for this clear answer. As usual, with long paragraphs, if I see a lot of discussion, I would like to, usually, divide them into. So, if you allow me, I'm not going to divide it into two bullet points. We're going to address the approval of parts of it, and then move to other parts in order to facilitate the discussion. If this is acceptable by all. Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Sorry, Madam Chair, it is not acceptable for us. And I regret to say that I disagree strongly with the legal advice, because in any single decision, especially the one that he referred to, my Ambassador was nominated in his personal capacity. Nowhere in the text there is "personal capacity". Then I said that 15.2, Rule 15.2, says that Member States are Members of the Bureau. There are no persons who are Members of the Bureau. Only States are Members of the Bureau. But the Chairperson is designated a physical person, you know. It's the same reason that we have this paragraph to mention Her Royal Highness here, because just to know that this is her. But she is representing Saudi Arabia. She is not in her personal capacity. She is representing Saudi Arabia and she is a Permanent Delegate of Saudi Arabia. Then if I follow your logic, then we have to admit, I'm sorry to say this, that Her Royal Highness cannot be in this Chair, because it should be a State, Saudi Arabia. You see? Because it says that if a Chairperson ceases to represent a State Member, he's replaced by the Vice-Chairperson. And you said that the Vice-Chairperson is a State. You see? But the provision that we have is very clear because it says "in English alphabetical order of States Members of the Bureau, commencing with the country of the Chairperson". So, when you say that Russian Federation was not elected as a Member of the Bureau, it is not factual, because Ambassador Kuznetsov, in his capacity as Representative of Russian Federation, and Russia being a Host Country in the last year for the World Heritage Committee, in that capacity, all of it constituted the Bureau. When you cite, sorry to say, Rule 13.1, you say is that only five Vice-Chairpersons shall remain in office. But it doesn't say so. It says Chairperson. "Five Chairpersons and the Rapporteur shall remain in office until the end of that session". So, the whole composition of the Bureau remains in office until the end of that session. And Russian Federation was chairing the Committee until its Ambassador ceased to be Ambassador of that country. And that's why he left, and we acted in accordance with Paragraph 15.2.

And there was a good question by South Africa about precedent. A precedent. I believe there was a precedent. Can we be enlightened? Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I think your intervention is twofold, but I would like to hear before from the Director of World Heritage about specific precedents. And what did the Committee decide on? Or maybe you would like to take some time to check your records? You have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente. Je pense que j'ai répondu à la question du Distingué Délégué d'Afrique du Sud pour dire qu'il y a eu par le passé, à plusieurs reprises, des moments où le Bureau n'était pas complet. Et dans les recherches que nous avons effectuées, nous les avons eus à plusieurs reprises et je peux regarder un peu les années en commençant, quand nous avons fait les recherches, depuis 1977. Depuis 1977, il y a eu à plusieurs reprises, et si mon compte est bon, quasiment 19 fois où le Bureau n'était pas complet. Et je crois que c'est important pour le Comité de le savoir. Merci beaucoup.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Mister Legal Advisor, you have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I maintain my legal opinion and advice according to which the Chairperson exercises his or her functions in his or her personal capacity. This stems directly from the decisions that are taken by the Committee every time that it elects the Members of the Bureau. It is very clearly stated that it is an individual who is elected in that position, as opposed to the positions of Vice-Chairs.

The second reason for that. I should point out, however, that not any individual may be appointed as Chairperson of this Committee, only those individuals who represent Members of the Committee, and that's a condition that indeed exists. Not any individual may do so. The practice of the Committee is also very clear that you, Madam Chair, when you exercise your duties as Chairperson, you exercise them in your personal capacity and not as a Representative of your country. Indeed, in this very session, Madam Chair, when the opinion of your country, the country that you represent, was requested by Members of the Committee, you did not provide an answer yourself, but you gave the floor to a Representative of Saudi Arabia. And that is the reason. The reason for that is that when you are at the podium, Madam Chair, you are exercising your powers in a personal capacity.

This, by the way, is not unique to the World Heritage Committee. It is also the case for many other organs at UNESCO, including and not limited to the General Conference and the Executive Board. And in order to be able to state that, in furtherance of the application of Rule 15.2, the Russian Federation was, became, and was appointed as a Vice-Chair of the Committee and a Member of the Bureau, I would need to be directed by the Distinguished Delegates to any provision or decision, provision of the Rules of Procedure, or Decision by the Committee, which indicates that the Russian Federation has been appointed as a Chair, Vice-Chair of the Bureau. If that is shown to me, of course, I will, indeed, change my legal advice. Otherwise, I would remain, my advice remains the same. And it is, of course, without prejudice of the possibility for the Committee to make a decision changing the composition of its Bureau, if it so wishes. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you for the explanation. I'll give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of South Africa, to be followed by Zambia.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Yes. No, thanks.

I think. I sympathize the future, but I also appreciate the patience we are giving in dealing with this matter, because it has gone beyond just a paragraph. It has got major implications now and in the future, because all of us might probably find ourselves in the same situation again. And that's why it's important that we should perhaps not talk about a country, we should talk about a principle.

And secondly, when we interpret these rules, I think we must understand, we must also be clear as to where the legal interpretation ends and where our own personal interpretation kicks in. Because if we mix the two, there's a danger that the Secretariat in particular might get into the arena. And we have been quite listening quietly, most of us, because we want to move forward. So, I'm going to restate my question directly again to the Secretariat.

And the question is to the Director. Was there a period where a Chairperson had to resign off the World Heritage Committee? Let me put it that way. Be specific. Was there an instance where the Chairperson of the Committee had to resign, of the World Heritage Committee? And how was that situation handled? And I think, think carefully when you respond, because this is a meeting of record. We want to be given questions, full, clear, truthful questions. This is a meeting of record. If you don't know, if you are not aware, please say so. And probably in this hall or somewhere, someone would remember such an incident. Because we want to take informed decision. The reason we are asking this question, we want to take informed decisions. Because Russia has a legitimate question: are we a Member or are we not a Member? And if we are not a Member, on which basis are we not a Member? Because if I were to find myself, if South Africa was to find itself in that situation, South Africa would ask the same question. And I think this is the question.

This is important because, when we come to the paragraph... I was going, I'll come back to that proposal, Chairperson. If we were to leave the name of the Royal Highness and say "assisted by Vice-Chairpersons", would we be still having this question? I'm not putting that question as yet. I just want us to deal with this question, because loaded in this paragraph is this question. Russia is asking a direct question and it's a legitimate question. And maybe President can assist us and Director answer us. That's the question I wanted to ask.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. I would like to give the floor now to the Distinguished Representative of Zambia. But before giving the floor, we have 10 minutes until lunchtime, so I would like to give you the floor to pose questions, maybe get answers, hopefully try to reach somewhere before the 10 minutes elapse. But I'll give you the floor, Your Excellency, Representative of Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Madam Chair, for your flexibility in allowing the discussion to really veer off from the paragraph in question. But discussing very, very important principles, and being new, I've been trying to follow the discussions and I'm getting more confused now. We have six Electoral Groups in UNESCO, and apart from the Chair, we have five Vice-presidents. And in my thinking, I thought, we don't have a Vice-President from the area where the Chairperson is coming from, because it's implied that the Chair will represent that Group. Now, going by the submission of the Legal Counsel, what then happens to Group II if Russia is not represented in the Bureau? Should we be talking about amendments of the Rules of Procedure, so that apart from the Chairperson who is elected in their personal capacity, we have Vice-Presidents from all regions? Because it will be very unfair for any Group to be de-franchised and not represented in the Bureau. I submit.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. And I think that there are two questions that are raised here. I have a question to Mr. Lazare to answer. Specifically, did it happen before, and what did we do?

And then there is the question raised by Her Excellency, Representative of Zambia with regard to the representation of different regional groups. And then maybe we can go forward with that. So, please answer the two parts and any other concerns you have heard to you have heard today. You have the floor, Mr. Lazare.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente. Alors, en même temps, le rôle du Secrétariat, effectivement, c'est, bien sûr, de rappeler très bien les règles de travail pour le Comité et pour ses propres procédures et l'efficacité de son travail. En même temps, nous avons fait des recherches plus ou moins poussées, mais peut-être pas précises, vu le temps qui nous a été donné. Le seul, et pour répondre très précisément à la question du Distingué Délégué d'Afrique du Sud, que je remercie pour la question très précise, le seul précédent connu aujourd'hui d'application de l'Article 15.2 du Règlement intérieur remonte à une époque où moi, je n'étais pas encore à l'UNESCO. Et donc vous m'excuserez pour cela. En 2001, suite à l'époque à la démission du Président à ce moment-là, qui était

l'Australie, et qui a été remplacé, qui a été remplacé, non, un Vice-Président qui a été remplacé, et, oui c'est ça, où le Président était, et le Vice-Président, était le Canada. En revanche, nous ne connaissons pas le contexte dans lequel des modifications du Bureau auraient pu avoir lieu à cette occasion, n'ayant pas de trace de décision spécifique du Comité à ce sujet. Donc c'est l'information que je peux apporter à ce stade-ci. Merci beaucoup.

En outre, alors si je peux profiter, Madame la Présidente, il y a eu un autre cas différent. C'est-à-dire qui s'est passé, effectivement, en décembre 2015. Et, là, le Comité a été consulté quant à la proposition de la Turquie, de remplacer le Président de la 40^e session à Istanbul en raison de la non-possibilité pour le Président turc qui avait été élu à la 39^e session du Comité à Bonn, qu'il puisse terminer son mandat. Et le Comité a approuvé, à la suite d'une consultation écrite, cette proposition à une majorité des deux tiers de ses membres. Et ensuite, les États parties de la Convention ont été informés de cette Décision par lettre circulaire du Secrétariat de la Convention en janvier 2016. Voilà quelques informations, peut-être pour répondre à la question du Distingué Délégué de l'Afrique du Sud. Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you. South Africa, does this answer your question? And I will give the floor to Russia after that. You have the floor, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Well, Madam, information is, it's scattered. I think we appreciate the response, but we don't know what happened to, I think the Secretariat doesn't have information, whether when the other one left, did they, did they remain in the Bureau? I think that's a question we want to establish. Or what happened? And if it's not known, we appreciate to say we don't know, so that we know where we can, which decision as a Committee to take, because we need to take this decision so that they are properly, if we want to create precedent, we can create it. Thanks.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I would like to give the floor to Russia. You have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, madam.

Thank you, Madam Chair. In my open dialogue with the Distinguished Legal Advisor, I would like to once again mention that the provision of Rule 15.2 clearly says that Members of the Bureau are States. A Chairperson with a name is established with the country also chairing the Committee. And then if we follow the logic of the Distinguished Legal Advisor, then a country should replace a person. But in no way, in not a single provision of these Rules of Procedure, nor in any decision of the Committee, the word "personal capacity" is mentioned. So, the Bureau is not composed of a person and five or six, or two persons and five countries. The Bureau is composed of seven countries, and functions of the Chair, function of a Chairperson and function of a Rapporteur are performed by physical persons. That's true, but the Bureau is composed of seven countries and that is what is written in Rule 15.2.

Now, I would like to thank wholeheartedly the Director of the World Heritage Centre for mentioning indeed this precedent when an Australian Chairperson of the Committee ceased to represent his country and the Delegate from Canada replaced him. We didn't find any decision of the Committee either, because there was no need to take a decision because in the report of the session chaired by this Canadian Chair, it is written and I quote: "Mr. Francesco Bandarin, the Director of the World Heritage Centre, thanked the outgoing Members of the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee". In brackets. "Australia, Canada, Ecuador, Morocco, Zimbabwe, for their valuable work over the last year". What I have just quoted means, and is an explicit evidence of, that Australia remained a Member of the Bureau until the end of the session. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russian Federation. I would like to give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of South Africa, to be followed by India. You have the floor. I think. Just before you start, Your Excellency, we are now at 1:00. I would just, with your indulgence, I would like to hear two questions. And then maybe if you, if we can answer them briefly, and then go to lunch. I will try. Please try to be very brief, everyone. South Africa, you have the floor.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Yes. The last comments by the Distinguished Representative of Russia, the response to it will be very interesting. One, to hear whether the Secretariat is aware of the document that the Russian Federation is reading from. But secondly, on the website of the World Heritage Centre, under the heading Bureau of the World Heritage Committee, it is stated: "The Bureau consists of seven States Parties elected annually by the Committee". Is it an error?

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you, Your Excellency. Your Excellency, you have the floor. Please.

Please can we have attention in the room? Can we have attention in the room, please? Your Excellency, Distinguished Ambassador of India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, you know I have been, I'll keep it quick, but I have been receiving a lot of requests and messages from various Ambassadors, after the last question, and on listening to the Legal Advisor's response. I have been asked to read out the Rules of Procedure already known to you, but I'll do it very quickly. 13.3 states: "In electing the Bureau, due regard shall be given to the need to ensure an equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the world, and a proper balance between the cultural and natural heritage as provided in the Convention". A Distinguished Ambassador has made a personal request that I read this out, which I have done. And with that, Excellency, the response given by the Legal Advisor that as of this point in time Group II is not represented on the Bureau. This is what the Legal Advisor said. And we would like to seek more clarity on that. It can be done after lunch also, Excellency. But we are in your hands. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. We have received. Like, we can go for, until 1:10, if this is acceptable. Hopefully we'll finish this. But I will turn to the Secretariat to reply to South Africa. They had clear two sets of questions. And then also, with regard to India, with regard to the Group II, are they represented, yes or no? So, that we can move forward. And maybe I have also myself a question to the Legal Advisor. So, we can maybe sum this up. You have the floor, Director of World Heritage.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Très rapidement. Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente. Pour, encore une fois, effectivement, pour répondre au Distingué Délégué d'Afrique du Sud. Comme je l'ai dit, il y a un résumé des interventions, mais je n'ai pas trouvé de trace de décision spécifique du Comité. Donc, c'est bien ce que ce que j'ai dit. Et donc, bien sûr, la Représentante de la Délégation de Russie a lu le résumé des débats, mais moi je n'ai pas retrouvé de décision du Comité. C'est bien ce que j'ai dit. Je pense que ce qui est important, c'est que vous ayez plus de clarté sur la décision, s'il y a eu des décisions du Bureau dans ce sens-là, pour alimenter un peu plus vos discussions. Et donc, je n'ai pas eu de, je n'ai pas retrouvé de décision du Bureau pour ce cas. Et nous sommes en train de vérifier aussi, effectivement, pour la deuxième question sur le site web, et je pourrais revenir là-dessus, bien sûr. Merci beaucoup.

Chairperson:

Thank you. There's another question about the seven Members of the Bureau, and there's another question by India with regard to the representation of Group II. If you can answer them, then please. Legal Advisor, would you answer these questions?

Two of them. One question was: is it, in the website, it says the Bureau is being represented by seven Members, seven States Parties. Is that, I mean, there's a correction needed to be made? Or this information is correct? And the other question by India. So, right now, is there an equitable representation for Group II in the Bureau? These two answers, as per the explanation that we have heard from you, you have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I cannot be held responsible for what is written in the website of the World Heritage Centre. I'm sorry about that. I can tell you that if there is a place in which it is stated that the Bureau is composed of seven Member States or States Parties, it is not reflecting what is, what stems from the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, nor its established practice in that regard, nor, I should say, the established practice of several organs within UNESCO.

As regard the question from India, the answer is that, indeed, as of today there is no representation from Group II. Quite simply, well, I'll get back to that. But there is no representation of Group II.

Now, in response to a question asked by Zambia, whether this can be arranged and whether that requires an amendment to the rules, the answer is yes. It can be arranged by the Committee through a decision, but it does not require an amendment to the rules. You just need to suspend Rule 13.1, change your decision that was made at the 44th session and at the 16th extraordinary session, and elect a new Vice-Chair.

But, Madam Chair, I am, as a Legal Advisor in my good conscience, I cannot, I cannot make the statement that the Russian Federation is a Vice-Chairperson of this Committee. If I'm not shown a rule that states that the Russian, that when the Chairperson is replaced by one of the Vice-Chairpersons, then the country, the Member of that Chairperson becomes a Vice-Chair, or if I'm not shown a decision by the Committee that the Russian, that the Russian Federation, has been elected as a Vice-Chair of this Committee. It's quite simply impossible for me to do so.

Now, if the Committee were to interpret the rules in that way and decide to interpret the rules in the sense that this is, that there is a replacement, it is the Committee. The Committee is master of its own procedure, and may authoritatively interpret its own rules in that sense. If it wishes to make a new election for the Vice-Chairpersons in order to rectify the equitable representation problem that it faces right now, it is also able to do so. I hope that this clarifies. And I remain, I remind that my role here is as a Legal Advisor and not to make decisions in lieu of the Committee. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you for this. And I see, I see Russia and Zambia. But going back to the history and the reflection, what happened before, I would like to maybe provide even some reflection. Would you like to take the floor, Mister ADG to explain on the previous case that took place? And with regard to also, maybe, some reflection on the questions.

Assistant Director General for Culture:

Yes, very short. Thank you.

Madam Chairperson, si vous me permettez, je vais le dire en Français. À moins que l'histoire ait changé depuis que je suis arrivé il y a cinq ans, dans tous les comités, on suit les précédents, donc l'histoire. Ce qui a été donné comme information par le Secrétariat depuis que je suis arrivé et par tous les États membres, et je dis tous les États membres, a toujours été la compréhension qui aujourd'hui est mise en doute. Que le Président et le Rapporteur des conventions représentaient des États, jusqu'ici, jamais je n'avais entendu cela. Tous les États membres, tous, lors des décisions pour aller, ont soutenu qu'effectivement ces deux personnes étaient représentants en nature, en personne. Mais bon, peut-être ça a changé et j'ai mal compris ces cinq dernières années. Parce que quand nous cherchions dans la dernière réunion, le Rapporteur, je me rappelle qu'on a approché l'Inde et on lui a dit très clairement qu'elle était en tant que personne naturelle. Et l'Inde a dû faire des consultations pour savoir qui allait être cette personne.

Dans la logique de ce que vous avez lu, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, la représentation géographique en ce moment ne serait même pas, selon ce que vous avez dit, avec ou pas d'erreur sur la page web, ça on le discutera après, à l'interne, il y aurait sept représentants. Donc il y a une région qui serait sur-représentée, qui serait l'Asie, le Groupe IV, puisqu'il y a l'Inde et la Thaïlande. Donc je vois qu'il y a une contradiction dans les textes même, mais cela est un autre problème.

Aujourd'hui, on est confronté à une situation où effectivement, et le Legal Advisor a été très clair, il ne pourrait affirmer qu'aujourd'hui, si j'ai bien compris, et tu me corriges Santiago, que la Fédération de Russie ait été élue comme pays pour être, faire partie de Vice-Chair. C'est ce que j'ai compris, contrairement à la présidence, où Monsieur. C'est ce qu'il a dit, je dis ce qu'il a dit. Mais c'est le Legal Advisor, moi je ne suis pas Legal Advisor, je suis ADG seulement. Je n'ai pas ce pouvoir. Donc la seule chose que je veux maintenir, c'est qu'on est face à une situation. La Zambie, la chère Déléguée de la Zambie, a été très claire. Bon, s'il y a un vide et on ne sait pas trouver une solution plus que regarder sur le passé, malheureusement, le passé qu'on a retrouvé, ce sont ces deux cas. Et on pourrait discuter si ces deux cas étaient en règle ou non. Si vous voulez, on peut rentrer dans l'histoire, Mais on ne va pas rentrer là. Aujourd'hui, on essaie, que je sache, depuis qu'on est arrivé, et vous nous avez demandé en tant qu'États membres, qu'on soit stricts sur les procédures. Le Legal Advisor a donné son avis. Maintenant, vous pouvez prendre la décision. Vous êtes dans un Comité. Vous êtes le Comité et vous pouvez prendre votre décision.

Chairperson:

Thank you, thank you for reminding the Committee of the decisions that they can take and reflecting on the, on what has been as a precedent in the previous years. Now, I know that we are out of time. I know that Russia wants to speak, Zambia wants to speak, and there is maybe a question that we want to reflect on, and I would like you to reflect on. The amendment as presented by Russia. Does it require changing? If we accept it, does it require changing any, or suspending, any rule? And maybe, if it doesn't, why don't we adopt it and move forward? So, I leave you with that thought, to think of and reflect on, and come back with a clear. You know, because we can contemplate all day long. And it's a very large room for interpretation. So, please come back at 3:00 o'clock with a clear mind, clear understanding, clear direction, so that we can move forward with the adoption of the other items that we have. Thank you very much.

The meeting rose at 1.12 pm.

FIRST DAY**Tuesday, 24 January 2023****SECOND MEETING****3 pm – 5:55 pm****Chairperson:****H.H. Princess Haifa Al Mogrin****PREMIER JOUR****Mardi 24 janvier 2023****DEUXIÈME RÉUNION****15h00 – 17h55****Présidente :****S.A. Princesse Haifa Al Mogrin****3. ORGANIZATION OF THE 45TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE (DATES, VENUE, PROVISIONAL AGENDA) (Ct'd) // ORGANISATION DE LA 45E SESSION DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (DATES, LIEU, ORDRE DU JOUR PROVISOIRE) (suite)****Chairperson:**

[inaudible] ... and Qatar. And then we had additional amendments proposed by Russia and some other, also, objections to this addition by certain Member States that we will show on the screen right now. There was a request for the floor by the Russian Federation and Zambia before lunch, and I promised them to get back to them. And there was a question that was raised to the Legal Advisor with regard to the text proposed by Russia. Is it against, does it violate or does it require to relax any rule or can it be adopted without relaxing them?

But before I resume the discussion with you, I would like to reflect on some of what has been raised and the way we have been conducting the discussion here today. Since, given the extraordinary nature of the discussion, and this is a global situation that is happening now, and then the, and that for three years, the World Heritage did not meet in person, I think there was a kind of, if I can say, in a positive way, passion in the discussion, where Members felt that they would like to speak and interact and deliberate, and, which is a great, great venue for that. But also, given the extraordinary nature of this meeting, I would like to urge and ask all of you to focus our discussion into reaching decisions. It is not useful to the time management of this meeting, where we want to conduct this meeting for certain purposes, that we did not really achieve any of them until now. So, with this afternoon session, I hope you all had a good lunch, and had some discussions, and had some reflections. I want you to come with a mentality to reach decisions and to achieve, to reach solutions and achieve decisions, and where we can all move forward. I count on all of your support and help in this. And with that, I would like to resume our discussion, starting with the Russian Federation and then Zambia. Russian Federation, as promised before lunch, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. It's just to reiterate that States Members of UNESCO, States Members of the Committee, are Members of the Bureau. And that's why the information posted on the World Heritage website that the Bureau consists of seven Member States is correct.

Also, I would like to say that at the previous Committee session, the Legal Advisor, I mean the Representative of the Office of the Legal Advisor, said that it was not necessary to put the name of the President in the Decision because of the Rule 15.2 was enough. So, this opinion of the Legal Office of UNESCO, in our view, contradicts completely the interpretation of the Legal Advisor that we hear today. But this legal opinion actually confirms that the rules apply *per se*, let's say automatically, because of the intergovernmental nature of the Bureau. I would like to say that the Rapporteur and Chair, they have to them certain functions are assigned, and for certain functions to be performed, the name of the person is put into the Decision so as to understand who exactly would perform this function on behalf of the given State. And therefore, I think that what I actually mentioned before, the report back from 2001, where Australia maintained rightfully its membership in the Bureau, was correct and no special decision was needed because the rules were applied this way. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Russia, for this clarification. I don't see Zambia back. With that, I would like also to see if there is any reflection from any other Members or requests to move for a decision. I'm in your hands. And I would like to come back to the Legal Advisor with a question I have raised before the break. The question here, we were talking about Rule 13.1, 15.2, 12.1, Decision 44COM. Really, I mean, too many decisions that came through. Is the text proposed by the Russian Federation in violation of any of these decisions? Or does it contradict with them? Or do we need to lift any decision or suspend any decision in order to adopt them? Or if we adopt them, there is no, nothing that needs to be suspended? I would like to hear your answer and then I will give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Oman. Legal Advisor, you have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, since I, the statement that has just been made argues that there has been a contradiction in the advice provided by my Office, particularly before and today, I have to, with your permission, I would like to state that there is no contradiction whatsoever. That the position of my Office is, and remains, and has always been, that the Chair and the Special Rapporteur, and the Rapporteur, sorry, are elected in their personal capacity.

During the lunch break I was able to, thanks to the colleagues from the World Heritage Centre, to find the letter by which His Excellency Ambassador Alexander Kuznetsov proposed his candidature or mentioned his candidature for the position of Chairperson. And that letter says, and I'm quoting, "Dear Mr. Director, I am honored to inform you that the Russian Federation would like to present my candidature for the chairmanship of the World Heritage Committee." End of quote. That letter was accompanied by the curriculum vitae of His Excellency, Mr. Alexander Kuznetsov. In addition, when Mr. Kuznetsov informed the Director General that he would, was not in a position to continue his mandate, he is the one who requested the Secretariat to take the measures that were necessary under Article 15, Rule 15.2, of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee for his replacement. Having said that, Madam Chair, this is a discussion that is, as you rightly pointed out, not central to what the Committee is discussing right now. The Committee needs to make a decision in that regard.

In response to your question, Madam Chair, the way I read the amendment, the amendment basically includes a reference as Vice-Chairpersons of Argentina, Italy, the Russian Federation, South Africa and Thailand. Insofar as this list does not include Saudi Arabia as a Vice-Chair, it is actually modifying Decision **44 COM 16** by which Saudi Arabia was elected as Vice-Chairman, -Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee, until the end of the 45th session of the Committee. In including the Russian Federation as a Vice-Chairperson, as I mentioned before, I do not have any element to base upon the argument that the Russian Federation has been elected as a Vice-Chair of the Committee. So, on that basis, I cannot say that there, on my side, that there is, that there is either a rule or a decision or Committee that has made, that allows this to be said. Having said that, the Committee, of course, is able to decide.

Last but not least, if, as to the question of whether this would require what I would call a suspension of the rule. The only rule I can point to is a Rule 13.1, which states that the Committee elects amongst its Members, the Chairperson, the five Vice-Chairpersons, and the Rapporteur who, I'm quoting, "shall remain in office until the end of that session". So, if this were to be adopted, it would be upon a suspension of Rule 13.1. Of course, once again, the Committee is able to do so. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you for this clarification.

I would like to give the floor to the Distinguished Ambassador of Oman. You have the floor, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And thanks to all the colleagues I have been listening from the morning for all this discussion, especially this discussion now for the amendment raised by Russia. Unfortunately, I think we'll be staying long in this discussion unless we take a decision, or to move, or move to take a decision. I'll go back to your question that you just asked the Legal Advisor. Whether is this violating any rules? If it is not, and we are looking back to what has happened for Australia and Canada last time, I think it's very important that take a decision and to adopt this Article as it is now. I am proposing this because we need to move instead of staying the whole day, and tomorrow. If we stay like this, even tomorrow, we are not going to finish. And therefore, if we are not violating any rules or regulation, I don't see any problem for adopting this Article as it is. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you, Your Excellency. Maybe if you want more clarification from the Legal Advisor, I think he pointed an issue about one country that was elected and another country that was not elected, as per his understanding and as per what I understood from him. But I will refer back to the Legal Advisor to answer your question again. I will give the floor to Bulgaria.

La Délégation de Bulgarie:

Merci. Bon, on voudrait vraiment soutenir ce que le Conseiller juridique vient d'expliquer. On a eu des discussions avec lui. Nous connaissons tous la situation telle quelle. Et vraiment, parce qu'on a besoin d'aller en avant, on voudrait vraiment proposer comment, dans l'esprit du consensus, on obtient un amendement pour dire que vraiment, avec l'aide des Vice-présidents et du Rapporteur pour s'acquitter de ses fonctions, mais sans mentionner les noms des pays.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I would like to give the floor to the Russian Federation and then to come back to the Legal Advisor to answer the question of the Distinguished Representative of Oman. Russian Federation.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I listened carefully to everybody, and I think the Bureau has seven Members. These Members are Member States. But then in the Bureau there are functions, function of a Chairperson, function of Vice-Chairpersons, and function of Rapporteur. If I continue the logic of the Distinguished Legal Advisor, because of the past, he is insisting on the personal capacity of the Chairperson. That means that the Vice-Chairperson, namely Saudi Arabia, could not become President. But which is not true because the Rule 15.2 says explicitly "by a Vice-Chairperson", meaning a country, right? So. And the representative of your Office in the previous extraordinary session said that there was no need to mention the name of Her Royal Highness because of that, because the Rule 15.2 applies strictly. Now, maybe there is a problem in formulation, because I haven't heard that anybody denies the membership in the Bureau, right? We are now discussing the functions. So, maybe we can provide a small, small amendment to our amendment, by "assisted by other Members of the Bureau". And since Members of the Bureau are countries, we enumerate them because we know who they are, and "including the Rapporteur, India, in carrying out her duties." Then we don't have a name, Vice-Chairperson that you were. I understood and comfortable about Vice-Chairperson. But we have Members of the Bureau and I think nobody disputes that, that countries are Members of the Bureau. And indeed it was the Government of Russian Federation who proposed the candidacy of my former Ambassador to perform the function. And he was performing the function of a Bureau Member, Russian Federation, in the Committee. I think I was clear. I think also that the proposal I am now announcing would be in full conformity with the text I've read before, about Australia and Canada, because it also said "Members of the Bureau" and then in brackets the countries were. And I think I'm, I think that everybody would agree the way we treat, treated before, Australia, we can treat any other Members.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you. Legal Advisor, please, the Distinguished Representative from Oman asked a question. And maybe we can answer it in light of the recent change by the Russian Federation. And I would like also to point out that Bulgaria also proposed deletion of certain names, but I would like to give the floor to the Legal Advisor to provide his feedback on this amendment as it now presents here in the screen. Thank you.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I cannot go on record accepting the position that the Chairperson and the Rapporteur are not elected in their personal capacity. This is my conviction, personally, but it is also the line of reasoning that my Office has taken consistently with respect to this Committee and other organs of UNESCO, including the General Conference, the Executive Board, and many other organs. So, on that basis, I cannot, in my in my capacity as Legal Advisor, accept that or go on record as agreeing to that point, because I see a number of legal issues that come with it. For example, if it is the country that is elected as Chairperson, why is it that the country cannot be, the Chairperson cannot be replaced by another person from that same country? And there is a Rule 15.2.

Having said that, Madam Chair, that is not the point that is being discussed here. It is not about my personal position, nor that of the Distinguished Delegate of the Russian Federation. It is that of, the decision of the Committee, what the Committee wishes to do. My position is that the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur are the ones that compose the Bureau, and that the Chairperson and the Rapporteur are elected in their personal capacity, which is the very reason why there are rules that provide for their replacement, Rule 15 and Rule 16 respectively. And there are no rules for the replacement of a Vice-Chair for the very simple reason that when the Ambassador of the Vice-Chair changes, the following Ambassador takes that position.

But once again, that's not the point. The point is the decision by the Committee. In reply to the question by the Distinguished Delegate of Oman, it is not so much about whether a rule is violated. It is rather whether the Committee wishes to apply the rule or not. In the sense that, as I said, I have said several times, the Committee is master of its own procedure and may decide to suspend the application of a rule if it wishes. So, there is a rule in the Rules of Procedure, 13.1, which says that the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur remain in office until the end of that session. The text that is on the screen, even with the proposed change, constitutes a deviation from Rule 13.1. It would therefore imply a suspension of Rule 13.1 by the Committee, and, which is something that the Committee may decide to do, the applicable rule being Rule 52, which is, which allows for suspension by decision taken in plenary by a two thirds majority if needed. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you. Now, with that, I think we have exhausted all the discussions and all the questions. And now it's time for you, the Committee, to decide. There is an amendment proposed by Saint Vincent and Grenadines, co-authored by Oman and Qatar, and there is an additional amendment by the Russian Federation, which has been objected on by Belgium, Greece, Japan, Italy and Bulgaria. I still want to hear from all of you. I think there were a lot of questions raised, a lot of questions answered, and a lot of, if I can say, interpretation of the Rules of Procedure that that were raised here. And now it's time for you to decide. And I would like to hear from you. We need to decide on this paragraph and move forward with our Agenda item. Russia, you requested the floor. You have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I would have a question to the Director of World Heritage then, and the Secretariat. Way back in 2001, they thought that there is no need for any special decision, any special suspension whatsoever, and they just strictly apply the rules as they are now, the Rules of Procedure of the Committee. And therefore Australia remained the Chair. And now, they think otherwise. Why at that time it was, let's say, favorable for Australia, and now this time it's not favorable for Russia? What is the difference then? As for the personal and non-personal capacity, I would like to ask a colleague of mine who is also a lawyer to have a dialogue with Legal Advisor. Thank you.

Chairperson:

I'm sorry. I don't understand. So, the dialogue. You mean you would like to give her the floor to ask questions? So, you already ask a question to the, here, to the The Director of the World Heritage Centre. And then you want also the Legal Advisor to ask a question. Please go ahead, Legal Advisor of Russia.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. And since it was my first time to take floor, I would like to congratulate you with your posting and wish you luck, cool blood and wisdom while conducting this very tricky session. So, luckily we have even two lawyers in our Delegation, so we would like to present a brief legal opinion from our side. As we were in the process of discussing the nature of the Bureau and its Members, we think that this issue is very serious and important, and it is certainly to take effect for the future. So, we need some more examination in depth about this very issue. And having said that, it seems to us that there is an opinion here that we should perceive some Members of Bureau, namely the Chairperson and the Rapporteur, as individuals functioning in their personal capacity, being not representatives of their countries. And we should, as lawyers, we should first rely on the normative texts of, regarding the issue. And one of these normative texts is the Rules of Procedure. So, we couldn't argue that the Bureau is a body which acts in the framework of the Committee. So, if we look at Rule 5.2, we could read clearly that States Members of the Committee shall choose as their representatives persons qualified in the field of cultural or natural heritage. So, it means that all Member States in the Committee are represented by somebody, by individuals. But they are not just individuals. They are Representatives. And we could find out a lot of texts...

Chairperson:

I'm sorry. I'm sorry I didn't pay attention to the time. I am sorry. You took more than the time allocated. I would love to give you more than two minutes. Maybe, with what has been heard so far, I would like to get the reply of the Legal Advisor and come back to you.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Okay.

Chairperson:

Thank you. With that, I would like to give the floor first to you, The Director of the World Heritage Centre, to answer the question that was posed by Russia. Why one country and not the other? And then maybe the reply of the Legal Advisor to the Representative of Russia as well. And then I want to go back to the room for us to take a decision. Thank you.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup. Madame la Présidente, j'aurais bien voulu répondre de manière précise à la Distinguée Déléguée de Russie. Comme je l'ai dit, à cette époque-là, je n'étais pas encore à l'UNESCO. Je travaillais sur plusieurs projets, dont ceux avec le Président Mandela à l'époque. Et donc j'ai fait, on a fait des recherches, et donc je vous ai déjà donné une réponse là-dessus. Je n'ai pas trouvé de trace de décision spécifique du Comité, donc qu'il m'est difficile de faire des suppositions sur pourquoi cela s'est passé comme ça. Je vous ai fait état de ce précédent et il m'est difficile d'en dire un peu plus, parce que je n'ai pas trouvé de décision. Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you. Legal Advisor, please.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, this is a, the question that was asked to me by the Russian Federation is an interesting question from a theoretical point of view. I understand that it may require further examination by the lawyers from the Russian Federation. I can assure you, Madam Chair, that it has already been the subject matter of lengthy examination by my Office on several occasions concerning the World Heritage Committee, but also other organs at UNESCO. My position is, and I would like to state it, I don't think there's a necessity for me to elaborate further, since I have already done so, and this is not the forum to do so insofar as what you are doing here is making decisions for the future of the Committee, and not writing PhD dissertations about intergovernmental bodies. My

position, Madam Chair, and it shall remain this one, is that the Bureau of the Committee consists of a Chairperson, five Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur. The Chairperson and the Rapporteur are elected in their personal capacity, which is the reason why if they are unable to continue their duties, they are to be replaced according to the mechanisms provided for in rules 15 and 16, and the Vice-Chairpersons are elected, it's the States, the State Members of the Committee that are elected. In that case, by the way, there is no need for a mechanism of replacement. And you do not need to take my word for it. You just need to read your own decisions. In particular, Decision **44 COM 16**, which very clearly and without any doubt it decides to elect His Excellency, Mr. Alexander Kuznetsov from the Russian Federation as Chairperson, and then, at the time, Spain, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Thailand, South Africa and Saudi Arabia as Vice-Chairpersons, not individuals, but the States. I don't think that that is, however, relevant for the decision you need to take today. I am more than willing and happy to have a discussion outside of the room with the Russian Federation if they so wish, in order to discuss the matter and maybe engage an examination or help them in engaging in an examination of the matter further, for future reference, thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you for this explanation. Now I see the Russian Federation requesting the floor. But if you can kindly listen to what I'm going to say. I think we have, I gave the floor to a number of countries more than enough times to ask all the questions that were there, to ask all the legal questions and all the procedural questions for all Members. And some Members took the floor different times and replied, and asked, and had the reply, and then asked again, and we got another reply, another reflection, different answers. And it seems to me that still it is a matter of interpretation of the Rules of Procedure that we have at hand, or the procedures in general that we are looking at, or even if it was the norm or the practice or the. We will never end this debate if we go on like this. Now, it seems to me that we exhausted this discussion, and now I would like us to look at the amendment.

First of all, I want us to look at the amendment as lastly amended by Russia. Instead of "Vice-Chairpersons", "by other Members of the Bureau". And I want you to look at it as it is and tell me if it can be adopted, or not. I'll give you the time to read it. If you are objecting to it, please. You have the floor to speak. You have the floor to. But please, please refrain from. Because I will not really see everyone. So, if you want to say something, please raise your flag so I can give you the floor.

The last amendment by Russia includes the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Oman, and Qatar amendment, amendment, and in addition to the amendment by Russia, but changing "Vice-persons" into "other Members of the Bureau". Can we adopt this one or are you objecting to it? Can we adopt the Decision as lastly amended by Russia? As you read it now in blue, can we adopt it? I see Belgium. Okay Belgium and Japan. I can see them both. Belgium, you have the floor.

La Délégation de Belgique:

Oui, merci Madame la Présidente. Concernant ce dernier amendement, nous ne pouvons pas l'accepter. Je me réfère à l'Article 12.1, qui mentionne bien le Bureau constitué des Vice-présidents et du Rapporteur. Nous sommes très attachés aux règles, et ceci figure dans les règles, comme le Conseiller juridique l'a amplement expliqué. Merci.

Chairperson:

Thank you Belgium. Japan, then Italy. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Madam Chair. It is obvious that some of the countries have been disputed. The names of some of the countries have been disputed by the Secretariat. Now, I would like to go along with the proposal made by Bulgaria. All we can say, what we should say is "assisted by other Members of the Bureau, including the Rapporteur". That's all. You don't have to specify the country names where we have some doubts about individual names. So, let's settle this without the country names and go to the next issue. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Italy, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Answering to your question, I am in the same position as *[inaudible]*. Sorry. Thank you so much. We are not connected. We cannot accept the Russian proposal. As Belgium already said. Thank you. For the same reason.

Chairperson:

When you said *[inaudible]*, I did not know exactly. I just remembered, we met. So. Thank you. Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

We also agree with the position articulated by Belgium. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Greece. Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We don't need to have a decision to have Russia in the Bureau. Russia is in the Bureau and remains in the Bureau. And I'm so sorry, but I asked, like, ten times our Distinguished Legal Advisor to cite the provision that says at least something about personal capacity in the Rules of Procedure or in any decision. He didn't give me any citation, and I haven't found myself. Now, the Bureau of the Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, five Vice-Chairpersons, then the Rapporteur, and these are countries. And then the country proposes a specific person to fulfil the function of the Chairperson. But the role of the Chairperson. The Chairperson itself is a country, but then there is an Ambassador or whoever, a minister, who performs this function. As I am here speaking as Russian Federation. But I have a name and a personality, but I am not speaking in my personal capacity. You see what I mean? But I am fulfilling the function of Russian Representative now to UNESCO. So, this is the same. Nowhere in the rules it is specified. And if we apply the rules strictly, we would see that all these, Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur shall assist, remain in office until the end of that session. So, all of us, all of these seven countries, we remain in office until the end of this session. So, there is no need to take a special decision. We don't speak about any speaking decision. My amendment was purely technical of a nature, because in the previous session your Representative said that there is no need to mention the name of the Chairperson, also referring to Rule 15.2, the same rule you refer to now when we do mention the name of the Chairperson. And for the sake of clarity. I just proposed this technical amendment. It is not about deciding on our membership. Our membership has been decided, and we stay in the Bureau. This is how we read the rules. And this is how everybody should. And that's why, back in 2001, there was no decision, Distinguished Mr. Director of the World Heritage, because there was no need for the rule. And that's why it says black and white in the report. And I would like to remind that, at that time, the decisions of the Committee were done in the form of the report because there was no decisions as such. There were reports, as we have. For instance.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Russia. Thank you.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

And we have a precedent.

Chairperson:

Out of respect to others, let us respect the time. Now, can we please, after hearing the explanation by Russia. And I heard from some other Members. Some others, I did not hear from them. And I saw some objection to the amendment as proposed by Russia. Do you want to, again, do you want to go back to the amendment, either as presented by Russia and amended by Bulgaria, or as Saint Vincent and Grenadines with Oman or Qatar, the initial amendment. And I want to hear from you. I heard that Japan had opinion. I think Japan, was it? Yes, that they can live with the amendment of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Oman and Qatar, with the latest amended amendment by Belgium, which is to keep the original sorry, which is "assisted by other Members of the Bureau" and stop there. And sorry, "and the Rapporteur", if I'm not mistaken. Egypt, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Madam Chair. And since this is the first time we take the floor, we wish to congratulate you on assuming the presidency and the chairmanship of our Committee. Wishing you good luck and all the best in your mandate and as well a happy new year to your good self, as well as to the rest of the distinguished colleagues. Initially, our position was in favor of the proposal made by the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Oman and Qatar. However, based on the debate and the discussions, the convoluted debates and discussions that we have witnessed, witnessed thus far, we believe that we can live, as a middle ground, as a compromise, with the proposal made by Bulgaria, which is generic in a way that encompasses, in our opinion, all the different and contradictory points of views expressed up till now. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. The idea, the, if we can just, see, for the text purposes now, doesn't mean that we have adopted, just can we strike through, without the mention of the States Parties? Just strike it through temporarily to look at it by all Members. So, this is how it's going to look if we adopt the decision, the amendment with the decision, with the amendment of Bulgaria, as supported by Japan and Egypt so far. Oman, you have the floor, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much. Again, this is not going to solve the problem. What you are putting us again, by this amendment, you are taking the names of the countries, you are putting it vague. If there is going to be a meeting for the Bureau, if Russia is going to attend, what is the status? So, again, this is another problem. We are creating a problem, not solving the problem. Therefore, we need to solve this now. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Oman. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you. Professionally, I'm a pedagogue, and when things are explained, usually the more things are explained, the more things will be clear. But today, what I'm observing, the opposite is true, for me. Several questions, several explanations, back and forth discussions, and things are getting very much complicated. And like what has been said by the Distinguished Ambassador of Oman, now the bottom line is, to come to the middle ground, if we cancel the name of the States Parties, does it mean that Russia will be canceled? And I would like to ask one question, that the Ambassador of Japan said, there is a concern if we write the name. What is that? What is that concern? We would like to have an informed decision, and we would like to be clear, to take the middle ground or to take the opposite. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency. I know you're trying to meet the time limits, but this is an intergovernmental meeting. This is a meeting of the signatories of the 1972 Convention. In many countries, the Treaty has been approved by the highest body, which is their Parliament. It's, these conventions are very serious. The rules of this Convention have had global acceptance. It's a 50-year-old Convention. We cannot play around with the rules. What has been applicable to one country needs to be, and should be, applicable to another country. Whether we like that country, we despise that country, or we don't. The question is who is right and who is wrong? I asked a specific question because I wanted clarity, because I was not sure whether a particular Member State was part of the Bureau or not. And the Legal Advisor gave me his learned opinion.

My second question was whether a particular Member State is, continues to be, a part of the Bureau at this point in time or not. And the Legal Advisor said, no, it's not. Now, the Member State concerned considers itself to be part of the Bureau. How on earth can we move forward if we don't clear this confusion? This should be absolutely clear to us all. And I commend my brother, the Ambassador of Oman, who has more than 17 years of experience in UNESCO, for raising this very particular point. Because you remember, Madam Chair, as the Chair, you will call the meeting of the Bureau. It is. And in that meeting of the Bureau, if a particular Member State considers itself to be part of the Bureau, but the Secretariat does not, what situation will we be faced with? So, I would, with all humility, I will request some clarification on that, so that I can go home and have a good night's sleep with no confusion in my mind whatsoever. Thank you.

Chairperson:

You're not going anywhere, Your Excellency, unless we finish the Agenda item. Your Excellency, do you require some clarifications? From whom? Just to be clear.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, I just continue to support what the learned Ambassador from Oman asked, and my intervention was in continuation of that, Excellency. Ideally, it would be on the question of, is from the Secretariat, whether that particular Member State is a Member of the Bureau or not. That clarity, clarification, if we can have, will be very grateful.

Chairperson:

Clear. Thank you. South Africa, you have the floor.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Yes. I think following on what colleagues have said, a colleague from Ethiopia, colleague from Oman, and Ambassador from India. I think, Chairperson, we have reached a stage where, as the Committee, we must affirm what we want to affirm. We have heard what the Secretariat said. We have heard what the Legal Advisor is saying. There are parts of what he's saying that I don't agree with. And there are areas that the Secretariat has admitted that they were not there. The Director said that he wasn't there. He doesn't have any recollection of what really happened. But I've been advised that until 2001, there were no decisions taken. It was only reports. I think I, what I like about this meeting is so transparent that those who came before us will send us information to fill the gap. And one of the messages I've received is that until 2001, there were no separate decisions of the World Heritage Committee. There were only reports, including all the discussions. And one of those reports has been quoted by

the Russian Federation. These reports are official documents of the World Heritage Committee. And I want the Legal Advisor to say to me that we cannot refer them as precedent. Am I correct? Let me put that question to the Legal Advisor. Are these documents not official records of the Committee? And can we therefore correctly say they constitute a precedent? After that response, may you allow me to continue, Chairperson?

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you very much. Legal Advisor, I think it's clear question. Are they official documents, these reports? And why aren't we using, or can't we use them as a precedent? And please, can you answer these two questions?

Legal Advisor:

Madam Chair, I'm afraid I cannot answer the question if I don't see the document concerned. If the, if I could kindly be allowed to look at the document, examine what it is, and tell you whether, what it is. So, I'm very happy to answer the question, but I don't want to answer in a vacuum, without having seen the document. I'm asked whether a certain document, which is not in front of me, can constitute a precedent. The answer, I cannot answer to that question.

What I can tell you, on the other hand, is that indeed, the Committee may refer to its own precedents and interpretation of its own rules in order to apply those rules. That is something that it can do. And I also mentioned that I, that the Committee is, that the rules of the Committee are there, and they can apply them by taking a decision, as we already discussed at length. Thank you very much. I'm more than happy to answer the question if the document is provided to me. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency, I think you heard that. If it is, I mean, there's nothing that's stopping the Committee from adopting precedent that they have done before.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Maybe I shouldn't put this to the, to the Legal Advisor. I submit that they are, they constitute, these are official records of the... I should put it differently now. These documents we've been referring to are official records of the World Heritage Committee, and correctly we can refer to them as, we can, we can say they, they lay the basis of the precedent or they were a precedent. One.

Two. I also want to submit that the sections that the, let me put it. In the Rules of Procedure, there's nowhere expressly written that the Chairperson is acting in, or is elected in, her personal capacity. There's nowhere. What we have been doing here is to interpret, and there are different interpretations to that. And therefore, this then says, as the Committee, we should then affirm our understanding. And unless it's expressly written that Russia was the former Chairperson of the Committee, was here in his personal capacity, unless we can be shown that, the only conclusion that I want to submit, and my submission to the Committee is, that Russia, the Ambassador was representing his country, and therefore Russia is a Member of the bureau. This is the understanding that I have, and that is the understanding I am inviting the Committee to affirm. Thanks, Chairperson.

I think we've reached the stage of having to decide. It's up to us now. The Secretariat has responded. And I also want to warn that we are not taking any illegal decision. It's within our purview. We are not amending anything because there's nothing here expressly written, here. We just are affirming our understanding based on discussions that have taken place and the records that we have, and I think we can exchange. I'll ask the Russian Federation to forward to the Secretariat this document that I'm having here. Thanks.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Would the Russian Federation, kindly forward to the World Heritage Secretariat the report that, if you can forwarded by email, or maybe provide the name of the document? Then, with that, you heard the explanation that we have heard from several Members, and I want to hear from you. Do you want to take the step by step?

Do you want to vote on that? Do you want to just watch the screen? I mean, we have all the day, but again, it is up to you to decide. There is different interpretations here. Members understand things. There has been some, if I can say, some different understanding of different rules. Now, there's been some valid questions raised with regard to the original representation by the Distinguished Representative of Zambia, and also other Members. The Distinguished Representative of Oman asked the clear question that we should really identify: is Russia a Member of the Bureau or not? Same thing was repeated by India, the same question. And again, I mean, this is not now a theoretical debate. I think we have asked all the questions, exhausted all the questions, that you wanted to ask. Now it's time for you. I mean, you got all the questions and you got all the answers that you requested. Now it's for you to decide. And we can go ahead, look at the options that we have, and see. If you want to go for a vote, by all means, feel free to go for a vote on this paragraph. But let us move forward.

Russia, if it is to explain more, I think you have explained enough, but please, you have the floor. Okay. Thank you.

So, do you like us to move forward? Would you like us to stop at this one and move to other Agenda items or move to other paragraphs in the Decision, without identifying the date and the time and the Bureau, and move forward? It is your decision. Let me phrase it for you. Can we go back to Point 1? I requested that if we can adopt the Decision as amended by Russia, and I got the Bulgaria, Japan, Egypt, I think. No, no, hold on. I'm not that tall, please don't keep scrolling down. Yes, please. Belgium, Greece, Japan, Italy and Bulgaria wanted the original amendment at that stage. And then there was another amendment without mentioning the States Parties, which added more ambiguity, as mentioned by State Members. So, now we go back to the amendment originally presented by Russia. Keeping the countries mentioned, Argentina, Italy, Russian Federation, South Africa, Thailand. Can you please remove the strikethrough? And we go back again. And I want to hear from Members. I can clearly hear from. Can you please? Belgium, Greece, Japan, Italy, Bulgaria want only the original amendment. And I want to hear from others. We have Russia, for the other amendments. And who else? Who else supports the additional amendment of the Bureau? Adding the names of the Bureau? India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Madam Chair, thank you for giving me the floor. Right now, I don't know who is in the Bureau. That's why our question of Oman. That is the clarification that the Ambassador of Oman asked. That is a clarification which we request an answer to that question before we could move forward. And if at all, we would like to know, Excellency, what is the composition of the Bureau as of today? That's, I think that would satisfy my confusion. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I will pose this question to the Secretariat. And what is the composition of the Bureau? Now, if we decide today to have the extended session and move forward, what is the composition of the Bureau? Would you like to ask a question before we...? Okay, please, you can, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Madam, for giving me the chance. I was asking this question. The Secretariat, if you want to call a meeting for the Bureau, or the States Parties who will be invited to attend the meeting, we need to be clear. And what is the fear behind it? The problem, the nexus between individual capacity and the State Party is the critical issue that extends our meeting and which disturbs you to manage the meeting. In fact, you are trying all your level best to manage our meeting. But this has to be clear, be proud too. That's why we're going back and forth. It has to be clearly stated or it has to be open to the Committee to decide on the interpretation.

Chairperson:

Thank you. So, the question here: what is the composition of the Bureau as per this extended session? It's a question for you, Mr. Lazare. And the question here is, if there, is this composition clear cut and undebatable, or can we decide if it's not clear? Is that your question, Ethiopia? Okay. Can you just. That's it. No, no. Again, sorry. Yes, you have the floor Mr. Lazare.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you. Thank you, Chairperson. Of course, I think the Legal Advisor has given a clear explanation on this. And for the Secretariat, we, it is our understanding that the Chairperson is, of course, Your Highness. And the Rapporteur is our Rapporteur, Ms. Shikha Jain, and the Vice-persons are Italy, Argentina, Thailand, South Africa and Saudi Arabia. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

I see you. I see it, Your Excellency. But I need to answer the question of Ethiopia. Is it up to the interpretation of the Members, or is this set in stone? Or is it, I mean, as I understood your question. If you can answer it, Mr Lazare, please.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Madam Chairperson, if you allow me, I'll leave the Legal Advisor answer this question. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Okay. Then, before giving the floor to the Legal Advisor, I will ask, please, can we, because of the time, can I ask, please, the Distinguished Representative for Oman to give his intervention before turning to the Legal Advisor?

The Delegation of Oman:

It's a good time because this is also for the Legal Advisor. It is, I want explanation for Article 13.3, which says "in electing the Bureau, due regard shall be given to the need to ensure an equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the world and proper balance between the culture and natural heritage", etc. What does it mean if we are going disregard of Russia, Oman, Italy, disregard on which country is going to be there? What is the explanation here? We are going to miss one Group from the Bureau. So, we want explanation for this. How we are going to solve this for the future, not even for now. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. And I will turn to the Legal Advisor with maybe a regrouping of the concerns that I have heard. With regard to the set, as explained by the Secretariat, with regard to the Members of the Bureau, are they, that's it, is it a done deal or is there a, is it the narrative of the Committee to change, and change and adapt now? Do they have this power? If I understood your question, Ethiopia.

And then, there was 13.2, which was raised also before by the Distinguished Representative of India, and then requested the clarification by the Distinguished Representative of Oman. And similarly echoing that, maybe in one way or another, Distinguished Representative of Zambia. And when they asked equal geographical representation by Members, or if I'm re-reading in one way or another, 13.2. So, the question here, and I heard also another question, I see it here also in my notes, it was raised by India. Is Group II represented in the Bureau?

And these are the questions that keep coming up. So, I want your specific answers for that. Is it the narrative now of the Committee to change the, to identify as per their own interpretation of the Rules and Procedure? Yes or no? Number two, what about 13.2? Can you please explain it? When it says it has to be like that, then how come certain Groups are not represented? And this has been echoed several times. I would have loved, personally, to move forward and adopt and move forward. But since this is a very critical question now to be answered, it seems that there is a request by Member States to get this answer right now before moving on. I would like you to be very clear on your answer and specific. And you have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you for giving me the opportunity of being very specific in providing a reply. Madam Chair, this is not a matter of interpretation of the rules. It is a matter of interpretation of the decisions of the Committee in light of the rules.

First of all, and with your permission, I would like to explain the whole reasoning and the whole steps of the reasoning. First step, by Decision **44 COM 16**, which was adopted at the end of the 44th session, the Committee decided to elect, in accordance with Rule 13.1 of the Rules of Procedure, its Bureau in the following composition. First, His Excellency Mr. Alexander Kuznetsov, Russian Federation between inverted, between parenthesis, Russian Federation, as Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee. I'm jumping a little bit, until the end of the 45th session. Spain as Vice-Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee until the end of the 23rd session of the General Assembly. Saint Kitts and Nevis as Vice-Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee until the end of the 23rd session of the General Assembly. Thailand as Vice-Chairperson until the end of the same session. South Africa as Vice-Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee until the end of the 45th session. Saudi Arabia as Vice-Chairperson until the end of the 45th session, and Ms. Miray Hasaltun between parenthesis, Bahrain, as Rapporteur until the end of the 23rd session.

As a consequence, Madam Chair, at the end of the 44th session of the Committee, the Bureau of the Committee for the 45th session was composed that follows: His Excellency Mr. Alexander Kuznetsov as Chairperson, Spain, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Thailand, South Africa and Saudi Arabia as Vice-Chairpersons, and Ms. Miray Hasaltun from Bahrain as Rapporteur. I am not interpreting anything. I'm just reading Decision **44 COM 16**. At its 16th extraordinary session following the General Assembly that took place at the end of 2021, the Committee adopted Decision **16 EXT.COM 3** which, by which it elected Italy as Vice-Chairperson of the 45th session of the Committee until the end of the 45th session, Argentina as Vice-Chairperson of the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, and Ms. Shikha Jain from India as Rapporteur for the 45th session. Madam Chair, it follows that at the end of the 16th extraordinary session, the composition of the Bureau was as follows. His Excellency Mr. Alexander Kuznetsov as Chairperson. Argentina, Italy, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Thailand as Vice-Chairpersons, and Ms. Shikha Jain as Rapporteur.

I hear the voice of the Distinguished Delegate of the Russian Federation, and I do confirm that, between parentheses, the names of the countries of the two individuals who are designated in those decisions. I'm sorry, but that's the reading. Individuals are designated in those decisions. It's not my interpretation. It's what the Decision says, are the names of the countries of those individuals are mentioned in those decisions.

Madam Chair, as you all know, in, I believe it was, in December 2022, the Chairperson of the Committee, made a communication by which he communicated that he was unable to continue his functions, since he ceased to represent his country. And this triggered the application of Rule 15.2 of the Rules of Procedure, which provides that in that case he is replaced, not by a Representative of his own country, but by a Vice-Chairperson in English alphabetical order commencing with the country of the Rapporteur, of the Chair, for the remainder of the term of office. On that basis, Madam Chair, your country was asked to designate an individual, as, in order to exercise the functions of the Chair at the session. And, Madam Chair, it is my understanding that your country designated you as the Chairperson. As a follow-up of this, my understanding is, stemming from the decisions of the Committee, that the Chairperson is Her Highness Princess Haifa Al Mogrini from Saudi Arabia. As per application of Rule 15.2. The Rapporteur is Ms. Shikha Jain from India as per Decision **16 EXT.COM 3**, and the Vice-Chairpersons are Argentina, Italy, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Thailand, as per decisions **44 COM 16** and **16 EXT.COM 3**.

Madam Chair, a last point to say, this is the current composition of the Bureau. Madam Chair, the question was asked whether the Committee may choose to change that composition, and the answer is yes. It may choose to elect. This would constitute a suspension of Rule 13.1. But it is something that the Committee may decide to do

without any difficulty. And it may decide to do so if it considers in particular, for example, that the good application of Rule 13.3, which talks about an equitable representation of the different regions and cultures of the world and a proper balance between the cultural and natural heritage as provided of the Convention, are needed in the Bureau. This is possible.

A last point, if you allow me, and I will conclude with this. Madam Chair, I was asked to cite the rule that says that the Chairperson and the Rapporteur are sitting in their personal capacity. I would say that I have already answered that question and I was not given an answer to the questions I asked, which are whether I could be given the rule that says that the Chairperson and the Rapporteur are actually Member States and the rule or the Decision which says that the Russian Federation has been elected as a Vice-Chair of the Committee, as it currently is written on the screen. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I hope this answered the questions. These are the current Members of the Bureau. Yes, the Committee can change if they feel that 13.3, I think, to be fulfilled in one way or another right now, to answer India's question that was previously raised, for, as per the current construction of the Bureau, there is no representation of Group II. I hope this answered your question. I see you Russia, but there is, there are some countries before you. I will give the floor to Distinguished Representative of Zambia and then Russia. And then India. Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I am desperately trying to follow the Legal Advisor's points of view, and I can see where he's coming from. But if I have to write on what I asked today, there are six Electoral Groups. So, maybe the question will go to the Secretariat. Why do we only have five Vice-presidents? If the President is chosen in his own capacity, why don't we have six Vice-presidents, so that even if the President, the Chairperson goes off, at least the region will continue to function? And having followed also the discussion that there is a Chair and also Saudi Arabia on the Bureau, if, let's say we agreed that we get Group II to appoint their Representative, then we are going to end up with an eight-member Bureau. If we get Group II to be there. And if you look at the previous Bureaus, there have only been seven Members. It might not be seven States, but there have been seven Members of the Bureau. So, are we creating some contradiction if we have eight Members on the Bureau, if Group II comes on board with Saudi Arabia having two representatives? Thank you, I submit.

Chairperson:

That's a very interesting question, Your Excellency. And I think it requires also an answer. I have Russia, India and then Oman. Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thanks everybody for contributions. I regret to state, but I haven't heard a paragraph, a number, from regular Rules of Procedure of World Heritage Committee that the Distinguished Legal Advisor, he said he mentioned. I'm sorry, I haven't heard. Can you give me the paragraph? The paragraph. Right? Because in any single paragraph of the Rules of Procedure, I didn't find anything about personal capacity. Now you tend to omit the names of the countries then. But you said that there are, in between parenthesis, Russian Federation and India, as this is a custom here. As well as when you were citing Paragraph 15.2, you also omitted something, and I want to read it in full. "If the Chairperson ceases to represent a State Member of the Committee or is for any reason unable to complete his term of office, he's replaced by a Vice-Chairperson in the English alphabetical order of the States Members of the Bureau, States Members of the Bureau, commencing with the country", country, "of the Chairperson for the remainder of the term of office". If I take your logic. Then it means that the Chairperson that should be personal and individual shall be replaced by a country, which is Saudi Arabia. But how can a country replace a person? But this is what the Decision 15.2 provides for. But why it provides for it, doesn't provide between individuals and States, because as per the Rules of the Procedure, the word Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur are countries. And then, there are individuals who perform for this country this function. And, as you rightly mentioned yourself, Saudi Arabia designated Her Royal Highness to perform this function. But it was her country, Saudi Arabia, that acceded to the chairmanship of the Committee. And then it was up to the Government of Saudi Arabia to say who will perform the function. So, it was Saudi Arabia who succeeded to the Chairmanship because Russian Federation, because of the departure of the Ambassador, ceased to be the Chair, but it continued that membership. So, therefore there is no need to take a decision on any new composition of the Bureau. The Bureau is elected in an ordinary session, until the next ordinary session, and remains in office. So, we cannot discuss any election. We are not in an ordinary session. So, we cannot discuss any election. And this is not about designating or not designating. I mean, this paragraph is about specifically mentioning the name of the Distinguished Chairperson.

Chairperson:

Russia, please, sometimes I cannot really follow the timer, because please, let's not exceed it...

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Please, Legal Advisor...

Chairperson:

I will ask the Legal Advisor to provide this. Please, let us not exceed the time limit because, out of respect to each other. I will not allow anyone to exceed the time limitation. Please. So, do not put me and put yourself in an awkward position where I have to interrupt every time. Let's make it clear. Let's make it specific. Let's make it, let's make it direct.

Now we have, I have received a question from Zambia with regard to the eight Members, to solve this issue where we can add a Member. And if this contradicts with any, or we have to have, to suspend anything to do that. And that's a question for the Legal Advisor to answer. I have received again, from Russia, the question is, which is, can a country replace a person? But there's a person replace the country. And that because Saudi Arabia took over as a Vice-Chair, as a country, and then what will happen? And this is another explanation by Russia, if I understood it right and maybe the Legal Advisor can elaborate on this issue further? Now I give the floor to India to be followed by Oman. India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency. Excellency, this is in continuation of the clarification the learned Legal Advisor gave to my question as to what constitutes the Bureau as of today. And I'm very thankful for, to the Legal Advisor, for having given his view.

I draw your attention to a Rule 12.1. The Bureau of the Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, the five Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur. The total of one plus five plus one is seven. And if he and I got the clarification as to what is the composition of the Bureau, and it was mentioned. The Chairperson is Your Highness Princess Haifa of Saudi Arabia. The Rapporteur is Ms. Shikha Jain, and in brackets India. And then the five Vice-Chairpersons were mentioned, Argentina, Italy, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Thailand. So, the number seven is again matched.

The Legal Advisor also mentioned to your question whether the Bureau, the Committee sorry, can add someone to the Bureau, and the Legal Advisor said, yes, you can. Now if that were to happen, to take care of Article 13.3, which gives equitable representation to Group IV, then in that case the number of Vice-Chairpersons will increase from five at present to six, and then six plus one plus one would become eight, which would be greater than seven. That would be a contradiction. Now, how do we resolve this issue? Because I am just new in this Committee. I know there are many Members and Ambassadors who have much, much more experience. Do you think, Excellency, I submit myself to your wisdom, do you think it would be better to have an informal group that could discuss this in a way, maybe a five- or ten-minute break, and try to find a precedence that may not be formally spoken, but informally? Perhaps it can be. And may I suggest again, subject to your Chairmanship, Chairman, Chairperson-ship and everything, Excellency, that you could choose and they could discuss, perhaps someone from each group. Thank you, Excellency.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Your Excellency. If it was an ordinary session, I think it is a brilliant idea to have a breakout session and then have the wisdom of Members talking together and reaching a decision. Since we are very limited on time and given the extraordinary nature, I think I would pass on this proposal, although it sounds like a very sound and wise proposal to achieve. But again, I think you raised the question about the eight Members, that requires an answer. And it also, the question by Zambia in this regard, also some questions on principle raised by Russia. And with that, I would like to give the floor to Oman. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thanks again. We are trying to find an exit, Your Excellency and Excellencies, colleagues. Also to answer is the question of Zambia. I think we have heard a lot from the Legal Advisor. And I think it's time again not to go to the Legal Advisor because he is repeating all the time what he has said from the morning, and therefore why we go back to him, because he exhausted what he has. He told us that it is up to us now to take a decision on this. And therefore, I would like to propose an amendment to this, where it says, "and also decides that, to give due consideration to the Rule 13.3, the overall Members of the Bureau shall be as follows: Argentina, Italy, Russian Federation, South Africa and Thailand." So, we are deciding we are not going to say whether it was or we want before. We are deciding now. So, I want to put this in conjunction with what we submitted before we co-authored this sentence. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. If it's possible just to send the amendment by email, because I don't see them writing it. If possible, it will make our lives easier. I saw several plaques coming up and down, but I don't know whom. Yeah, I saw Qatar and South Africa. But before that, Your Excellency of Oman, would you like maybe to repeat it again? For the sake of time? We can write it down and. But slowly, please, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Oman:

"and also decides that", comma, "to give due consideration to the Rule 13.3", comma, "the other Members of the Bureau shall be as follows: Argentina. Italy. Russian Federation".

Chairperson:

Your Excellency, you're very fast. I'm really sorry. If you just please bear with us and just. First of all, I think it is before the name of the States Parties, you want us to enter this? Is that right?

The Delegation of Oman:

Before?

Chairperson:

And. Okay, so, so let's go with it, "and also decides" and then?

The Delegation of Oman:

..."decides that".

Chairperson:

Okay.

The Delegation of Oman:

..."to give due consideration to Rule 13.3, the other Members of the Bureau shall be as follows".

Chairperson:

Okay. I think, I think as follows will be that list of the countries, but please. "...and also decides that, to give consideration", as I heard from His Excellency. Yes, "that". Now, can you please. It is kind of, a kind of, a middle sentence that can go in between, before the name of the States Parties. So.

The Delegation of Oman:

After "assisted by".

Chairperson:

After "assisted by".

The Delegation of Oman:

Sorry. Before "assisted by".

Chairperson:

Yes. Maybe, maybe. Maybe. Let's keep it. Let's keep it as a separate paragraph. Maybe. And now have. Rewrite the paragraph again with Oman's amendment. Yes, "and also", yes, "decides that". Now I have. I just want to see the paragraph here, and then I'll give the floor to Qatar and then South Africa. So, Your Excellency, would you like to give explanation, Oman, again, on why are you proposing this amendment?

The Delegation of Oman:

We are proposing this amendment in order to have equal representation for the six Groups. That's why we have to add also the Rapporteur, I think, there.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I'll give the floor now to Qatar, to be followed by South Africa. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci beaucoup Madame la Présidente, et je voudrais souhaiter soutenir la proposition de Oman. Je voudrais ajouter que nous sommes dans la salle depuis ce matin, entre l'interprétation de textes et entre les pratiques aussi. Donc on est vraiment presque bloqués entre les deux. Mais dans l'âme de texte ne donne vraiment l'égalité de représentation des États membres. C'est ce qu'il vient d'expliquer, mon collègue l'Ambassadeur de Oman. C'est pour ça, nous, vraiment, nous voulons soutenir la proposition de l'Oman pour passer la décision avec le consensus des États membres. Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Distinguished representative of Qatar. Can you please add Qatar as co-author of Oman's amendment? Thank you. I have South Africa and then Bulgaria. South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you. I welcome the proposal by Oman that we should take a decision. And this is what I've always been saying. And I support the proposal, the proposed paragraph or amendment. Thanks.

Chairperson:

Okay, So. So, you would like to support Your Excellency, or co-author, South Africa? That's great. And now we have, who else? Someone. Bulgaria, you have the floor.

La Délégation de Bulgarie :

Je vous remercie, et désolée de prendre la parole encore une fois, mais pour nous cette proposition veut dire la suspension de la Règle 13.1. Nous voudrions bien recevoir des clarifications de la part du Conseiller juridique. Et en plus, en ce qui concerne la représentation du Groupe II, cette question n'a pas été évoquée pendant nos réunions. Il y a deux, quand même, États membres du Groupe II dans le Comité, bien sûr, la Russie et la Bulgarie. Alors, cette question doit aussi être décidée dans notre Groupe. Si on va vers un changement de la composition de Bureau.

Chairperson:

Okay. So, there is a question to the Legal Advisor. This was before a question also to, from Zambia, with regard to the eight Members. And I would like to hear an answer from the Legal Advisor. I see Thailand and Russia, but I would like to give the floor to the Legal Advisor to answer these two questions and come back to Thailand and Russia.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, Rule 12.1 states that the Bureau of the Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, the five Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur. As was rightly pointed out by the Distinguished Ambassador of India, that is equivalent to seven Members. If you were to elect eight Members, you would be deviating from Rule 12.1, which is something you may do by suspending Rule 12.1. So, it will be a deviation from that Rule. It would imply not applying the Rule, but the rules allow you to do so by suspending the rule.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I think that's clear. So, it is. If we need to add a Member, we need to suspend a rule. Zambia and India, if this has been clarified, now we go back to our discussion. We have Thailand. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Madam Chair. And since this is the first time that my Delegation has taken the floor, we like to extend our warmest congratulations on your Chairmanship. I think we've spent a lot of time this morning on this particular matter, on this Agenda item. In the end, I guess we have to make a decision. And my understanding from the explanation by the legal counsel that it's up to the Committee to make this decision. And insofar as my Delegation is concerned, I, we could go along with the amendment proposed by Oman, perhaps with a tightening of the language. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Now we have. After, I mean. Now we have, still within the seven number, with this amendment is still seven Members of the Bureau. And with the amendment of Oman, Qatar, South Africa, Thailand. Russia, you have the floor to be followed by Saudi Arabia. Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. This is just to remind that I'm still waiting for the provision of the, of the regulations that actually speaks about personal capacity. Then, I am totally confused now. Completely confused, Madam Chair, by the explanations provided by our Distinguished Legal Advisor, because he just said that you are already appointed and designated as, in your personal capacity. If I'm not mistaken, then, by which decision, Distinguished Legal Advisor?

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. Your question is clear, I think. Now, can we look at the proposed amendment here? Because now we keep going into.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

No, no, I will continue.

Chairperson:

Do you have a clear question that it was not answered before? Please, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Yes. This is a very clear question because the Distinguished Legal Advisor said that you are already appointed in your personal capacity, but the Representative of his Office said completely other thing, in the previous session, that there is no need to mention your name because it was her reading of the Rule 15.2. And when the country that is holding the Chairmanship of the Committee, when the person ceases to represent this country, another country, which is Saudi Arabia, acceded to the Chairmanship of the Committee this way. And it's going to be for the first time that we would be mentioning your name now. So, that means that Saudi Arabia leaves the Chair of the Vice-Chairperson and accedes to the Chair of the Chairperson in the composition of the Bureau, which is composed of Member States. That is stated in Article 15.2.

Now, as for the proposal by Oman, Qatar, South Africa and Thailand, I do agree that it's in the ordinary session that the Bureau is elected to, until the next ordinary session, and that its composition remains unchanged. And we are, we all, I mean, countries, remain in office until the end of this session. Therefore, this extraordinary session cannot decide. It can only acknowledge or confirm, etc., if there is a need. But my, initially, my proposal was of a technical nature, and I continue to believe that my country holds a membership in the Bureau. Therefore, I think, after listening to the answers of the Legal Advisor, we might be considering, you know, agreeing to the proposal of Bulgaria, Japan and Egypt to have "assisted by other members of the Bureau" without mentioning the countries, because we do know that we are still in the Bureau. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Before giving the floor to the Legal Advisor to answer this question that you have raised, I want to give the floor to Saudi Arabia, Zambia and Belgium, and then we can see where we stand. Saudi Arabia, have the floor.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll be very quick. Saudi Arabia supports Oman's amendment. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Can you add Saudi Arabia as co-author? And Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Sorry, I just wanted to say, to make progress, which we really need to do, and I would appeal to all the colleagues here, we need to move. And in the interest of goodwill, Zambia would like to support the language proposed by Oman, and I hope everyone will be okay with it. I think there will be another time when we can be able to sit down and thrash out this thorny issue, maybe in an ordinary meeting. So, I'd like Zambia to be added to the, to the supporters.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Please add Zambia. I have Belgium and then Rwanda. Belgium, you have the floor.

La Délégation de Belgique:

Merci, Madame la Présidente. Je pense que les explications du Conseiller juridique ont été très claires. Nous avons respecté les règles. Nous avons agi conformément à ce qui figure dans les Règles de procédure, dans la Décision **44 COM 16**. Nous ne voyons pas de raison de déroger à la situation dans laquelle nous sommes maintenant. Donc, je voudrais soutenir la proposition de la Bulgarie.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Now, if we go to the, keep original here, "assisted by other", where is it? Yes, "Bulgaria, Japan, Egypt", without mentioning States Parties, can you add the name of Belgium? So, it will be "Belgium, Bulgaria, Bulgaria, Japan"? Yes. And as I understood, the Russian Federation as well, can support that. Okay. No, no, don't put Russian Federation until they hear the answer for their question. Now, with that, I would like to give the floor to Rwanda. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Allow me to add my voice and support to the proposal from Oman. I thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Rwanda.

Chairperson:

Italy, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Very short. To support the proposal from Bulgaria. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Italy. To support the proposal. Thank you. I think now we see some movement towards some reaching some decision here and there. I saw Greece. Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

We could also add Greece to the supporters of Bulgaria.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Agreed. And India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, we would like to support our brothers in Oman, Qatar, our brothers from South Africa, Thailand, our brothers from Saudi Arabia, Zambia and Rwanda, Excellency.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I don't see any more names raised. Oh, Nigeria, you have the floor. At the microphone, please.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Nigeria would like to support the proposal of a, proposal, the proposal by Oman too. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you, Nigeria. Can you please add Nigeria to the list? I don't see any more names raised. So, then we have. I would like to give the floor to the Legal Advisor to answer the specific question by Russia. But please, with specific answer so that we can move ahead and go to the next paragraph. Legal Advisor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am convinced I have already answered this question, but let me answer in detail. The references to Rule, first of all, 12.1, which says that the Bureau of the Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, the five Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur. There is no such thing as Members of the Bureau that are not the Chair, the Chairperson, the five Vice-Chairpersons or the Rapporteur. All rules that follow, Rules 13, 14 and 15, when referring to the Chairperson, used a terminology, which might not be gender balanced, but clearly refers to an individual, since they talk about "he" and not "it". It's clear, therefore, that the Chairperson is an individual. Last but not least, Rule 15.2, which was quoted by the Distinguished Delegate of the Russian Federation, says, to begin with, "if the Chairperson ceases to represent a State", a State may not represent a State. Therefore, the Chairperson is an individual. And then it says "the country of the Chairperson". If the Chairperson were to be a country, then it would not have a country, it would be a country. Therefore, there's absolutely no doubt in my mind that the Chairperson is an individual who needs to be representing a State Member of the Committee, but exercises his or her functions in their personal capacity. However, Madam Chair, this is, at this stage, a theoretical question for the purposes of what the Committee needs to decide at this stage. I believe that you are in line to find a solution. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Now, Russia, where do you want to add your name? Which paragraph?

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I am not convinced by the explanation given by the Legal Advisor, because if we now see the language, of course the Chairperson is a person, as well as the Vice-Chairpersons, they are persons, but they are named as countries. And, but if you stick that their countries, then why the Chairperson can be assisted by the countries? You see? So, I am not convinced at all, since I also mentioned many times the Article 15.2, which says explicitly that Member States are Members of the Bureau. And Russia was holding Chairmanship in the Committee, as well as other countries were holding their membership in the Bureau. But to assume the function of Russian Chairmanship of the Committee as such, a person representing Russian Federation was nominated. So, therefore, because I am not convinced and because I hear that the room needs clarity, whereas I can always also live with my conviction, through conviction of the strict application of the Rules of Procedure, we would add our name to the amendment initially proposed by Oman. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Can we please add the name of the Russian Federation? Now, we have to decide which version we do adopt. We have the first, of course, the amendment by. I see you, Ethiopia. By Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. And the amendment was, there was an amendment added by Russia and amended by Bulgaria. This amendment by Bulgaria is supported by Bulgaria, Japan, Egypt, Belgium, Italy, Greece. And then, the other proposal by Oman, which is Oman, Qatar, South Africa, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Zambia, Rwanda, India, Nigeria, Russian Federation. I would like to see a growing, you know, consensus towards one direction or another. And with that, I will give the floor to Ethiopia to be followed by Argentina. Ethiopia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you. We want to be included in the Oman proposal.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Can you please add Ethiopia? Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We support the amendment of Oman that clarifies the Members of the Bureau.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Can you add the name of Argentina? Now, Belgium, I understand that you are in favor of the Bulgarian amendment, but you would like to express something? You have the floor.

La Délégation de Belgique :

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente. Je voudrais avoir un point de clarification sur la procédure. Pour procéder à ce que nous faisons maintenant, nous devons suspendre une règle. Alors le Conseiller juridique peut-il nous clarifier ce point ? Est-ce que la règle maintenant est suspendue ?

Deuxième point, si je lis correctement le 13.3, on parle de « lors de l'élection du Comité ». Nous ne sommes pas en train d'élire un comité ici. Alors, j'aimerais les clarifications du Conseiller juridique sur le type de procédure que nous sommes en train de suivre maintenant. Merci.

Chairperson:

So, if I'm, if I am just understanding your question clearly, you are referring to the Belgium amendment, if it fits, we have to? Can you please explain? Because you did not explain.

The Delegation of Belgium:

So, I will put it in English. I'm referring to the amendment first put by Oman. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Okay. So, now there's a question to the Legal Advisor. With the amendment proposed by Oman, supported by Qatar, South Africa, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Zambia, Rwanda, India, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Ethiopia and Argentina. Are we suspending certain rule there? And please, can we suspend such a rule now? As far as I understood the question. You have the floor, Legal Advisor.

Legal Advisor:

Yes, Madam Chair, you would be suspending Rule 13.1. And this is something that you can do, pursuant to Rule 54, I believe, of the Rules of Procedure, 52 of the Rules of Procedure. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Oman, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Oman:

I don't know how we are, I mean, violating that rule. Because this is going to be a precedent, because for next, not only for this Committee, but for next Committee, are you going to have only five regional distribution? I mean, to be accepted in the Bureau? What is this? We are supposed to have the six regions, or the six groups, in the Bureau. So, why we are here violating? Now, because we know when a country is becoming a Chair, immediately they are not going to be as a Vice-Chair, and therefore, or in the Bureau, because the Chair is in the Bureau there. I don't know how we are violating. We need to rule this. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Oman. So, you have a question to the Legal Advisor. How does it mean that we are violating 13.2 I guess, or 13.3? Sorry. Go. I mean, can you please mention the number? Legal Advisor, you have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Yes, Madam Chair. Yes, you would be. I don't like the word "violating" because you are, you would be suspending the rule, as a matter of fact, the application of the rule. The rule says that "the Committee shall elect at the end of each ordinary session, a Chairperson, five Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur who shall remain in office until the end of that session". So, the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur who were elected were elected until the end of the 45th session. Setting aside the divergence of views that we may have with the Distinguished Delegate of the Russian Federation, at the very least, insofar as you're taking away Saudi Arabia as a Vice-Chair, and Saudi Arabia was elected until the end of the 45th session by your Decision **44 COM 16**, you are actually not following Rule 13.1.

However, you are able to suspend that rule and the suspension of the rule is provided for under Rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure. So, it's not a problem. It simply is a suspension of the rule that you are actually implementing for the very reason that you, the Distinguished Delegate of Oman, explained. Which is that because the Chairperson was unable to continue his functions, you were, you're not able to, as I understand it, to maintain the equitable representation, and you need to do, you consider that it is appropriate to do this, in order to maintain an equitable representation. Be aware, of course, that you will never be able to achieve equal representation because there are seven Members of the Bureau under only six regional groups. But that's a question for another day. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you. India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll make it quick. And once again I would, the question is directed to the Legal Advisor only because I would just, to improve my understanding. Rule 13.1 states, there is no mention of any State Party out there. There's just mention of designations, which are person-based designations. So, I guess the rules and procedures of the WHC have this deficiency. It says the Committee at the end, blah blah, blah shall elect among those Members whose term continues to the next ordinary session, a Chairperson, that's an individual, five Vice-Chairpersons, who are also individuals, and the Rapporteur, who's also individual. And what I see here is that the rule for seven is not violated because this particular amendment by Oman, as per my limited understanding, and please forgive me if I'm wrong, it is not an election of a new Chairperson. It is basically, it is, gives due consideration to Rule 13.3 and says that the Bureau shall be as follows. That's it. It's not electing a person, it's not deleting anyone. It is giving its interpretation. And as you said, the Committee, in its wisdom. The wisdom of the collective is greater than the wisdom of the individual, and we rest ourselves in the wisdom of the collective. That 13.3. And the wisdom of the collective has, in a way, decided that equitable representation is the spirit upon which the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Convention, stands on. That the World Heritage Convention, by its very word, the first word "World" means everyone. It doesn't mean any individual country or our individual likes and dislikes. What, what, what? Who are we against? Who are we in favor? No. We rise above our differences. We rise above our geopolitics. We rise above the differences that separate, separate us into nations, nationhood, race, religion. We, as the World Heritage Committee, we are a committee of the world, and for which I feel the Rule 13.3 is so important. It's so important that that is what defines the spirit, why this Convention came into existence. And it is that spirit of that Convention that gives equitable representation to all geographies. All geographies. And because of that reason, I feel this is not an election. This is just a clarification that the Bureau shall be this. And if the collective, wisdom of the collective has decided, then so be it. And let's move ahead. Thank you, Your Excellency.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Your Excellency. Now, I think we have exhausted all the questions and all the perceptions and all the interpretations and all the understanding. I saw you, Bulgaria. And before, before I give you the floor, I would like to ask a simple question. We do have here two amendments. One is without mentioning the States Parties, one is with mentioning the States Parties with a rationale. I see a number of countries supporting one and a number supporting other. Seems that the second one is gaining more support. And I would like to implore all of you to come again now and tell me if we can look at the last part of Oman, that Oman has proposed. It may need an addition just to remove one sentence from the first part and add "until the end of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee". Because it is already on the top, it has to go all the way back. But if we can adopt the amendment of Oman and go forward, since it has, I see the number of countries is increasingly more. But again, it is up to you, as Members to decide. So, I would like to hear from you, countries who I did not hear from before, countries who did not say what do they prefer? How would you like us to go? Shall we adopt the amendment by Oman? Mexico. You have the floor Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Mexico:

Thank you. Madam Chairman, thank you for giving me the word. Just very briefly, we will back the amendment of Oman.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Mexico. Please add the name of Mexico. Sorry, Bulgaria, I forgot to give you the floor. I'll give you the floor and then move to Saint Vincent. But can we be direct?

La Délégation de Bulgarie :

Merci, je serai très brève. Parce que quand on mentionne l'Article 13.3, on doit se rendre compte que, là, on parle des élections, et je 'quote' : « dans l'élection du Bureau, le Comité tient dûment compte de la nécessité d'assurer la représentation équitable des différentes régions ». Quand on parle des élections, est ce que maintenant on entre comme dans une pseudo élection ? Est-ce que le Conseiller juridique pourrait nous expliquer ? Et si on va vers la suspension de Règle 3.1 ? Selon l'Article 52, on a besoin de deux tiers des États membres du Comité, qui va soutenir la suspension du 13.1, si on va vers des élections maintenant ? Parce que dans l'Article 13.3 qu'on a mentionné, là, on parle des élections. Des élections du Bureau. Merci.

Chairperson:

Thank you, thank you for the clear questions, Bulgaria. I will come to the Legal Advisor. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and then I'll give the floor to the Legal Advisor. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you Chair. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines supports Oman proposal. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Can you please add the name Saint Vincent? Now, there is a question by Bulgaria with regard to the 13.3, and if it requires an election, does it need two thirds, and do we have two thirds? You have the floor, Legal Advisor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much. I'm sorry I didn't get from. Madam Chair, if you reach consensus, you have, you have reached the two thirds majority that you require. So, there would not need, you would not need to have a vote. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you. So, we have two thirds supporting the amendment by Oman. And I would like just to kindly, for the sake of consistency, to add, to remove from the top of the paragraph the word, the sentence, or add at least with, to Oman's amendment "until the end of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee". Yes. And I would like to give the floor to Egypt. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that now things are getting clearer, the, concerning the path the Committee is more willing to take. So, we believe that in light of the continuous developments, we believe that it's more pertinent to add Egypt's voice to the consensus that's being built around the proposal of Oman.

Chairperson:

Thank you. So, as per the explanation of the Legal Advisor, and we have a majority here to support the Oman, and we don't need to go for a vote. Then, if we can just kindly strike through the, not all of it, please, just until the, yes, until "Al Mogrin", I think "Saudi Arabia" to "UNESCO designated", after the word, maybe, "Chairperson". If I'm not mistaken. Yes. Can you strike through this? Okay.

And then we'll go to the amendment by Oman. If we can read. Does it follow? "...and also decides to give due consideration to rule", as amended by Oman. So, with that I can. So, I saw the great support to Oman's amendment. Thank you, Oman, for this. And we would like to then adopt that Decision as amended by Oman and supported or co-authored by this big number of countries. With that, this Paragraph number 4 is adopted. Thank you.

Applause

Now. Thank you. Now, please, can we move in a faster pace so we can move on with our Agenda? I was. I was. Sorry? This is Paragraph 4. Yes. Yes. Now we'll move to Paragraph 5. This is what I said. We adopted Paragraph 4.

Now, just remembering the discussion and saying that the, with regard to the, our dear friend, Ambassador, previous Ambassador of Russia, Mr. Alexander, and to say that he ceases to represent, he ceased to represent his country. And whenever they say "cease to represent" I would, I would like to say that I will cease, I, personally will cease to exist as a Chair if we continue doing things this way. So, please, can you please try to move in a more practical manner and maybe hopefully we can move forward with our Agenda and continue the discussion in a way that helps us to achieve what we convene this meeting for. India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, just a humble submission for your wisdom. If there are no further amendments, can you adopt them as a whole and we can move ahead. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. So, I don't, we did not receive any amendment to the rest of the paragraphs. Can we take India's suggestion and adopt the rest of the paragraphs as they were initially proposed, put forward in the Decision? I see no objection. They are then adopted. Thank you, India. Thank you.

Applause.

Now I have to go the whole Decision? So, then the whole Decision is adopted. Thank you very much.

4. OUTCOMES OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON SITES OF MEMORY ASSOCIATED WITH RECENT CONFLICTS // RÉSULTATS DU GROUPE DE TRAVAIL A COMPOSITION NON LIMITÉE SUR LES SITES DE MÉMOIRE ASSOCIÉS A DES CONFLITS RÉCENTS

Chairperson:

Now, with your permission, I would like to move to the next item. Dear colleagues, we will now start with our Agenda Item number 4, which is devoted to the outcomes of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory associated with recent conflict and to the Draft Decision **45 COM 4**. The documents pertaining to this Agenda Item are documents WHC/23/18.EXT.COM/4 and WHC/23/18.EXT.COM/INF.4. If you still have energy, I would like to invite Ms. Vera Lacoueilhe, Permanent Delegate of Saint Lucia to UNESCO, and the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory associated with recent conflicts to present the report of the Group. Excellency, thank you for bearing with us all this time, and we would like you to present the outcomes of the Open-ended Working Group. You have the floor.

Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Dear colleagues. Allow me to start by where it usually ends, which is to thank everybody. I would like to really start by expressing my gratitude and thanks to all those who took part in the whole process linked to the Sites of Memory associated with recent conflict. I would start with all States Parties. There was very high attendance. We were told that we had reached the highest average number of participants in a World Heritage Working Group. Member States, States Parties were very well prepared. The level of debate was really very high. And there was, all the time, all through the six months, very high spirit of compromise and respectful exchanges, and I have to thank you all for that. I would also like to thank the, those, all the experts who prepared reports for the Committee on Sites of Memory associated with recent conflict. In the end, we ended up finding these reports extremely useful. They were heavily used by the Members of the Committee and referred to all the time. I would also like to thank the Advisory Bodies. They were present all through the meetings, and they answered questions whenever asked. Of course, I will thank the Secretariat, the ADG, the Director of the World Heritage Centre, but I have to really name particularly Mr. Alessandro Balsamo and Madam Frédérique Aubert for their availability, like, 24 hours a day. I would send them Whatsapps at 11:00 at night asking for information, expecting to get the information in the following days, and I would get the response a few minutes later, sometimes after midnight. Really, the institutional memory of these two staff members is really priceless for the Organization.

I will not repeat in this oral statement what has been said in the report. But I do want to thank my colleagues from the, of the Bureau of this Open-ended Working Group, and the Rapporteur, because they worked very hard to help me move things forward. And there was much more work between meetings than during meetings. It was invisible, but this is what made the difference. I will just explain to you the major the main principles on which we based our work.

The first principle that really guided our work was the principle of consensus. The results of the Open-ended Working Group were unanimously adopted by all participants. They are the outcome of very tough negotiations between and during meetings. Everyone was very conscious of the sensitivity and complexity of the issue. And, therefore, everybody's point of view were very extensively debated. The Decision recommended to you for adoption is a delicate balance among all positions. I'm therefore hoping that consensus will prevail in today's adoption.

The second principle that guided our work was fairness. The first thing that the Open-ended Working Group unanimously adopted was to recommend lifting the ban on Sites of Memory associated with recent conflict. Based on this same principle, the Group thought not to further penalise the nominations that had been blocked and recommended that their evaluation occurs under the procedure and criteria applicable at the time of their submission. Under the same principle of fairness, suspension of paragraphs 61 and 122 of the Operational Guidelines was also recommended concerning the number of sites you can recommend, you can present, every year in order not to penalise them further.

The third principle that served as a basis for our work was never to lose sight of the fact that nothing can prevail over the Convention and its credibility. The Outstanding Universal Value remains the major prerequisite for an inscription on the World Heritage List. It is therefore important to acknowledge that not all Sites of Memory associated with recent conflict are eligible for inscription on the World Heritage List.

The fourth principle was the necessity to uphold UNESCO's peace-building mission. The crucial role of dialogue, peace and reconciliation is an integral part of these guiding principle and of the contestation mechanism. The contestation mechanism is meant as a framework to facilitate dialogue and consultations among States Parties. It was not meant in any way as a tool to give a veto power to any State Party.

Madam Chair, dear colleagues, the guiding principles that are before you might not be perfect, but they were agreed to by everyone, which gives States Parties a sense of ownership that facilitates implementation. Experience drawn from implementation will tell the Committee in the future a further improvement of these guiding principles are deemed necessary. Implementation and experience drawn from it will allow the Committee to monitor the impact of these guiding principles on the Convention, on the World Heritage List, and namely on the process of reconciliation and on the use of Criterion (vi), among other things.

Finally, Madam Chair, to conclude. I would like to make a personal comment drawn from my own experience. After several years of involvement with this Convention, several years of teaching it to young students, after chairing the World Heritage Committee, chairing the first extraordinary session of the General Assembly, I can say the following. You can produce the best rules, the best basic texts, procedures, mechanisms, guidelines, frameworks, whatever you can produce as text. They are elaborated only to help, to frame a subject, to facilitate decision-making. They have no magic powers. They cannot make tensions or divisions disappear. Only States Parties can. It is totally a question of political will. Sites of Memory can bring an immense added value to the World Heritage List. They can enrich it. They can humanise it. They can allow us to leave to our children a more complete World Heritage List, but only if they are brought to the Committee in the spirit of UNESCO's peace-building mandate to build a better future. So, it is entirely within our hands. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Ms. Lacoeylthe, for your presentation, very clear presentation. And I would like to congratulate you on your exceptional leadership of such a challenging topic and coming out with these consolidated outcomes. I would like to open the floor to hear if there is any intervention with regard to this Agenda topic, or maybe we can move to the adoption of the Agenda. I have Belgium, Belgium, you have the floor.

La Délégation de Belgique:

Merci, Madame la Présidente. Je voudrais commencer par remercier chaleureusement la Présidente du Groupe de travail pour son énergie, pour le temps, la patience qu'elle a eue, dont elle a fait preuve dans la conduite très éclairée des travaux du Groupe de travail. Je pense que le résultat que nous avons devant nous est un excellent résultat. De très nombreuses délégations y ont participé, à l'élaboration de ce résultat, ce qui, je pense, est un gage de sérieux et de professionnalisme. Je voudrais me réjouir de la possibilité que nous avons aujourd'hui de lever le moratoire sur ces sites, et de permettre de continuer à appliquer nos conventions, et de permettre également, notamment pour les sites qui ont déjà fait l'objet d'une évaluation, d'être traités lors de la prochaine session ordinaire de ce Comité. Madame la Présidente, encore toutes mes félicitations pour votre travail. Merci.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium. I don't see any more requests for the floor. Oh, sorry South Africa, you have the floor.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Let me join my colleague from Belgium in expressing our appreciation and thanks to the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group, our sister Ms. Vera Lacoeylthe, for the manner in which she presided over the work of the Open-ended Working Group, and for the tireless efforts in ensuring that consensus was reached during the negotiations. We also wish to thank all the colleagues who worked with the members of the Bureau, including our Rapporteur, the Deputy Permanent Delegate from Kenya, Ambassador Hellen Gichuhi, for accurately capturing the discussions held within the Working Group. We all remember very vividly the very lengthy discussions that took place during the Group's meeting, as well as the very constructive spirit that prevailed during the negotiations. And we are pleased that we have reached the final phase of this process. As this outcome document is a reflection of the delicate consensus that was reached after many months of deliberations amongst all States Parties, we strongly encourage Committee Members to adopt the outcome document of the Open-ended Working Group. We thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, South Africa. I would like to give the floor to Russia. You have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. We would like to congratulate the Chairperson of the well, Open-ended Working Group and the Rapporteur and the Bureau Members of this Open-ended Working Group on Sites of

Memory associated with recent conflicts. When the Group has started its work, many experts were rather skeptical about the possibility to reach a consensus on such a complex and multilayered issue. But the solid knowledge in various fields of the Convention and international law, the years of experience within the UNESCO and advanced negotiation skills of the Chairperson, as well as a strong will of the Member States to find a solution, their readiness to dialogue, to hear and to listen to each other, made it possible. We could be only satisfied with the outcomes of the Open-ended Working Group. We strongly support the lift of the moratorium on the evaluation by Advisory Bodies of Sites of Memory submitted before the creation of the Group. And we would also underline the importance of the major guiding principles that States Parties have agreed upon, namely that the inscription of Sites of Memory associated with the recent conflicts should serve the peace-building mission of UNESCO, and that it is important to reach an agreement through dialogue among the concerned States Parties upon all nominations in this regard. We consider that the new mechanism that will be established represents a powerful tool in this purpose with the new subsequent, subsections, sorry, and the nomination dossiers concerning the interpretation, strategy, education and information programmes. Thus, the outcomes of the Open-ended Working Group represent solid frameworks for all stakeholders of the Convention involved in the preparation and evaluation of the nomination dossiers, and will serve as a compass for the Committee in its decision-making process. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. I would like to give the floor to Japan, to be followed by Argentina and India. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much. First of all, I would like to express our full support for the outcome of the Working Group. In this connection, I commend the Chairperson of the Working Group, my dear friend Vera, for her excellent and creative leadership in bringing the Working Group into a successful conclusion. As mentioned by the Russian Delegation, we were very concerned at the outset. We are not quite sure what was going to happen, very honestly. But thanks to your excellent leadership, we have come to an agreement. That was, I think, that was in many ways a great success. And having been a Member of the Bureau of this Working Group, I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my colleagues in the Bureau, the Ambassadors of South Africa, Kenya and Austria for constructive suggestions and comments. From time to time. We had heated discussions, but everybody who participated in the Working Group shared the spirit, the constructive spirit. So, we have come to an agreement on the Draft Decision which is presented before the Committee today. Given the history of the discussions on this very difficult and sensitive issue, we should not reopen any of the languages contained in the parts, Part 1 and 2. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Japan. I would like to give the floor to Argentina to be followed by India, then Ethiopia. Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Only to say that I will ask the floor after the decision.

Chairperson:

Well noted, Argentina. We have India to be followed by Ethiopia. You have the floor, India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Madam Chair. India too, would like to congratulate the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group of this extremely sensitive topic. We would also like to thank you for your excellent, succinct presentation that you've made here, and commend and congratulate for you to organize this event. In fact, what was even more challenging was that the whole proceeding or whole discussion was happening online. From the point of view of India, we too welcome this decision of removing this moratorium, and that discussion, that discussing these nomination dossiers which were suspended for the last, I think, four years, and that we evaluate them on a case-by-case basis. Also, the suspension of the Paras 61 and 121 of the Operational Guidelines. You very rightly mentioned that nothing can prevail over the Convention. So, obviously, one of the paramount, I think, discussions, and decisions that was taken is that every site that is being discussed, which is case by case basis, would have the outstanding universal value. And that's something that was, that is something that we also stand by. And that you articulated the concern for this crucial role of dialogue that the World Heritage Centre and the World Heritage Committee can have in the process of the nominating of the Sites of Memory of recent conflict. And that's something also we agree. So, we congratulate you for your excellent report. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Distinguished Representative of India. Now, I'd like to give the floor to Ethiopia, to be followed by Oman and then Mali. Ethiopia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair. From my personal observation, one of the best Working Groups, which I attended, seriously, last year was this Working Group. Really. Thank you. And congratulations, Chair. I would like to extend my appreciation for the Chair, for the Bureau, and for all who were expediting the work of this Working Group. Because it was delicate and there was a conceptual issue, which brings a Working Group into back and forth, the principles and the case-by-case issue, and finally, how it ends up in a constructive spirit is one of the legacies that we need to follow in the future dealings. So, that, I support what has been said by the Distinguished Ambassador of South Africa, and to proceed to decide on the 'DR'. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Ethiopia, for your intervention. I would like to give now the floor to Oman to be followed by Mali. Oman, you have the floor, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair, I would like also to add my voice to all the voices which congratulated the, and thank the Chair, the Secretariat and the Board, the Bureau, of this Working Group. It is an excellent outcome. However, I would like to have a clarification regarding the contestation. Because I don't know if I have missed the reading, or. And the contestation is for how long? For example, I know that the Secretariat, the World Heritage Centre, they are going to put a lot of effort to solve the contestation, etc. But what about if they are not going to reach a conclusion? This is one question in need of clarification. As well as in the existing, we said in, in Paragraph 16(a), where a State Party may contest an existing. What do you mean by "existing" here? Do you mean here the new, the existing submitted, or which is already evaluated? Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Oman. I'm just trying to take your question. Okay, so now we have questions by Oman. I will take the Mali intervention, and then if there is no more questions or interventions, I'll move to Madam Lacoecilhe to answer, Her Excellency, to answer this. So, I have Mali, to be followed by Egypt. Mali, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci bien, Madame la Présidente. Je voudrais d'abord vous adresser mes chaleureuses félicitations pour la manière admirable avec laquelle vous avez conduit nos débats. Il a fallu beaucoup de patience. Les choses n'ont pas été faciles ce matin, mais à présent on commence à aller de l'avant. Mes félicitations s'adressent également à la Présidente du Groupe de travail et ainsi qu'à tous les membres du Groupe pour les efforts soutenus pendant longtemps, six mois durant, qui nous ont valu de réaliser le bel compromis que nous, le compromis formidable auquel nous assistons aujourd'hui. Et c'est pour cette raison que nous aimerions vraiment soutenir l'adoption, donc, de ce travail-là. Et nous n'aimerions pas que nous puissions remettre en cause de cet appui-là. Je vous remercie.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Mali. I would like to give the floor now to the Distinguished Representative of Egypt. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. My Delegation would like to welcome the outcomes of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory associated with recent conflicts, and commend the excellent efforts extended by its Chairperson, Ms. Vera and all participating in delegation to reach an agreement on the guiding principles and suspend the current moratorium on considering these sites in the Committee, taking into consideration the need to change and to enhance dialogue among concerned Member States. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Egypt. I see no more flags raised. I would like to give the floor to Her Excellency. Madam Lacoecilhe, if you would like to answer the questions raised by Distinguished Representative of Oman. Two questions, about the contestation, and the other one specific on the contestation. Is it about "existing"? What does it mean, "existing"? Is it already submitted or evaluated already? Would you like to give the answer, please?

Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory:

Yes, thank you Chairperson. By "existing", it means, what it means is "submitted for evaluation". And this was precisely because the contestation is also possible for sites that are on the Tentative List. So, on the Tentative List or "existing", which means "already submitted". As to the contestation mechanism, it is up to the Committee. It goes back to the Committee in any case, and the Committee might decide to ask them to continue their dialogue. But then it comes back to the following Committee for a decision. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Oman, is this okay? Thank you. So, if that's satisfactory now for Oman, we can move to the, to consider the Decision before we... Can we please display it on the screen? I would like to ask the Rapporteur if we have received any amendment. And as explained by the Distinguished Representative of Argentina, there were some amendments. If you can just outline them?

Rapporteur:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We have received one amendment from the Delegation of Argentina. In the Draft Decision, which is Para 1 to Para 17. Under two subheads, there are no changes. Argentina has proposed an addition under the subheading Part 3: Implementation of the present Decision. Para 18, that reads as "also decides that, in reference to the nominations mentioned in Paragraph 9 above, and taking into account the exceptional circumstances, which affected the timetable for such nominations, the procedures will be applied so as to allow for those States Parties which have requested it at the present extraordinary session, the examination of their nominations by the Committee at its 45th session". That's all.

Chairperson:

Thank you for outlining this. Now, if you don't mind, I would like to go para by para, if this is acceptable by all.

Okay, so Paragraph 1. I see no objection. It is adopted.

Paragraph 2. I see no objection. It is adopted.

Paragraph 3. I see no objection. It is adopted.

Paragraph 4. No names raised. It is adopted.

Paragraph 5. No objection. It is adopted.

Paragraph 6. I see no names raised. It is adopted.

Paragraph 7. No objection. Adopted.

Paragraph 8. If I have to tell you a secret. I love really thumping on them. And that's why sometimes I take it para by para. I'm sure you have noticed from the PX already.

So, Paragraph 7, can we adopt it again? I see no objection. It is adopted.

Paragraph 8. I see no objection. It is adopted.

Paragraph 9. Can you scroll down, please? Paragraph 9. I see no objection. It is adopted.

Paragraph 10. I see no objection. It is adopted.

Paragraph 11. As it was sent to you. I see no objection. It is adopted.

Paragraph 12. I see no objection. It is adopted.

And now we move to Paragraph 13. No objection. It is adopted.

Paragraph 14, which is Part 2. And no objection. Adopted.

Paragraph 15. Adopted

Paragraph 16. There is no amendment there. So, as I sent to you, can we adopt it? It's adopted.

Paragraph 17. Where we have received the amendment as outlined by our Distinguished Rapporteur. And it was here there is an amendment by Argentina which had, adds a part to to this, and it's a new paragraph. It's an amendment to Paragraph 17, if I understand. And then an addition. Maybe, I would like to give first the floor to Argentina to explain the amendment, and then maybe I'll give the floor to India and other members if they want to intervene. Please, Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

We did not ask for the floor. We are in Part 3, 18.

Chairperson:

Sorry, it is my mistake. I will give you the floor when it comes. In Paragraph 17, the Rapporteur, why are we striking it out in red?

I would like an explanation before we move forward and give the floor to other Members. So, I think we have an explanation by the Secretariat? Please, can you give an explanation, Mr. Lazare?

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Yes. Thank you, Chairperson. So, I think what you see here is, of course, the fact that this is the current text of the Operational Guidelines and then the amendment in the text of the Operational Guidelines of, it's, of course, to delete "Members of the Committee" only. If the Committee decides, because this is in line with the Decision taken by the, I mean proposed by, the Working Group. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Maybe the Chair can also, because I still, to be honest, I still did not understand. Maybe the Chair can provide an explanation. Please.

Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory:

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. This is deleted here as it is now in the Operational Guidelines, because the recommendation is to make nominations available to all States Parties, not just to the Members of the Committee. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I hope this clarifies this strikethrough. So, can we just adopt 17 as, with the strikethrough here, I mean, to remove this "to the Members of the Committee", I see no objection. Then Paragraph 17, as you see it on the screen, it is adopted.

Now we move to Paragraph... Hold on. Is it on 17? Okay. Thank you. Now we move to Paragraph 18. I want you, please, there was some countries raising the flag before Belgium on Paragraph 18. I remember India was raising. Not anymore. Mexico, I think, was raising also. And Japan. And then I'll give the floor to... Okay. So, it was not on this. It was to clarify. Okay. I think Belgium, you will be the first, but I'll give the floor first to Argentina to explain their amendment and then I'll give the floor to Belgium. You have the floor, Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina:

Yes, please. It's an explanation of the implementation. Just that. Not an amendment.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much. So, it is not an amendment. It is just a clarification on the implementation. And with that, I would like to give the floor to Belgium.

La Délégation de Belgique :

Merci, Madame la Présidente. Dans la même veine, je souhaiterais également avoir une clarification. Ce paragraphe mentionne le Paragraphe 9 qui évoque les dossiers dont l'évaluation, des propositions d'inscription considérées comme complètes. Je voudrais simplement avoir la confirmation que ces propositions, qui ont déjà fait l'objet d'une évaluation par ICOMOS et dont l'examen a été suspendu jusqu'à l'adoption prochaine de ce point, pourront valablement être examinées par le Comité à sa 45^e session. Merci beaucoup.

Chairperson:

Thank you. So, I will get some more interventions now from Japan, and others, and then we'll come back to you, Madam Chair of the Working Group, to reply. I have Japan, and I have Mexico. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much. With regard to the proposal from Argentina. We would like to express our support. The files, which had already been submitted before the discussions of the Working Group, had to be positioned in very exceptional circumstances, including the postponement of the Committee meeting in 2022. The proposal from Argentina as it stands does not reopen any of the original text agreement of the Working Group or change the time frame for future nominations, and therefore we support this proposal. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Japan. Mexico, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Mexico:

Thank you, Madam Chairman. Just to express our support to the Argentinian amendment.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Mexico. Egypt, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Given the exceptional circumstances which affected the timetable for the nominations mentioned in Paragraph 9 of the Draft Decision, we support the proposed amendment submitted by the Delegation of Argentina to allow the 45th session of the Committee to examine files for States Parties, which have requested the examination of the nominations. Taking into consideration that the aforementioned States Parties submitted their nominations within the timeframes identified by the Operational Guidelines of the Convention. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Egypt. So, now, there was a question that was raised to the Chair, if I'm not mistaken, to be answered by Belgium, a question by Belgium. I will give the floor to the Chair and then. Okay, before I give the floor to the Chair, because I wanted to group all the questions. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, if you want to intervene, because I want to group everything together.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Just to support the proposal of Argentina, given the exceptional circumstances which affected the timetable. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. And then I give the floor to South Africa.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Indeed, I join all the colleagues who are supporting Argentina. In fact, the issue, as was raised during the discussions, and I think the spirit is captured in Paragraph 9. So, we support Argentina's paragraph.

Chairperson:

Thank you, South Africa. And Rwanda, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We are also supporting the proposition presented by Argentina.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Rwanda. I hope you're writing the names. Mali, you have the floor. Then, Ethiopia.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci, Madame la Présidente. Nous nous joignons également, donc, à l'Argentine, à la proposition, avec le soutien du Japon, de l'Égypte et les autres. Donc, c'est juste pour exprimer notre soutien. Merci.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Mali. Ethiopia, to be followed by Thailand, then Zambia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you. Just, just to support the amendment made by Argentina. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Can you add Ethiopia? And then we have Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Yes. Thailand would also like to support the amendment proposed by Argentina. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Thailand. We have Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you. Thank you, Chair. Zambia wishes to support Argentina.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I've seen also, I've seen. Belgium, I will go back to the Chair to answer your question, I promise you. Okay, you don't want the answer. Okay. We'll go now to the... We have the Russian Federation, and then we will move forward.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson, just to support the proposal of Argentina also. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Russia. We have Belgium and then Nigeria. Belgium, you have the floor.

La Délégation de Belgique :

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente.

Un petit point de clarification qui s'adressait davantage au Secrétariat, puisque c'est sur la future procédure d'examen des dossiers. Et nous supportons, nous soutenons, pardon, l'amendement argentin.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium. Do you still want also the reply from the Chair to your questions? Do you want? Okay, let me continue then with the Member States and then we'll figure this out if you don't mind. And then I have, after Belgium, Nigeria, Oman, and Saudi Arabia, and Bulgaria. So, Nigeria please.

The Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Nigeria will also want to support the proposal by Argentina. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Nigeria. After that, we have Oman.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thanks again, Madam Chair. Actually, it should be automatically, if there is no objection from any State Party, that we are all supporting this amendment. Therefore, we need to go for adoption. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I tend to agree with you, but maybe I will state out the names, and if they are in favor of supporting, can you please indicate for me?

Bulgaria, would you like to support, please? So, can we please add the name of Bulgaria? And then we have India, and, sorry, Saudi Arabia. Would you like to support? Okay, Saudi Arabia, please. And then India? Yes. Also India. Qatar? Yes, we would like to support. Oman, we already, Oman, we did not mention also Oman, please. And, okay, So, we see a growing support for that. ICOMOS, I have to apologise to you because unless it's requested by Member States to give an explanation, I wouldn't really, I would refrain from giving you the floor, unless there's a question raised by Member States. Thank you.

Now, now with that, maybe. Belgium, do you still want to hear from the Chair about the? Yes. Madam Chair, please. Oh, Secretariat. Okay, Secretariat, please, give an answer.

Le Secrétariat :

Merci, Madame la Présidente. Est-ce que vous permettez que je demande à la Distinguée Déléguée de la Belgique de répéter sa question, peut-être, pour que ce soit plus clair ?

The Delegation of Belgium:

Maybe I should do it in English. Non, plus sérieusement, donc simplement vous demander de confirmer que, selon le Paragraphe 9, donc, les propositions d'inscription qui avaient déjà fait l'objet d'un examen, ou plutôt de procédure d'évaluation complète, pourront bien être soumises à la 45^e COM. Merci.

Le Secrétariat :

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente, et je remercie la Distinguée Déléguée de Belgique. Donc, si j'ai bien compris, la question était effectivement de savoir si les propositions d'inscription qui avaient déjà fait l'objet, et je pense qu'il faut retourner dans la Décision de cette proposition d'inscription pour, et je pense que le cas dont vous soulevez est un cas qui avait été ajourné, ou ajourné d'une certaine manière, si je peux dire comme ça, et donc la question c'est de savoir si ce cas-là reviendrait effectivement au Comité avec la même décision. Je pense que...

Chairperson:

Would you please kind to reply to the question?

Le Secrétariat :

C'est ça ? C'est bien ça ?

The Delegation of Belgium:

No, just to mention that this was mentioned in the Decision of Manama. And so, it had been suspended due to the proceedings of the Working Party. I know it's a question about resuming normal procedure.

Chairperson:

I would like to give the floor to the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group to explain that, and maybe we can just move forward. Thank you.

Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory:

Thank you, Madam Chair. This nomination mentioned by Belgium was also part of the moratorium, was also blocked like others. So, even if it was already evaluated, it falls under the same category and this applies to it. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. And I would... Okay, so with that, I would like to move to the adoption of this number 18.

Unidentified speaker:

Sorry.

Chairperson:

Hold on, please. Madam Chair?

Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory:

The most important...

Chairperson:

Okay. Please go ahead.

Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory:

I'm very sorry to interrupt you, but as the paragraph reads, it has to be requested before the end of this session. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Okay. So, shall we proceed with the adoption of Paragraph 18 as amended? Okay. So, just to clarify to the Members with their questions. So, any Member who would like to indicate that, should indicate that before the end of the session, which means that it needs to be added to this Decision here. So, if you want to go ahead with that, by all means, add the name of your country to this Decision.

Now, maybe I would suggest a phrasing of this. It needs to be phrased in a paragraph. Maybe the Secretariat can help us in phrasing a paragraph, and then inserting the country's name who would like to request that. For the sake of time. And I would like, meanwhile, to tell the Secretariat, propose a paragraph that can be accepted, to add the names in. Can we adopt Paragraph 18 and then maybe have a follow-up paragraph to that with the names of countries? Okay. Is that possible or not? Madam Chair of the Open-ended Working Group, maybe you can provide an explanation. Thank you.

Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on Sites of Memory:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the paragraph of Argentina doesn't request anything to be added to this Decision. And some of these States Parties may not be here to add it to the Decision. I think, before the end of the session means before the end of the session. They could make this request in writing to the World Heritage Centre before the end of the session. But I don't think we should do it right now, immediately in the room, because some of them might not be here, and this is not my understanding of this paragraph. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. So, now I hear two different opinions. Here, and Madam Chair of the Open-ended Working Group has kindly clarified to us, and here with the, Mr. Lazare has also explained to us the, that it should be included in the Decision. With these two opinions and with so much at stake for Member States, I want to hear from the Legal Advisor on how, what is the modality that is considered to make this request? And if enough is writing before the end of the session, and that's it, full stop.

But before I give you the floor, I just want to say that since we are almost at 6:00 o'clock, I will give the answer to the, I will give the Legal Advisor the room to answer, but it seems, or I think it's almost certain, unless we are super humans, that we're [not] going to finish before 6:00 o'clock today. And therefore I propose that we continue tomorrow. After we finish today, after 6:00 o'clock, we continue tomorrow, the 25th of January. All arrangements have been made by the Secretariat for us to meet here, in this room, with the remaining Agenda items. However,

please note that since there is the 'Women in Multilateralism' event being planned at 9:30, I think tomorrow, or 10:00 to 1:00, and being a woman in multilateralism, I mean, I would like to give some, a little bit of flexibility to start the session tomorrow at 10:30 instead of 10:00, to allow Delegations to participate in the opening, and then move here to start, to continue the discussion at 10:30 tomorrow. But we're not finished here yet. I would like to hear from the Legal Advisor on the modality and to clarify this and move forward. You have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, subject to confirmation by Argentina, which is the proposer of this amendment, my reading of the text is that there is no need for the Decision itself to refer to those, explicitly, to those States Parties that may wish for their items, their sites or their nominations, sorry, to be considered by the 45th session. Several courses of action are possible provided that a specific condition be respected. What would happen, first of all, is for this Decision to be adopted. Once this Decision is adopted, any States among the ones that are referred to in Paragraph 9, and most particularly in Footnote 1 of the Decision, may express their wish for the, in the course of the present session, for their nomination to be examined by the Committee at its 45th session. They may do that immediately after the adoption of the Decision by expressing this in session, and it would, it could be reflected in the Summary Records, or they could do it in writing prior to the end of the session and send that to you. But in that case, I would recommend that you, first of all, this needs to be arrived before the end of the extraordinary session. You might, for example, if you were to receive this, you might make reference to that in proceedings, so that there is also a record in the Summary Records and there be no doubt. What is undoubted about this amendment is that once this present extraordinary session is over, then only the examination of the nominations by the Committee at the 45th session will only be possible for those States that can, that have expressed their view for the procedures to be allowed, to be applied so as to allow the examination of their nominations whenever this requires some sort of speeding up of the process. I hope this clarifies, Madam Chair. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Then it is clarified.

If there is a request by any Member State, to be sent before the end of this session. So, please let us, in writing, so that I can reflect it tomorrow, and also say it in the procedures as well. Now, I would like us to move forward and adopt the amendments, and maybe adopt the whole Decision today so that we can receive the requests by tomorrow.

Paragraph 18, as amended by Argentina and supported by almost every, almost everyone in the Committee, can we adopt as amended by Argentina? Paragraph 18. I see no objection. It is then adopted. Now, we move to the next paragraph?

Unidentified Speaker:

Non, non, non.

Chairperson:

No next paragraph. Sorry. Because I saw extra numbers here. I think I'm too eager to adopt more. Maybe we can move to the next item if we still have time. Now, if we can adopt the item as a whole. Can we adopt the whole Decision as a whole? I see no objection. It is then adopted. Thank you.

Applause

Now. After the adoption, Argentina wants to take the floor. Please be brief, as brief as you can.

The Delegation of Argentina:

I never take so long.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you. I know.

The Delegation of Argentina:

Thank you.

Chairperson:

You have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor. And thank you also to the Chair of the Working Group, Vera, Delegate of Santa Lucia. Thank you, Vera for all your hard work and the outstanding results achieved on this issue. Thank you, all, you Delegates, Member States. This year, 2023, we commemorate the 40th anniversary of an uninterrupted

democracy in Argentina. We recovered democracy in my country in 1983, after years of military governments. The museum and Site of Memory, ESMA, is the memory of those terrible years of the horrors Argentines suffered. Horrors that must never happen again. *Nunca mas*. This vital anniversary is not the only reason 2023 is a key year to have ESMA and its outstanding value recognised by UNESCO and the world. It is a key juncture both nationally and regionally, I will even say globally. Unfortunately, as I am sure you are all aware, several countries in my region have been facing hate speech and violent attacks on democratic institutions recently. In this context, we are convinced that today, more than ever, our society is flooded with fake news and hate speech, need to be reminded of the horrors and suffering that losing democracy implies. ESMA is exactly the reminder of this, of everything that must never happen again. In this context that we strongly welcome and appreciate the Committee Decision, in particular Point 18, to apply the procedures to allow for the examination and interest nomination presented before February 1st, 2022, in our upcoming ordinary session. Taking into account the exceptional circumstances, circumstances which have undoubtedly affected the Committee work and which find us here today. I would therefore like to request that Argentina be included in this group, and to reiterate our willingness, commitment and availability to work with the Secretariat, the Advisory Body and all Members country so that our nomination can be examined by the Committee at its 45th session in September. Thank you, all of you. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Argentina. And I would like, upon the adoption of this item, to also thank again the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group. I see Rwanda requesting the floor. Well, Rwanda and Argentina, I was planning to start with the next item. But you have the floor now.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Yes. Thank you Madam Chair. Merci, Madame la Présidente. Je voudrais, suite à la levée de, et à l'adoption de l'amendement proposé par l'Argentine, Madame la Présidente. Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Please, no. You have the floor, Your Excellency.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci beaucoup. Je voudrais, suite à l'amendement proposé et adopté par l'Argentine, que le Rwanda souhaiterait que les Sites de mémoire des génocides perpétrés contre les Tutsis du Rwanda sur Liste indicative depuis 2012 et dont le dossier est considéré comme complet, soit examiné pour une inscription par le Comité à sa 45^e session en septembre de cette année. Je vous remercie.

Chairperson:

Thank you, well noted, but I would like to reiterate the request to have an official, in writing, if possible, so that we can reflect it tomorrow. You have the floor, Your Excellency, please, by all means.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Excuse me, Madam Chair. In writing to the Secretariat? To whom, please? To the President? You didn't clarify this.

Chairperson:

To the Chair. To myself.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I see no more request for the floor. Now we have about. Belgium. Belgium, you have the floor.

La Délégation de Belgique :

Merci, Madame la Présidente. Je ne veux pas prolonger les débats, mais je profite de l'occasion pour indiquer également que la Belgique souhaite, que la Belgique souhaite que le dossier qui a été mis au frigo soit ressorti du frigo, et que nous puissions l'examiner lors de la 45^e Com en fonction de la Décision 42/COM/8/B/24 et nous vous transmettrons ceci par écrit.

Chairperson:

Thank you, thank you, Belgium. And we wait your kind letter in this regard. Do I see any more requests for the floor?

Now, I know that we have almost five minutes left. It's about seven minutes left. Okay, now we have five minutes left, and when, now, if you would like, we could move to the next item. But if you would like, we can have it at 10:30 tomorrow. Ethiopia.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

I think, Madam. Thank you. We had a very nice day and a nice conclusion. I recommend to start the new Agenda in a fresh mind tomorrow. Five minutes will not be adequate time to start this big Agenda.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I was hoping to trick you into getting into the new item and then stay here all night, but I think I have failed in my attempt.

With that, I would like to thank you all very much. Looking forward to seeing you all tomorrow at 10:30. I would like to thank you all for your spirit of collaboration, for all the discussions that took place. I would like to thank members of the Secretariat for their support. I would like to thank again the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group, and all of you Members and observers, Member States, for all the discussions and the decisions taken apart. Good night. Have a nice dinner. I'll see you tomorrow at 10:30 a.m., same place. Thank you.

Applause

The meeting rose at 5:55 pm.

SECOND DAY

Wednesday, 25 January 2023

FIRST MEETING

10:30 am – 1:45 pm

Chairperson:

H.H. Princess Haifa Al Mogrin

DEUXIÈME JOUR

Mercredi 25 janvier 2023

PREMIÈRE RÉUNION

10h30 – 13h45

Présidente :

S.A. Princesse Haifa Al Mogrin

5. ANY OTHER MATTER: NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST – NOMINATIONS TO BE PROCESSED ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS (ITEM PROPOSED BY JAPAN, BELGIUM, BULGARIA, GREECE AND ITALY) // TOUTE AUTRE QUESTION : PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL – PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION DEVANT ÊTRE TRAITÉES EN URGENCE (POINT PROPOSÉ PAR LE JAPON, LA BELGIQUE, LA BULGARIE, LA GRÈCE ET L'ITALIE)

Chairperson:

Good morning, I hope you all had a good sleep and that you come here today with a fresh spirit to start the meeting. We have a remaining item which is “Any other matter” and we are going to start with that today our 18th extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee.

Now, we start with “Any other matter” which is “Nominations to the World Heritage List — Nominations to be processed on an emergency basis”. Now, I would like to recall that the relevant working document concerning this Agenda item is WHC/23/18.EXTCOM/5. The evaluations by ICOMOS can be found in the nomination document INF.5. Document WHC/23/18.EXTCOM/INF5.2 presents factual errors identified by States Parties to the Advisory Bodies during the evaluations and it was distributed to you on Monday.

I now invite the Secretariat to present this document and read out the list of nominations for which factual errors notifications have been received and to add some explanations. Mr Alessandro Balsamo, Chief of the Nominations Unit of the World Heritage Centre, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Madam Chair. In compliance with the procedure of paragraph 150 and annex 12 of the Operational Guidelines, the notification of factual errors, as submitted by the nominating States Parties and reviewed by the relevant Advisor Body, are presented in the language in which they are being submitted in document WHC/23/18.EXTCOM/INF.5.2. This document was published on Monday and included three columns: the first presenting the original text extracted from the evaluation, the second presenting the proposed changes by the nominating State Party and the third including the Advisory Bodies reply.

In relation to the nomination to be examined at the present session, we received factual errors notifications concerning the following files: “Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli”, Lebanon, “Historic Centre of the Port City of Odesa”, Ukraine and “Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate”, Yemen. Before each of the presentation of the concerned nominations by the Advisory Body, the Secretariat will announce the related factual errors notifications received. For those notifications of factual errors that have been acknowledged by the concerned Advisory Body and that have an impact in the text of the proposed statement of OUV, the related amendment is already included in the text that is ready to be shown on the screen in green highlighting. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo. Are there any comments or questions? Japan you have the floor to be followed by Russia.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much and good morning to my colleagues. I would like to make one suggestion. Well, in fact the World Heritage system that we are talking about today is in place to protect the cultural heritage and the Outstanding Universal Value. The In Danger List exists to protect the cultural heritage facing serious and specific damages as stipulated in paragraph 161 of the Operational Guidelines. It is the responsibility of this Committee to take actions to protect such cultural heritage.

We have three files in front of us. Yesterday, we agreed with clear voting results to discuss those three items under the Agenda item: "Nominations to the World Heritage List — Nominations to be processed on an emergency basis". In all three items, ICOMOS provided positive evaluation recommending the inscription of all three files in the In Danger List. In short, the OUV is there for all three items files and the need for emergency protection is there for all three items. Therefore, in view of our discussions yesterday, I propose to adopt the three decisions altogether without debate and to go for a roll call vote for that purpose. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Japan. I would also like to check about the validity, if it is valid or not to propose this to the members here. But I will give the floor to Russia and then we can discuss that. Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a question to the distinguished representatives of the World Heritage Centre. We have just heard your short report about the information received from the States Parties on factual errors and how you dealt with it and we are grateful. My small question is: could you please give us the dates when the States Parties sent you the information? Because, and I will read the Operational Guidelines which states clearly: "The concerned States Parties can send, at least 14 days before the opening of the session of the Committee, a letter to the Chairperson, with copies to the Advisory Bodies, detailing the factual errors they might have identified in the evaluation of their nomination dossier made by the Advisory Bodies."

Since, we, as member States of the Committee, received information about the date and the provisional Agenda of this session less than 14 days ahead, it means that there is a breach of the regulation of Guideline 150. Because either you did receive it later or if you received it on time, how on earth would they possibly know when would be the session and what would be on the Agenda.

I would appreciate this comment. I would also appreciate a comment on the proposal of the distinguished Japanese Ambassador. In my humble opinion each proposal, I mean each decision is to be considered on its face value, separately. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Mr Balsamo, would you like to answer the questions and then maybe you can address the request later?

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Madam Chair. The short answer is that we received the factual errors notifications on the 12th of January from the States Parties. Now, paragraph 150 actually does not apply in the case of nominations submitted on an emergency basis because paragraph 161 clearly states that the normal timetable and definition of completeness for the submission and processing of nomination dossier of emergency nominations, nominations submitted under emergency procedures, are dispensed from the normal timetable, including also factual errors submissions.

Also, I would like to underline that in any case, in any ordinary session of the Committee, the document on the factual errors letter is never submitted to the Committee before the first day of the session of the Committee itself. So, we actually comply with, I would say, normal procedural in terms of the submission of the document because this is really the practice. But, of course, with regard to other dates and delay, paragraph 161 clearly dispense us from following the 14 days that are asked by paragraph 150.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo. Russia, I hope this answered your question. Now, with regard to the request of the distinguished representative of Japan. These items are different items in nature and to be honest I am surprised by this request, but, again, I would like to hear maybe more, to give you the chance to decide, from the Director of the World Heritage Centre. Maybe he can also give us some insights about this. You have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente. C'est juste pour partager avec les membres du Comité, cette question un peu sur l'expérience des adoptions en blocs de projets de décision par le Comité. Si vous vous rappelez bien, effectivement, cette question avait déjà été abordée pour les examens des rapports sur l'état de conservation, notamment, en 2003 et en 2019. Le Comité en fait avait présenté deux catégories : les types de rapport qui existent, les rapports qui doivent faire l'objet d'une discussion par le Comité, et les rapports d'état de conservation qui peuvent être notés sans discussion. Donc, c'est pour cela que les projets relatifs au rapport qui n'ont pas fait l'objet de demandes de discussion de la part des membres du Comité ne sont pas débattus en plénière et ceux qui ne font l'objet d'aucun amendement sont adoptés en bloc.

Ceci est l'expérience du Comité et cela veut dire que le Comité, bien sûr, est libre de décider de la façon dont il souhaite traiter cette question, de quelle manière, quand un rapport tient compte de ce précédent sur les rapports d'état de conservation que le Comité a déjà étudié. Merci beaucoup Madame la Présidente.

C'est juste pour ajouter, si vous le permettez Madame la Présidente, que pour le cas des dossiers de nomination, nous avons reçu des amendements et peut être que Madame la Rapporteuse pourrait nous en dire un peu plus. Merci beaucoup Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Before I give the floor to Madam Rapporteur, maybe I would also like to hear from the distinguished representative of Ethiopia. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Madam, and good morning all. I think, concerning the proposal of the distinguished Ambassador of Japan, that Ethiopia will never accept that idea. This is culture. This is cultural heritage, and thank you to the director for the explanation given on previous conservation reports and other issues. Concerning natural heritage issues, it might be the case, but this is culture, debatable issues, different cases, different scenarios. And we need to discuss case-by-case. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency. I would like to give the floor to Madam Rapporteur to explain about the amendment that we have received on one of the sites. You have the floor.

Rapporteur:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We have just received an amendment from the Russian Federation for the draft decision 18 EXT.COM 5.2.

Chairperson:

Sorry, there is a point of order, please.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

I am sorry everybody, but could you please, Madam Chair, explain to me why you are now announcing that about the amendment on a decision that we are not yet discussing because we have not yet come even to the first site, right? And this should be the third on the list.

Chairperson:

Clearly, I got your point. Now, the idea here is that maybe we do not need to get in depth of the detail of the amendment, but amendments are not secret information; it is public information. So, to say that there is an amendment by Russia is not a top-secret thing and I am sure that our colleagues here have been duly notified that there has been an amendment by the distinguished delegation of Russia and that this is public information for all. It should be there; it has just been received, now you are notified. Now, when we come to examine case-by-case or if we decide to address them as a whole then maybe we will go to that but this is another discussion.

Now, I want to give the floor to the distinguished representative of South Africa and then I will hear from the other requests for the floor. You have the floor.

The Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I hope we are going to have a good day today. Please, guide us, Madam Chair, how do you want us to deal with this matter? Because I wanted to comment on and to support what Ethiopia said in response to the proposal by Japan because I agree that. I think from the explanation we got from the director, it is different from the state of conservation report. Here, we are dealing with a nomination per se. Each has his own merit, its peculiarities, and therefore to claim them as one submitted by different States, sovereign states, it will not be good practice and good governance.

So, I support the points raised by Ethiopia and I propose that if we were to get to consideration of these dossiers, we should consider each decision in its own merit. Thanks.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency. I would like to give the floor to Italy but I want to apologise to Oman and Italy. If you bear with me, I will give the floor to Oman first because they requested the floor before. You have the floor, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much. Good morning to everyone. Oman has a comment and a question regarding the Yemen's file. So, I would like to open the Yemen's file. Thank you.

Chairperson:

I am sorry, Your Excellency, now, would you like us to start with the files? I mean because there is an order to the files.

The Delegation of Oman:

Yes, that is what I meant. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Now, I would like to give the floor to Italy to be followed by Mali. Italy, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to echo what the Japanese Ambassador mentioned earlier and let me clarify the point. I represent Italy and Italy is one of the countries who actually asked a request for the addition of these items to the Agenda. We did it after long consideration of the issue and we considered that the time was ripe for the inscription of the three items on the Agenda, and therefore on the World Heritage List. We never meant that these items should be considered as one, we never meant or underlined the fact that they did not have their cultural specificities. We simply thought that the three with equal standing and equal footing deserved to be assessed by the Committee and therefore be inscribed on the List as a package because the three of them received the support and favourable positions from ICOMOS with the recommendation to inscribe.

This is exactly what we meant and this is the reason why we asked them, the three of them, to be added to the Agenda and discussed today. So, it is very important for us as a proposal, and it is very important that the whole Committee here takes this into consideration not to decouple the three from the package, the very idea that the three of them are ripe for inscription. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Italy. I would like to give the floor to Belgium to be followed by the Russian Federation. Sorry Mali, I meant Mali. You have the floor first.

La Délégation du Mali :

Merci bien Madame la Présidente. Comme vous posez la question, alors, à ce stade, nous aimerions vous indiquer notre option clairement pour l'examen cas par cas.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mali. I have Belgium to be followed by Russia and then Greece. Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Good morning, Ms Chairperson, good morning, colleagues. I would like to support the position expressed both by Japan and Italy and add some elements to that. The first element is that we, as a Committee, bear responsibility in inscribing those three sites on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Why? Because there is a unanimous positive recommendation by ICOMOS, and the two things we need to examine today is whether there is an Outstanding Universal Value to those three sites and whether there is urgency. In both cases the response is yes. That is why we support the consideration of those three items as a package. And I would like to underline the commonalities between those three inscriptions. That is why we ask for having those three together under the same items. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium. I would now like to give the floor to Russia to be followed by Greece and Bulgaria.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Needless to say that I join my voice to those who said that every proposal should be regarded on its face value, separately, as per the rules of procedure, first point. Second, I have a small question to Italy.

The distinguished Italian representative just said that they took time as a group to come to this proposal to add this item on the Agenda, and they decided to add this item on the Agenda because time is ripe, there is urgency, and because all three nominations received positive opinions from ICOMOS. I have a question: how did this group of countries know what was the recommendation of ICOMOS if the documents by ICOMOS were distributed after the provisional Agenda.? Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. I will give the floor to Italy if they want to intervene about your last question, but I would like to now turn to Greece. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Madam Chair and good morning to all colleagues. Greece also joins its voice to the urgency of the matter of examining together the three Agenda items. There are the reasons just mentioned by Italy and Belgium. We fully subscribe to this. We are also one of the countries which worked together with Italy for this file and given the extraordinary circumstances and the urgency of all these files in their substance, we believe it is very important to deal with them as a package and forward with their adoption. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Greece. I would like to give the floor now to Bulgaria to be followed by Zambia.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Ms Chairperson. We just want to support the position of Japan, Italy, Belgium and Greece, and Bulgaria wants to echo what Belgium underlined about the positive evaluation of ICOMOS of all three files and all three files deserve to be inscribed as one because of their emergency nature. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I have Zambia to be followed by Saudi Arabia and then Thailand.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Chair. We would like to support South Africa and Ethiopia that the three files should be treated case-by-case. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Zambia. Saudi Arabia to be followed by Thailand.

The Delegation of Saudi Arabia:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We support, reviewing the files case-by-case. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Saudi Arabia. I have Thailand to be followed by India then Qatar.

The Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I think that it is incumbent on the Committee to look at each file individually. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I would now like to give the floor to India.

The Delegation of India:

Good morning, Your Excellency. Excellency, I take the floor today, again, as I would like to ask a question before we can make up our mind. Operational Guidelines paragraph 161 is a long paragraph, but please permit me to read towards the end of that paragraph which says: "[...] according to the report of the relevant Advisory Bodies, may unquestionably justify Outstanding Universal Value. Such nominations will be processed on an emergency basis and their examination is included in the Agenda of the next Committee session. These properties may be inscribed on the World Heritage List. They shall, in that case, be simultaneously inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger." And thereafter it says: "(see Paragraphs 177-191)."

I have a question for the Legal Advisor again, you know I have been depending on him to guide my curiosity and I would like to know this: "simultaneously inscribed" does it mean that they have to be taken as a single decision for a Committee or the simultaneous inscription is that they get listed on the site together? I would request you to clarify on that. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, India. I will just finish the list of requests and then we will go to the Legal Advisor. After India I have Qatar and then Egypt. You have the floor, your Excellency.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci Madame la Présidente. Nous souhaitons appuyer la proposition de notre collègue d'Oman de commencer par un examen cas par cas. Merci.

Chairperson:

Well, to start with there is an order that we are following, so this is a different thing. We will come to the order of the files but case-by-case. I get your reply in this regard. Now, I would like to give the floor to Egypt. You have the floor, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you very much, Madam chair. Sorry for coming late. I listened carefully to both opinions and I believe that the Committee should go on a case-by-case approach dealing with the three issues. We need to hear from the Secretariat and to explain the three issues and also to give the country concerned, the right to explain its fact. So, I think we should go case-by-case. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency. I see Rwanda requesting the floor. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I would also like to join my voice to Ethiopia's proposal to go case-by-case. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Rwanda. With that I would like to give the floor to Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We support case-by-case.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Argentina. I see no more requests for the floor. I will give the floor to the Legal Advisor to answer the question by the distinguished representative of India with regard to the paragraph that he requested information on about simultaneously inscribing. You have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you, Madame chair. Good morning to you and good morning to all members and observers. Madam Chair, I believe that the question in so far as it relates to the Operational Guidelines would best be answered by my colleagues from the Secretariat and I would defer to them on that point.

Chairperson:

Thank you.

Legal Advisor:

On the procedure, I would say that the proposal on the table is for several decisions to be adopted together, but they remain different decisions and I do not see how these three sites would constitute only one. They would still be separate sites, but once again the Secretariat is best placed to answer. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you for the clarification. Director, or maybe Mr Alessandro, can you please answer?

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Concerning the question of the honourable Ambassador of India: the nominations that are put forward on an emergency basis as in paragraph 161 mentions that they are de facto an emergency situation for which an immediate decision of the Committee is necessary to ensure their safeguarding. So, actually, de facto these nominations when they are submitted under this procedure are inscribed at the same time, if the Advisory Bodies and the Committee acknowledge the OUV and the emergency, on the World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger. And this is within the same decision, actually in the working document that you have received. This is inserted in the same decision.

Chairperson:

Thank you. India, yes, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, thank you for getting this query clarified. The meaning of 'simultaneously inscribed' means they are inscribed on the in Danger List and the World Heritage List that is the understanding. I thank the Legal Advisor for having clarified that these decisions are in a way different for each of them. So, in that case Excellency, and seeing

that a large number of countries have opted for a separate and not a single decision, India would also like to voice its support in favour of the growing majority and we would request a case-by-case analysis as well. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Now, I do not want to start counting numbers here, but there is growing support to the case-by-case. With that, I would like to give the floor to Japan and then maybe we should make a decision.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much and thank you very much to my colleagues for the discussions this morning. You know, in a way, it is obvious that these three files have many things in common. This is an emergency case, the emergency is very clear, the OUV is also recognised, so there are a lot of commonalities. And that is why we thought it would be beneficial to do it all together. But after hearing the views of the room, I am not a very rigid person and I do not want to waste the time of other delegations, so I will not insist on this. But, please, remember that those files have many things in common. That is the most important thing and having different treatments for those files will not give a good impression, will not make a good statement from this Committee to the world. The world is watching and we have to act to protect those properties. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency. With that, I think we can proceed with the examination as scheduled and we are now beginning the examination of nominations. Russia, okay go ahead.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Sorry, Madam Chair, I asked a question to the Italian Delegate, why and how they had recommendations by ICOMOS before the item. I mean that helped them to take a decision to put this item on the Agenda and I did not receive an answer and if Italy does not want to answer maybe then ICOMOS or the World Heritage can help me. How did this group of countries receive all these documents?

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. It is up to the Delegation of Italy to provide an answer to that. Italy, maybe, you would like to take the floor?

The Delegation of Italy:

It is not that I would like to take the floor, I am forced to take the floor which is different. Thank you very much to the Delegate of Russia for this question. I think the Committee has proven yesterday to be at a very advanced stage of maturity to take the right decisions and to commit itself to taking the right decision. The circumstance is notwithstanding.

We have been here for many hours yesterday, listening to different opinions and the Committee took the decision. Having heard what the conseiller juridique had to say on the issue, the Committee can take its decision and is sovereign in doing this. So, my urge here, also echoing what the Japanese delegation just said, is that we have to take a look at the greater picture. We need to do the right thing today because, again, as was said, the world is looking at us. I urge the entire Committee not to focus too much on the procedural points today.

This is a point which has been added to safeguard the urgency of the matter and the Outstanding Universal Value of these three sites and properties that have been certified by the independent Advisory Bodies; this is the point. We contributed, and we said this in the Executive Board meeting last time, to the preparation of the file for the inscription of one of the sites. We did not get any information from ICOMOS on the status of or on their recommendation any earlier than anybody else here. The point is that we contributed creating one file. We were confident that the three files were ready and right. We got the ICOMOS positive recommendation for inscription.

This is what we have today in front of us. I would urge not to lose any more time on the details and the procedures. The Committee is sovereign to make the right decision today. This is what matters. This is what also the members are asking us to do. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Italy. Can we proceed now with this Russia? I will give you the floor for one last comment and then we can move forward. You have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I have just a question: in which order would we proceed with the nominations? And then based on what Italy just said, I just want it to be recorded that in my view I did not receive an explanation, because previously the Italian Distinguished Delegate said that they decided to bring the issue to the attention because they knew that there is an Outstanding Universal Value and there is a recommendation which contradicts what he said just now.

And then, before we go to the consideration of the nominations, I would like to ask the Secretariat to enlighten the Committee members, so that we could see a broader perspective to the whole process of the nomination. It was stipulated in the press release of UNESCO, in multiple interviews of the members of the Secretariat, that UNESCO has mobilised international experts and substantial support to provide assistance for one State Party with the preparation of the dossier, so that it could be presented on an emergency basis. My question is: did the two other States Parties benefited from an assistance of this kind from the Secretariat? And, if yes, could you please specify? In one case we had Italy and Greece helping, what were the countries helping the other two State Parties? Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I would like to refer to the Secretariat. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I think I do not have any answer to what has been said because I think the Delegate of Russia has said many things. There is no specific question to the Secretariat which is related to the examination of this item so I have no comments on this. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Does this answer your question? Thank you. Dear colleagues, we now begin with the examination of nominations. I would like to take this opportunity to recall that in line with paragraph 23 of our Operational Guidelines, the 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 on:

- 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 document WHC/23/18.EXTCOM/5 and takes its decisions about whether a property should or should not be inscribed in the World Heritage List, referred or deferred, in accordance with paragraph 153 of the Operational Guidelines.

I wish to stress that in compliance with the Convention and the Operational Guidelines and as recalled in the Committee decision **42 COM 8** adopted in 2018, the Outstanding Universal Value is recognised at the time of the inscription of a property on the World Heritage List and no recognition of Outstanding Universal Value is foreseen prior to this stage. We can now proceed with the examination of the nominations.

For this extraordinary session, we have only cultural nominations proposed to be processed on an emergency basis. In conformity with the procedure set in paragraph 162 of the Operational Guidelines, as we usually do during the ordinary session, the order of the examination of these three nominations will follow the English alphabetical order of the regions which will be in this case: Arab States, then the Europe and North America region. I am going to call on ICOMOS to be concise on these presentations. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

I would now like to invite ICOMOS to start to present our first nomination "Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli", Lebanon, but before that I would like to give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr Balsamo, please, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Concerning the evaluation of the nomination "Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli", Lebanon, we received a notification of factual errors from the State Party and this notification is contained in document INF.5.2 which was provided on Monday and is on page 2 of both the English and French version of the document. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo. Now, ICOMOS you have the floor to present.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Madam Chair. "Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli", Lebanon. ICOMOS has received a factual errors letter on this nomination and does acknowledge these clarifications.

Erected in Tripoli, the second largest city in Lebanon and the capital of the northern governorate, Rachid Karami International Fair was designed by Oscar Niemeyer between 1962-1967 and built between 1967 and 1975. The international fair was commissioned for Tripoli and not for Beirut as a statement of post-independence modernisation, social liberalisation and the pivotal programmatic action to reduce regional inequalities and promote multipolar development. To implement these ambitions, the Lebanese government sought an internationally renowned architect and the choice fell on Niemeyer.

The property occupies an elliptical area not far from the coast to the west of the Mamluk historic core of the city and the southeast of El Mina Ottoman historic district on land undeveloped at that time. Niemeyer's initial idea was to use the fair layout as a matrix for a larger plan for social housing interspersed with vegetation. But the Lebanese authorities discarded the urban plan and the project was modified. Eventually, the area developed around the fair developed differently from Niemeyer's idea.

The nominated property comprised all oval-shaped fair grounds and no World Heritage buffer zone has been proposed. The grand canopy is the main structuring building of the fair ground. It is a huge bent, oblong and covered exhibition space complemented by a series of sculptural structures for educational, recreational and cultural functions, as well as experimental residential buildings; all exhibiting Niemeyer's architectural language with contamination by local architecture.

For all structures, Niemeyer chose reinforced concrete for its structural capacity and aesthetic potential. The buildings are connected by water ponds, passages and green areas and completed by housing and administrative zones and service infrastructure.

Niemeyer was responsible for the architectural design with executive and tendering documents prepared by experienced Lebanese engineering firms who engaged in close exchange with the architect. Construction was already advanced when war broke out in 1975. The site became a military camp and the structures were damaged and looted. Attempts to revive the fair complex through various projects and interventions started in the 1990s. It is only very recently that systematic efforts for revitalizing the complex were launched. However, the deep economic crisis in the country has prevented their implementation.

Despite some weaknesses, ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the property to the World Heritage List. Of three criteria only one has not been met whilst criteria (ii) and (iv) have been demonstrated. Both integrity and authenticity have been met despite changes in Niemeyer's initial design and subsequent changes in degradation. However, they are both extremely vulnerable and in need of an urgent conservation programme.

To provide an additional layer of protection to the nominated property, ICOMOS observes that consideration should be given to establishing a buffer zone circling the nominated oval area. Stabilisation measures are urgently needed as well as a conservation programme and updated geometric documentation. In terms of protection, the property is only covered by provisions of the law for the fair reorganisation to strengthen its heritage status; it should be designated as cultural heritage. Planning provisions need to be urgently harmonised. Management requirements require reinforcement, and the management committee needs to be established including representative of heritage protection institutions.

The State Party has set out the following threats as a basis for the emergency nomination procedures:

- Critical state of conservation of Niemeyer's structures;
- Lebanon unprecedented financial crisis;
- Protracted marginalisation of the fair which combined with the crisis make the nominated property vulnerable to inappropriate development; and
- Urgently needed support by the international community.

ICOMOS has jointly assessed the requirements set out in the Operational Guidelines paragraphs 161 and 162 for emergency nominations and thus found that all three apply to the nominated property. The old budget for the rehabilitation of the International Fair exceeds the current capacity of the country. An immediate World Heritage Committee decision would gain necessary attention to the property and the property demonstrates Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS then recommends that the "Rashid Karami International Fair", Lebanon, be inscribed on an emergency basis on the World Heritage List, at least on the basis of criteria (ii) and (iv) and at the same time on the List of World Heritage in Danger. A joint ICOMOS World Heritage Centre Reactive Monitoring Mission should be invited to the property as soon as possible.

ICOMOS has also identified a set of additional recommendations for the State Party to be considered urgently. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS, for your presentation. Now, I would like to know whether there are any comments on this nomination or if we can go directly to the adoption of the decision. I see no request, so, can we please move directly to the adoption? Okay, so, Madame Rapporteur, did we receive any amendment to the decision?

Rapporteur:

We have not received any amendments to this decision Madam Chair. We have incorporated the factual errors in the SOUV and the decision is on screen for the Committee members.

Chairperson:

Can we adopt? I have a suggestion and it is up to you to save time. Can we adopt the decision as a whole or do you want to go paragraph by paragraph? I see no objection to the adoption of that decision as a whole, then can we adopt? It is adopted.

Applause

Thank you and congratulations Lebanon on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List. Lebanon, you have the floor for a brief two-minute statement. Thank you.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you very much. This is really a very emotional moment and really great news. Thank you, thank you, thank you. On behalf of Lebanon and the Lebanese people, I thank the World Heritage Committee, you, Madam Chair, and all dear members for your recognition of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Rashid Karami International Fair in Tripoli designed by Oscar Niemeyer in the 60s' of the 20th century. Your decision touches the hearts of all Lebanese, as Lebanon suffer the brutal consequences of an unprecedented crisis. We believe that with your decision this architectural jewel is now on the right track to be brought back to life, so it can play its initial role that never materialized due to the 1975 War and the series of following crises that led to an alarming deterioration of its conditions.

I also thank the World Heritage Centre for its continuous support and command, ICOMOS for their high-level expertise of the evaluation of this dossier despite the limited time imposed by the emergency conditions. And, of course, I thank everyone who made this possible, especially a renowned architect, Jad Tabet, who prepared the dossier and who himself had the opportunity as a young man to accompany Niemeyer during his visit to Lebanon.

The emergency inscription of this exceptional property on the World Heritage List as well as on the List of World Heritage in Danger is a testimony to the uniqueness of Niemeyer's design in the Arab region and an acknowledgment of the urgent need to preserve it. It is also a recognition of the original role that Lebanon intended to the fair. It was designed and built in the north as a pivotal programmatic action to reduce regional inequalities and promote social cultural and economic development and most important as a statement of Lebanon's post-independence modernisation and social liberation.

Madam Chair, it is this role of the fair and it is this Lebanon that we are determined to hold to, and we hope that with our efforts and your continuous support, we will be able to fulfill this role and maintain it. Thank you very much again.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Lebanon, for taking two minutes of your allocated time. Congratulations, again. Now, if you do not mind, would you just turn off your microphone, so that we can move on and invite the next item that we have which is "Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate", Daft Decision **18 EXT.COM 5.3**. I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of "Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate", Yemen. I would like to give the floor before that to the Secretariat. Mr Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Concerning the evaluation of the nomination "Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate", Yemen, we received a notification of factual errors from the State Party, and this notification is contained in document INF.5.2 and is on page 3 of both the English and the French version of the document. This notification contains corrections that have been acknowledged by ICOMOS and that have an impact on the text of the proposed statement of OUV. As customary, we entered this correction in the text of the statement that is presented for adoption. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo. Now, I would like to give ICOMOS the floor for their presentation. You have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Je vous remercie Madame la Présidente. Les « Hauts lieux de l'ancien royaume de Saba dans le gouvernorat de Marib ». L'ICOMOS a reçu une lettre d'erreurs factuelles et a accepté certaines erreurs et clarifications.

Les Hauts lieux de l'ancien royaume de Saba dans le gouvernorat de Marib témoignent de l'ancienne culture sabéenne et de sa production créative au cours de la période allant du premier millénaire avant notre ère jusqu'à l'arrivée de l'islam dans la région. Ce bien illustre les réalisations architecturales esthétiques et technologiques des sabéens, témoignant d'une société très complexe dotée d'une administration forte et centralisée comme le prouve de nombreuses inscriptions historiques en langues sud-arabiques anciennes.

Le bien en série est composé de sept sites archéologiques. Avec ses deux villes principales, Sirwah et Ma'rib, le royaume de Saba a dominé politiquement et culturellement la région de l'Arabie du Sud, du VIII^e siècle avant notre ère au III^e siècle de notre ère. Il doit sa prospérité au commerce de l'encens. Les connaissances technologiques

en matière d'hydrologie aidèrent les villes sabéennes à s'épanouir en lisière du désert grâce au développement de l'agriculture irriguée.

Construite sur un tell, au milieu de l'oasis de Ma'rib, l'ancienne ville de Ma'rib fut l'un des points de contrôle les plus importants de la Route de l'encens. En tant que centre culturel et économique de l'ancienne Arabie du Sud, la ville servit de capitale au royaume de Saba. Le temple d'Awām au sud de l'ancienne ville de Ma'rib est considéré comme le temple le plus vaste de toute l'Arabie du Sud ; il fut le centre de l'autorité religieuse du royaume sabéen. Au nord-ouest du temple d'Awām se trouve le temple de Bar'ān, également dédié au dieu de la lune. Il a été érigé au cours du I^{er} millénaire avant notre ère, avec de grands blocs de calcaire et d'albâtre, dont certains murs, s'élevant jusqu'à trois mètres, sont toujours debout.

L'ancienne digue de Ma'rib est considérée comme l'un des plus anciens modèles d'ingénierie de haut niveau pour la construction de barrages. Sirwah, la seconde ville du royaume de Saba, était située à quarante kilomètres de l'ancienne ville de Ma'rib. La ville fut probablement une base militaire pour les armées sabéennes comme l'indiquent les inscriptions historiques préservées sur les murs de Sirwah.

L'analyse comparative a démontré que le bien se distingue des nombreux sites de la région qui étaient aussi parties prenantes du commerce de l'encens et en tiraient profit, en particulier par le rôle dominant que le royaume de Saba joua dans la route de l'encens, par les techniques de gestion de l'eau à grande échelle et très sophistiquées et par l'abondance dont témoignent les vestiges des temples et des zones urbaines. L'ICOMOS a considéré que le bien proposé pour inscription répond aux critères (iii) et (iv) et que l'approche en série est justifiée. L'intégrité et l'authenticité des éléments constitutifs et du bien dans son ensemble sont considérées comme très vulnérables.

Les limites à la fois des éléments constitutifs et des zones tampons ont été étendues par l'État partie pendant le processus d'évaluation. En l'absence d'une mission technique d'évaluation sur place, il n'a pas été possible d'évaluer pleinement l'état de conservation et l'efficacité des mesures de protection et de gestion telles qu'elles ont été présentées dans le dossier de proposition d'inscription. Tous les composants de la série souffrent de l'absence d'entretien et aucun financement n'est disponible pour la protection et la conservation depuis 2015. L'ICOMOS considère que dans le contexte actuel les mesures de protection et le système de gestion du bien sont inadéquats et doivent être renforcés.

L'État partie a identifié les menaces suivantes pour justifier la demande d'une inscription en urgence :

- les dommages collatéraux et délibérés causés au bien liés à la guerre en cours au Yémen ;
- le vandalisme et le pillage observés dans les éléments constitutifs du bien ;
- l'occupation de l'ancienne ville de Sirwah, élément constitutif du bien, par la milice ;
- les pressions dues au développement liées à la croissance démographique dans la région ; et
- les facteurs environnementaux ayant un impact négatif sur les sites archéologiques.

L'ICOMOS a évalué conjointement les conditions énoncées aux paragraphes 161 et 162 des Orientations pour justifier le traitement en urgence et a conclu qu'elles s'appliquent au bien proposé pour inscription. L'ICOMOS considère que les menaces indiquées par l'État partie sont de caractère grave et que les dommages causés au bien proposé pour inscription, à l'exception des facteurs environnementaux, constituent une situation d'urgence nécessitant une décision immédiate du Comité du patrimoine mondial. Le conflit en cours entraîne de nombreux effets secondaires tels qu'une réduction importante des ressources financières et humaines pouvant être attribuées à la protection du patrimoine, de même qu'une expansion urbaine incontrôlée au voisinage du bien qui ajoute au contexte d'urgence de la proposition d'inscription. Par ailleurs, le bien justifie incontestablement une valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

En conclusion, l'ICOMOS recommande que les « Hauts lieux de l'ancien royaume de Saba dans le gouvernorat de Marib » au Yémen soient inscrits, conformément à la procédure d'urgence, sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sur la base des critères (iii) et (iv) et simultanément également sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril. L'ICOMOS recommande également qu'une mission conjointe Centre du patrimoine mondial/ICOMOS de suivi réactif puisse se rendre sur le bien dès que cela sera possible.

L'ICOMOS a également identifié des recommandations supplémentaires que l'État partie doit considérer de façon urgente afin de renforcer la protection, la conservation et la gestion du bien.

Finalement, l'ICOMOS a également recommandé que le nom du bien soit changé en excluant la notion du gouvernorat de Marib.

Je vous remercie Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS, for your presentation. Now, already, we have requests for the floor from the distinguished representative of Oman to be followed by Ethiopia to raise any comments on this file. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, good morning and we hope to go smoothly during the session. First of all, I would like to thank the Secretariat represented by the World Heritage Centre and the Culture Sector and I would also like to extend these thanks and appreciation to the Advisory Body, here ICOMOS, for all the excellent work and support.

Regarding this specific file and due to its importance, we would like to express our full support to its inscription. And for the sake of better defining the five historical sites of the landmark of the ancient Kingdom of Saba mentioned in the submitted file, and as the ancient Kingdom of Saba covered historically vast areas of Yemen, I would strongly like to request the addition of the word Marib to the suggested title and reference it in the name of the nominated property. This will give it a delimitation and avoid any governing issues when it comes to site management.

We also have a question regarding the criteria used in addition to criteria (iii) and (iv): has criterion (v) also been considered? Criterion (v) requires a site to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement land use and area use representative of culture or human interaction with the environment, specifically when it has to become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change. I thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, your Excellency. Your question will be duly transmitted to ICOMOS, I think. But before that, I would like to give the floor to Ethiopia. You have the floor, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair. First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretariat and ICOMOS for preparing such commendable document to be decided on an emergency basis. However, we have a statement on the factual errors to be considered by ICOMOS. Sorry for the delayed reaction here during the meeting. The statement on page 14 of the document under the title history who says: "by the 5th Century BCE, Saba was ruling a federation of neighbouring States Ma'in, Qataban, Ausan and Hadramaut maintaining its hegemony over 600 years and extending its influence to Najran in the north and crossing the Red Sea to Ethiopia". It needs to be corrected since this is a factual error regarding Ethiopia.

It is true that the Kingdom of Saba had a political hegemony on the States that prevailed in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, but it never had a political hegemony of any form on the African side of the Red Sea. Historical sources and historical literature and studies have shown that by the 5th century BCE there was an independent and flourishing State and civilization in present day Ethiopia and Eritrea called D'mat which later on evolved to the Kingdom of Aksum. Thus, this statement needs to be corrected not to include Ethiopia and Eritrea.

And the second error is on page 15. It says under the title "Proposed justification for inscription" the comparison of the property with the Tentative List with Nineveh (Iraq), Al-Faw (Saudi Arabia) and Yeha (Ethiopia) also needs to be corrected. The statement which says: "None of these sites is said to demonstrate the level of technological mastery as the nominated property" is completely an arbitrary judgment. It is clear that ICOMOS has not sent an evaluation team to the nominated property to Yemen, neither to the ones in the Tentative Lists from Iraq and Saudi Arabia. But my concern is with Ethiopia. After all, a property must be evaluated by itself not by comparison to others. Yeha is an architectural masterpiece and of mosaic structures without mortar which is not comparable to the stone structures of Yemen.

Ethiopia does not object to the inscription of the mentioned property, but it strongly insists that such historical factual errors statements on the ICOMOS document given in the INF document and the nomination dossier must be corrected. If not, Ethiopia will strongly oppose it. And I would like to listen to the reflection from ICOMOS. If factual errors are to be corrected that is okay for us. Thank you, Madam.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Ethiopia. Now I would like to remind everyone that if they have any written statement which they want to put on record to send it to the Secretariat as for any amendment by Member States. We can now discuss once we reach the decision and then amendments can be made by Member States.

Now, with that, I would like to give the floor to ICOMOS to reply to the question of the distinguished representative of Oman, who asked about criterion (v) and also to reply to the fact about the factual errors in pages 14 and 15 that were raised by the distinguished representative of Ethiopia. You have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Je vous remercie Madame la Présidente. Donc, en ce qui concerne, la question du délégué d'Oman, le critère (v) n'a pas été considéré par l'ICOMOS puisque, en fait, l'État partie a proposé comme critères le critère (iii) et le critère (iv). Donc c'est un critère que l'ICOMOS n'a pas évalué dans la mesure où il n'a pas été mis en avant par l'État partie, dans la mesure aussi où l'on n'a pas considéré qu'il y avait des informations suffisantes ou des arguments suffisants qui pourraient justifier le critère (v). Ce critère par ailleurs est très souvent utilisé pour des établissements des peuplements traditionnels, mais pas forcément pour des sites archéologiques, et des établissements qui témoignent aussi de l'occupation des sols. Donc, pour vous répondre clairement, ce critère (v) n'a pas été envisagé par l'ICOMOS, n'a pas été considéré par l'ICOMOS.

Si je peux me permettre pour répondre aux clarifications de l'honorable délégué de l'Éthiopie. Je pense que vous faites références à des erreurs factuelles dans l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS qui n'ont pas été notifiées en tant qu'erreurs factuelles par l'État partie. L'ICOMOS, dans l'analyse comparative qu'il a procédé par rapport au bien, a considéré que dans la région ce bien là, en tout cas, pouvait se distinguer par rapport à son rôle important au niveau de la Route de l'encens, mais aussi par l'ampleur de ses vestiges matériels et par la technologie liée à

l'irrigation. L'analyse comparative n'exclut pas en soi, elle reconnaît qu'un bien a une valeur universelle exceptionnelle pour ses caractères esthétiques propres, mais elle laisse aussi la place à ce qui pourrait témoigner pour d'autres caractéristiques propres de la même période de l'importance du royaume de Saba dans la région au sens plus large.

J'espère que j'ai répondu à vos questions. Je vous remercie Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS. I have seen a follow-up question or remark from Oman. You have the floor, Excellency.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much again for ICOMOS and I am convinced regarding criterion (v), however I am still waiting for an answer about adding Marib to the title of this inscription. Because Yemen is vast, we cannot leave it like this. The country has requested to put Marib there, so we need to put Marib instead of Marib Governorate. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Your Excellency, would you like to propose an amendment in this regard once we discuss that or you would like to get a reply from ICOMOS?

The Delegation of Oman:

I would like to get a reply if they are taking it. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency. This is duly noted. Ethiopia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you for the explanation, but I am not satisfied with the explanation. Professionally I am not a historian, I am not an archaeologist, but we have tried to go through this document with a well-esteemed team of historians at home. We are not talking about incense trade; we are not talking about irrigation when we are trying to compare the property that has been tentatively submitted. And you cannot compare with what has been submitted by Iraq and Saudi Arabia. And for Ethiopia, I once again would like to request, do not compare when listing one property with others. This is not a comparative analysis. Every element ought to be described in terms of its own merit. This is what I would like to say today.

Secondly, regarding the first one, I think I was expecting that ICOMOS would like to review the text. All the time we believe that scientific justifications from professionals ought to be esteemed, however, when factual errors are there, I think we have to be listened. We do not have any objection for the inscription of a heritage site for Yemen and heritage for Ethiopia. We do not have any objection but factual errors, scientific factors, historical factors should be corrected.

Chairperson:

Thank you. And I also have the same question for you, the same I asked Oman. I heard your statement and I think maybe ICOMOS can reply to that if they have a reply. But again, as members you are always free to add amendments as you see fit in order to reach a decision in this regard. Now, I will go to ICOMOS to reply to the two comments raised by a question from Oman and a comment by Ethiopia. If you have a reply for them, you have the floor, ICOMOS.

ICOMOS :

Merci Madame la Présidente. Effectivement, pour la réponse en ce qui concerne le changement du nom du bien. L'ICOMOS a suggéré de supprimer la référence administrative, le gouvernorat, dans la mesure où les limites administratives ne reflètent pas ce que pouvaient être les limites du royaume de Saba à l'époque. Par contre, on entend bien votre remarque en ce qui concerne la nécessité d'avoir un ancrage géographique. Donc, on pourrait suggérer si vous en êtes d'accord que le mot gouvernorat soit modifié pour dire dans la région de Marib. Voilà. En ce qui concerne la deuxième question, peut-être si vous me le permettez.

Chairperson:

With regard to Ethiopia if you would like to move forward and then I would get going.

ICOMOS :

Simply, par rapport à la remarque de l'honorable délégué de l'Éthiopie pour souligner qu'il est vrai que le fait de procéder à des analyses comparatives tendraient à démontrer qu'un bien est unique puisqu'on tendrait à démontrer qu'il y a une place pour ce bien-là qui n'a pas déjà été occupée. C'est un défaut finalement de ces analyses comparatives et cela ne signifie pas qu'en comparant, on exclut de facto la possibilité d'avoir d'autres biens qui représentent avec leurs spécificités propres et leurs qualités propres une même période de l'histoire, mais

peut être de façon un petit peu différente. Donc, le fait de comparer avec ces biens-là n'exclut pas de facto la potentialité de voir sur la Liste d'autres biens qui refléteraient la même période historique de l'histoire. Je vous remercie Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you for your explanation. With that, I hope, I mean if there are not any more questions, we can move directly to the adoption of the decision. Oman, I think you had a suggestion at the beginning to have the word Marib on and ICOMOS here has also proposed the region and then I leave it up to your decision and to the esteemed colleagues to discuss this during the adoption of the decision. Thank you very much. Now I will give the floor to Ethiopia as you requested the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Madam Chair, still we are repeating the same thing. I was expecting from ICOMOS that opportunities will be given on how to rebuild the historical analysis. I tell you the old-aged history of Yemen belongs with Ethiopia and Ethiopia to Yemen; we know that very well. But this fact is not as per the historical evidences and documents. And I would like once more, again, to request that means would be created to verify this and correct the factual errors. Thank you. You know we will object the inscription.

Chairperson:

Your Excellency, just to clarify the file now as it stands, I mean technically there is no way to change the file itself, the only thing that we can discuss here and amend is the decision itself. So, if there is any point that you would like to raise or any amendment that you would like to see in the file, you can add to it or you can have your own objection as you see fit during the discussion of the decision. But correcting, just to explain, correcting the factual errors is not the mandate of the Committee right now. It is whether we accept or we do not accept or we change and amend the decision. This is the limit of our power as Committee members in this regard. Just to explain your Excellency. Would you like to take the floor?

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Yes. Now, I expressed my concern and I know that the Committee is not a debate for history, this is an international intergovernmental committee to decide on the nominations, but I am strongly insisting the factual errors are to be corrected by ICOMOS not by the Committee. This document is there this is what I am saying strongly. We are not objecting the inscription, but the factual errors have great implications on our future nominations when Yeha is to be nominated. Because here it is compared, and it is not like how it is presented in the inscription. Thank you. This is my last intervention.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency. The summary records will definitely reflect your concern and if you can also send us your statement, we would also add it to the summary report. Oman, thank you. Now I would like to give the floor to Qatar. Please, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci Madame la Présidente. Juste pour proposer, si notre collègue d'Éthiopie est d'accord, de rajouter sa demande dans le rapport. Cela pourrait être une solution pour passer à la décision. Merci.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. And now when a statement is received it is going to be sent to the Secretariat and we are going to add it definitely to the summary report. Please, can we display the decision now on the screen? I now invite you to adopt the decision, but before I would like to ask the Rapporteur if she has received any amendments.

Rapporteur:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We have received no amendment, for this draft decision. The decision on screen is the final version, considering the factual errors. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Okay. Now, can we adopt the decision as a whole or do you want to go paragraph by paragraph? Oman, I just want to add, to clarify, because you said you have an amendment. Do you want us to go paragraph by paragraph or adopt as a whole?

The Delegation of Oman:

No, our reflection is only about the title and now it is there I can see it: Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba in Marib Governorate, Yemen, that is what we wanted. If that is what the title is going to be, we, are in agreement.

Chairperson:

Okay, so then if there are no amendments to the decision, I said no amendment to the decision, but I see two in the decision. Your Excellency, Ambassador of Oman, please, can we have order in the room? Ambassador of Oman, please, number 8, and can you see the title – this is the title that is going to be inscribed, so it does not reflect what you requested.

The Delegation of Oman:

No. We need to be reflected that is what I said and ICOMOS are in agreement.

Chairperson:

Yes, then we have to go paragraph by paragraph so that way...

The Delegation of Oman:

No, I only want to go to paragraph 8, why do you want to go paragraph by paragraph?

Chairperson:

So, okay, Your Excellency. If the room is in agreement, can we adopt paragraphs 1 to 7 and then we move to 8, okay? Can we adopt paragraphs 1 to 7 of the decision? I see no objection; it is then adopted. Now, we move to paragraph 8, your Excellency, Ambassador of Oman, you have the floor. Thank you.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you. After Saba we put "Marib governorate" or "region", she wants to put "region". Let us put only Marib, it is well understood without region or government, Marib. I hope ICOMOS is in agreement.

Chairperson:

I see no objection and can we adopt the decision as amended by Oman? There are no objections, paragraph 8 is then adopted. Now, the whole decision is adopted. Congratulations Yemen.

Applause

With that, I would like to congratulate Yemen, again, on behalf of the entire Committee on the inscription of this property to the World Heritage List. Yemen, you have the floor, for a brief two-minute statement. Please, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Yemen:

Thank you very much, Madam chair. Excellencies, members of the World Heritage Committee, dear colleagues, on behalf of the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Yemen to UNESCO, the government and people of Yemen, I want to express my deep appreciation for your esteemed assistance and valuable support regarding the decision taken up today about the inscription of "Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba and Marib", nomination filed on an emergency basis.

We feel very grateful for you all, taking time out of your busy schedule to assist us on this matter. My sincere words of gratitude to the ICOMOS team represented by its Director General and his team of experts who have done an excellent detailed analysis regarding the value of these historical sites. With your help, expertise, knowledge and support we have made a big step forward in safeguarding and protecting Yemen's cultural heritage which supports speeding up the procedures and getting this site inscribed.

I would also like to thank Dr Eloundou Assomo Lazare, Director of the World Heritage Centre, and his staff for the support given to my country, Yemen, in promoting these valuable heritage sites which are now part of the World Heritage sites. We consider ourselves very privileged for having a chance to cooperate with cultural heritage experts of your quality. These heritage sites are of Outstanding Universal Value and many archaeological studies refer to the significant role of the Saba civilization in ancient history.

Thank you all, once again, for your commitment, valuable and continuous support and in protecting the World Heritage culture in Yemen. Wishing you all excellent days.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much, your Excellency. Now, we move to the next file on this Agenda item which is the "Historic Centre of the Port City of Odesa", Ukraine, Draft Decision **18 EXT.COM 5.2**. I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the "Historic Centre of the Port City of Odesa", Ukraine, but before that I would like to give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Concerning the evaluation of the nomination of the "Historic Centre of the Port City of Odesa", Ukraine, we received a notification of factual errors from the State Party. This notification is contained in document INF.5.2 and is on page 7 of both the English and French version of the document. This notification

contains corrections that have been acknowledged by ICOMOS and that have an impact on the text of the proposed statement of OUV. As customary, we entered this correction in the text of the statement that is presented for adoption. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo. Now, I would like to give the floor to ICOMOS for their presentation.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Madam Chair. The “Historic Centre of the Port City of Odesa”, Ukraine. ICOMOS has received a factual errors letter on this nomination and acknowledged some errors and clarification.

The nominated property is part of the port city of Odesa located on the Ukrainian shores of the Black Sea. Odesa developed as a vibrant city at the site of Khadzhibey since 1794 following a strategic decision of Empress Catherine II to develop a warm-water port at that location after the Russian-Turkish war of 1787-1792. As the port prospered in the 19th century, the city grew rapidly, attracting residents from all over the world, but declined in the early 20th century.

The nominated property covers part of the historic centre and part of the railway and port area. Planned as a system of spacious straight streets and rectangular blocks, the city’s architecture reflects its rapid growth in the 19th century. A new master plan in 1819 envisaged the construction of a wide boulevard along the plateau’s edge and the central street perpendicular to its course ending with a staircase leading to the port which played a dominant role in the development of the city and its character.

The presence and competition of various diverse communities contributed to the city development and wealth. The trade and the liberal policies attracted newcomers who formed multiethnic and multicultural community to which Odesa owed its reputation as a cosmopolitan city. Most of the buildings and structures within the nominated property were erected in the 19th and early 20th centuries and represent both diversity in architectural styles, with eclecticism as a dominant feature, and in the main activities in the trading city.

Many religious buildings testify to residents of various confessions; the toponyms in the old town and street names identify areas where different communities lived in Odesa in the 19th century. However, most of these areas are not included within the nominated property, and the boundaries appear too narrow to reflect the complete historic ensembles of the 19th century city. On the other hand, the port cannot be seen as an attribute because, although it had a considerable role in shaping the city’s significance, it has not survived as a reflection of the 19th century layout and function.

Odesa multiculturalism is reflected in different cultural quarters and the heterogeneous urban buildings therein, as these communities never merged into a multicultural social unit. Odesa shows similarities with other Eastern European cities; still it is distinguished from them by its landform, the central axis and staircase linking the city to its port and its comparative intactness that reflected rapid growth and decline.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property justifies criteria (ii) and (iv), but its boundaries must be expanded to include all attributes that express the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the property while the port area should be reduced to exclude what does not contribute to the OUV.

With no technical evaluation mission, it has not been possible to fully assess the state of conservation and effectiveness of protection and management measures. ICOMOS considers that comprehensive conservation plans for individual historic monuments should be developed as soon as possible. The current legal framework provides a basis for the effective protection of individual monuments, while the general plan of Odesa has established an integrated protection zone that should allow for conservation and compatible development at a territorial scale. However, both protection and management need to be reinforced.

The State Party has nominated the “Historic Centre of the Port City of Odesa” to the World Heritage List on an emergency basis for the following reasons:

- On 24th February, the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine and the country is currently at war;
- Cultural heritage is in danger of being destroyed or severely damaged due to strikes and hostility in war operation;
- Risk of damage and destruction of cultural heritage persists during hostility, even if they occur far from the nominated property, due to their fragility caused by systemic anthropogenic factors.

ICOMOS has jointly assessed the requirements set out in the Operational Guidelines for emergency nominations, paragraphs 161 and 162, and all three apply to the nominated property. The current conflict in Ukraine poses a danger to the historic centre of the city of Odesa. The unstable situation called for decisive action by the World Heritage Committee to preserve Odesa’s urban heritage. The nominated property demonstrates Outstanding Universal Value.

ICOMOS then recommends that the “Historic Centre of the Port City of Odesa”, Ukraine, is to be inscribed on an emergency basis on the World Heritage List based on criteria (ii) and (iv) and at the same time on the List of World Heritage in Danger. A joint ICOMOS/World Heritage Centre reactive monitoring mission should visit the property as soon as possible.

ICOMOS has also identified several additional recommendations for the State Party to consider urgently, first of all submitting a revised map of the property to be inscribed as revised.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS, for your presentation. As done with the previous two, if there is no intervention at this level, we would like to go to the decision. I see request from Russia, Greece, who else would like to take the floor? Okay. So, I only have Russia and Greece at this stage, and Belgium. Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. It would not be an exaggeration to say that for every Russians the beautiful city of Odesa holds a special place in history and culture. It has inspired famous artists, writers and musicians. The candidacy of the city that was inscribed to the Tentative List by Ukraine in 2009 deserves to be presented and thoroughly studied to allow the Committee to make decisions that are based on objective and scientific information. Unfortunately, the way the nomination was brought to the attention of the Committee and the very superficial dossier do not contribute to the professional and thorough consideration of the matter. I would therefore have specific questions to ICOMOS.

Did you notice that a big part of the presented nomination is a simple copy and paste from Wikipedia and other tourism blogs? If yes, why didn't you comment and do you find this information scientific or not? We also note that there are only 28 sources listed in the bibliography for the nomination file, and no contemporary studies by local historians and experts specializing in the Odesa region have been included. A recent contemporary literature published in the last decade on Odesa and Kyiv was also not taken into consideration.

Specifying the multiethnic character of the city, it looks like the nomination file pays no attention to a large Jewish community, and the Jewish community in Odesa was the largest in the Russian Empire and contributed extensively to its historic architecture, culture and worldwide recognition. We also note that there are a lot of recommendations by ICOMOS, including changing the boundaries of the property, which is a significant change. In any other case it would be a deferral, but you recommend nonetheless its inscription; why? And I would stop, Madam Chair, here to ask my colleague to continue.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. And maybe just to give the floor to others and move back to Russia because I feel that you have exhausted your time, or if you can do this in 20 seconds you have the floor, please go ahead. Okay, now I will give the floor to Greece, sorry, and then we will move to other matters.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I think we do not have to explain at length the extraordinary situation under which this evaluation took place for reasons which are not due to the State itself. What I would like to propose is to follow the usual procedure and start examining the draft decision itself. And in case of any comments, or the best I can think of minor amendments, it is the duty of the Rapporteur to give the floor. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Your Excellency, Distinguished Representative of Greece, is this a request for the closure of debate or is it a suggestion to Committee members? Your Excellency, Ambassador of Greece, is this a request for the closure of debate or is it a suggestion to the Committee members?

The Delegation of Greece:

It is a suggestion.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency. I will give the floor to Belgium to be followed by Ethiopia. Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. At this juncture, I would just like to draw the attention of the Committee on what the Russian Federation just said about the superficial file we are considering now. We do not think this is pertinent in regard of the decision we need to take. I refer you to the decision we have just taken and point 3 of the decision we have just taken and what matters in this file, as in the other two files, is the Outstanding Universal Value, and ICOMOS has made a very clear recommendation on that and to my understanding this has not been put into question by the Delegate of the Russian Federation. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Wait Russia, I have a list of speakers. Thank you, Belgium. I would like to give the floor to Ethiopia. You have the floor, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you. I have a question and like with my previous intervention in the previous nominations, I would like to ask ICOMOS a question. We have received amendments on the historical factors and our Secretariat has sent some amendments and errors to be corrected and I would like to listen to ICOMOS on how the historical factors are based on research and based on commendable documented evidences. We would like to hear from them. There was a previous communication and there was some amendment from I think the Delegation of Ukraine we have received and how was that history written. We have to listen properly to the factors, real history to decide on the matters. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Ethiopia. Your question is duly noted. Now, Russia, you requested the floor, if there are any other clarification or questions, because I would like to move to ICOMOS to answer the questions. You have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Madam Chair, as the head of our Delegation has already mentioned there are certain problems with the validity of the nomination. And these problems root from the lack of scientific sources. As was said there are only 28 of them which is unprecedentedly low for such a case as Odesa. As it was already mentioned, this lack of sources and using Wikipedia, travel blogs and travel agency sites as sources caused numerous errors and drawbacks in the nomination. I would like to give some examples. For example, on page 113, sorry 112, of the nomination file, they say that there were only three theatres in Russia, in Moscow, Saint Petersburg and Odesa. This is a mistake which is in Wikipedia and this mistake was copied and pasted to the nomination dossier because I can name at least six theatres which existed in the same time in Russia besides those mentioned.

Another thing, the position of the Ukrainian side is a position of omission of Russian culture and Russian language in the development of Odesa. However on in the same nomination dossier, there is a citation from Mr Sears, a former 19th-century scientist. Let me quote what he said. He said that; just a moment...

Chairperson:

We are running out of time here. If you can please rush, we have 50 seconds for you.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

He said that "there is perhaps no city in the world in which so many different languages can be heard as in the streets and coffee houses of Odesa from a motley population of Russians, Tartars, Greeks, Jews, Poles, Italians Germans, French, etc". For objective reasons the traveler does not mention Ukrainians, due to the facts that there was no distinct Ukrainian nation group in those centuries. Saying that Odesa is a Ukrainian city of the 18th century is the same to say as if Paris was founded by French people. But we know that Paris dates back to the 3rd century before BC when we know there were no France and no French people. The same as with Ukraine.

Chairperson:

I think we have run out of time. Thank you for your intervention. Now, we have a set of questions. Could you at least just turn off your microphone? And then, I do not see any more questions to ICOMOS and I would like to give them the floor to answer multiple questions that were raised by the Russian Federation, and also by Ethiopia with regard to the factual error sheets and the historical facts. And I think these are the two questions of the two members who raised questions. If you can kindly answer the questions, ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Madam Chair. With regard to the first question from the Honourable Representative of the Russian Federation concerning superficiality and lack of sources. ICOMOS evaluates the merits of the nominated property; this is what it is requested to do, not to evaluate the merits of the dossier, so the document that presents the property. And that is what ICOMOS has done to evaluate the qualities of the property.

It has proposed a number of nuances in the evaluations. And with regard to the boundaries, ICOMOS has identified the boundaries of the already existing integrated protection zone, which is part of the master plan of Odesa, which are boundaries that exist as appropriate boundaries to reflect the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the property. And that was in that case possible to propose to have these boundaries modified according to the already delimited boundaries to have the property inscribed. One has to consider that this was submitted as an emergency nomination, with a different time frame and calendar and different possibilities of assessment and recommendations. So, this is what ICOMOS has done. In the absence of possible existing boundaries that would not have been possible, but there were and there are boundaries that can delimit the property with all necessary attributes to the Outstanding Universal Value proposed.

With regard to the questions from the Honourable Delegate of Ethiopia. ICOMOS has received the factual errors and has responded to these errors raised, also quoting the nomination dossier itself. There are essential questions concerning the factual error letters for historical facts which concerned a few points. One concerned the foundation of the city of Odesa, another concerned the role of the Empress Catherine II. ICOMOS has also drawn from the

nomination dossier where the nomination dossier itself states “a unique example of a newly founded city built in the late 18th century on the Western shore of the Black Sea. It was conceived as a trade gateway” –I am quoting from the dossier. And again, it is an outstanding example of a newly founded town. So, basically, the response came also from the dossier and historical facts known from literature, historic literature and scientific literature. I think I have exhausted my responses and time. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS. Excellencies, have you received an answer to your queries? I know, I see them, but I see Greece and Russia. Ethiopia, if you have further questions, feel free. Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Just, if I am allowed to add some elements. First of all, concerning the multicultural and multinational character of the city. Speaking as the Ambassador of Greece with a vibrant Greek presence in the city of Odesa, we feel that ICOMOS's report satisfies this description, as it is well noted. It is not mentioned if it is a Jewish community or Greek community, but the multicultural and multinational criteria are very well mentioned and satisfying and applied too. And, if you allow me a second point. This is not a Wikipedia report, this is a report based on a pre-existing report in 2009. So, please, take a good note of that. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Greece. I give the floor to the Russian Federation to be followed by Japan. Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much and thank you, ICOMOS, for answering the question; that was very valuable. I have further questions based on your answers. Since you said you did not pay so much attention to the literature as you were looking at the Outstanding Universal Value, and thank you, Ambassador of Greece, to mention that there was already the dossier presented in 2009, we looked and made a comparative analysis and found out that there are two different dossiers. There are too many differences in the dossier presented back in 2009 and now. And I would like to hear the opinion of ICOMOS what they think about that.

As for the Outstanding Universal Value, ICOMOS indicates that it is unable and I quote "to evaluate the reasoning behind the justification of the Outstanding Universal Value included in the nomination dossier, in particular with regard to authenticity, integrity and governance", but suggests that it contains potential inconsistencies and weaknesses. This is on page 35 of the report.

Another important issue is about the coherence of the policy of Ukraine and paragraph 78 of the Operational Guidelines: "To be deemed of Outstanding Universal Value, a property must also meet the conditions of integrity and/or authenticity and must have an adequate protection". Now, the State Party, before asking everybody else to take obligations to protect the property, should protect the property itself, right? But between the presentation dossier and the day of today the local authorities demolished several monuments purposefully and the monuments were on the territory of the property that is now being proposed to be inscribed, including the monument to the founders of the city Russian Empress Catherine II with José de Ribas, François-Paul Sainte de Wollant, Platon Zubov and Grigory Potemkin, all of them mentioned in the nomination dossier as founders of the city. And also, this monument has been protected by local authorities as an integral part of the dossier but then they demolished it. So, we see that there is incompleteness under paragraph 78 of the Operational Guidelines. I would like to hear the opinion of ICOMOS. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia, for these questions. I will refer to ICOMOS after we hear from Japan. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Madam Chair, I would like to hear the views of ICOMOS first. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Japan. ICOMOS, can you please answer the question?

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Madam Chair. With regard to the question asked by the Honourable Delegate of the Russian Federation, ICOMOS has examined the dossier as a source of information plus all information that ICOMOS can gather based on its network of experts. I did not think I said we did not pay attention to literature, but we did not judge the dossier, we judged and examined the property.

With regard to the issues concerning protection, ICOMOS has considered that the protection in place from a legal perspective is sufficient. What ICOMOS cannot judge, could not judge, in the absence of a mission was the effectiveness of the application of this protection. So, that is what ICOMOS has stated, it could not examine the protection. We also are in a situation where the property will be inscribed, if inscribed, because it has been

nominated on an emergency basis, automatically it is also inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger with all sets of recommendations to improve the conditions of the property. I hope I have responded. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS. Russia, I think you have received your responses. I would like to give the floor to Japan who requested the floor first. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much. I would like to touch on two things. The first is the existence of the OUV and the second thing is the danger, the emergency there. On the question of the OUV, as I understand it, and I understand it from the discussions here, nobody has questioned the OUV. I want to be enlightened if the Russian Delegation is opposed to the existing OUV as such. I want to be enlightened in that case. This Committee is not here to discuss the detailed history, what is right what is wrong. That is the point that we discussed in the previous file on Yemen. So, we are not here to discuss which accounts of the history are right or wrong, but what is important from our perspective is whether we have the OUV or not. And to the best of my knowledge, so far in this room, nobody has challenged the existence of the OUV. Maybe there are some differences in the historical account, but nobody has opposed to the OUV.

Secondly, yes, as pointed out by the representative of ICOMOS, you know it is obvious, you simply cannot go there. So, that is why we are talking about an emergency. And if you talk about the lack of protection, yes, it is simply impossible in this situation and therefore we propose to inscribe this in the In Danger List. So, again here, can anybody deny that there is an emergency in this particular case? I do not think anybody can deny that and therefore we strongly request that this item should be inscribed in the In Danger List. That is the point that I wanted to make. Nobody is against the OUV, everybody is very clear that there is an emergency. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Japan, for your intervention. Now, Russia you have the floor and then Belgium.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. It is just a response to the question of the Distinguished Japanese Ambassador, and also, he said that nobody questioned the OUV. I do not concur with his interpretation of the debate because I specifically cited the quotations on the ICOMOS report saying that they were not in the position to fully make a full analysis and they need a mission, they need to go and they need a mission. And, second point, they propose a significant change in the boundaries. So, what we are proposing to inscribe we do not even know the boundaries. Let us inscribe something that is a first thing.

To answer shortly, the property has the OUV potential, but because of the poor quality of the dossier and because of the lack of a mission and many deficiencies, as detected by ICOMOS, we cannot fully judge. Because the OUV is decided by the Committee; but how can we possibly decide if the materials are not authentic, if there was no mission, if we do not know even the boundaries?

And as for the protection, I would like to respond to the distinguished Ambassador of Japan. What I was mentioning is that local authorities purposely destroyed monuments that they themselves proposed to be part of the property that they were proposing to inscribe. Moreover, Ukraine has a law that, and I would like to hear the opinion of ICOMOS, provides that they need to get rid of every Imperial and Soviet heritage, etc. That is a big part of Odesa the Imperial and Soviet heritage, you know. And they are destroying monuments.

So, the State Party is in a controversial position. It proposes to protect something that the State Party is destroying itself. Therefore, for us, with the alleged damage and allegations with the OUV, my country would like to suggest everybody to read the latest report by the Secretary General of the United Nations on the implementation of the UN grain deal where no mention of any danger to the port facilities of Odesa is mentioned. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. I would now like to give the floor to Belgium to be followed by Italy. Belgium, you have the floor and then we will go to ICOMOS to answer your question.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Madam Chair. As it is the first time I take the floor, I would like to assert your female leadership on this very particular day of women and multilateralism. I would like to wholeheartedly echo what the Japanese Ambassador said, notably that there are two issues at hand: one is the Outstanding Universal Value and second is the emergency, and we urge all members of the Committee not to lose focus on these two items, on these two issues. As a response to the Russian Federation, what the Distinguished Delegate just said with regard to the mission that did not take place. Well, let us just remind everyone why that was not possible, it was because of safety reasons and we all know why. And it was not a problem in previous files, notably the Yemen file. And many other files that are treated on an emergency basis follow a different procedure, we are referring to paragraph 161 of the

Operational Guidelines and so forth. So, this is not a valid argument, the file can be completed afterwards that is a well-known fact. We would, please, ask to keep focus on what matters today. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium. I would now like to give a floor to Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like once again to appeal to this Committee to focus on the extraordinary session of today, the character is extraordinary, not ordinary. We have voted on the addition to the Agenda of these three items and by doing this — the Agenda was approved and the items were added by voting in their favour – we have recognized the fact that we are under extraordinary circumstances. I would like to underline this fact, extraordinary. What I am hearing here around the room is to try to apply ordinary criteria which are fair and acceptable under ordinary circumstances. This is again, sorry to underline, extraordinary.

Now, we heard repeatedly that the OUV is not put in question, and we understand that the proper procedure in this type of complete, extensive, lengthy evaluations that under ordinary circumstances are allowed and possible, on these very circumstances are not. Given the fact that the OUV is here and is being attested by ICOMOS, and I do not see that this is a put in question, I appeal strongly for the acceptance of this dossier which is being carefully considered and dates back from many years, has been updated and has been integrated under the possible current circumstances. We could not have done anything better. ICOMOS could not have done anything better. We are here to assess this point.

We all know the standard procedure that the dossier can be completed later and there are various and many stages, and there are a lot of procedures involved in the monitoring of a property in the future after inscription. This is, after all, what the Committee does on a normal basis. The monitoring of inscribed properties is standard procedure.

I appeal to the Committee not to politicize these issues and to move on because the inscription is what ICOMOS recommended as long as the other two files – which I recall from previous discussions were also not complete under ordinary criteria. Thank you so much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I would like to give the floor to Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We would just like to echo what has been said by Belgium, Italy and Japan and we need to focus on the OUV and the emergency basis of the proposed inscription. The lack of a mission is not a valid argument as per articles 161 and 162 of the Operational Guidelines and the dossier could be filled at a later stage. And it is not why we are here today, there is something more important.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium. Now I would like to give the floor to the Russian Federation. Sorry, I meant Bulgaria. I need my glasses to see the name again.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. In response to the discussion and several subjects that have been touched upon by previous speakers, I would like to say that the emergency procedure relates specifically to the deadlines. So, the deadlines of the usual normal standard procedure are not observed. But as for the criteria and everything and the scientific nature of the dossier, authenticity, etc., all the criteria stay, and this is specifically mentioned in paragraph 161 that has been cited today by the Distinguished Indian Ambassador and the procedure is described in paragraphs 177 to 191.

What colleagues try to imply is that if there is an emergency, then we can approve distorted facts and diversified dossier or something. I mean, if we can work based on Wikipedia, then next time what? Shall we not have any dossier? Everybody can read Wikipedia and then adopt an emergency decision. This is the message that is being sent. As for the danger, I talked about the fact that the local, I mean the national authorities, are in a controversial situation asking for protection but demolishing themselves. That is the first point.

Second point, in the report by ICOMOS, it specifically stated that so far no damage has occurred to the property; there was only glass windows broken, I hope it was repaired. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I would now like to give the floor to Belgium so that we can move through that decision. Belgium, you have the floor.

La Délégation de Belgique :

Bonjour à tous. Je voudrais juste répondre à la Délégation de la Russie. Je pense qu'il y a des références qui sont souvent faites à l'article 161, mais j'aimerais bien lire une partie de celui-ci parce qu'il y a, à mon avis, une lecture assez sélective de celui-ci qui est faite : « Le calendrier normal et la définition du caractère complet pour la soumission et le traitement des dossiers de proposition d'inscription ne s'appliquent pas » – ne s'appliquent pas – « dans le cas de biens qui seraient en péril ».

Juste une petite précision : je pense que nous avons suffisamment parlé, et je propose que l'on clôture le débat et que l'on aille au vote sur ce dossier. Merci, Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Okay, so is that a request for a vote Belgium? Is it a request for a vote by a show of hands, if I understand, or by a roll call? Because it is a different procedure: a show of hands you do not need to be seconded, if it is a roll call you need to be seconded as a request. So, what I would like from you is to specify your request.

The Delegation of Belgium:

We just would like to go to the vote on the entire draft resolution as it stands, it can be by a roll call or a show of hands, we have no preference on that matter, but we think it is time to move forward. It is very clear that considering the conflict of interest with a member of the Committee, that is also the origin of the danger and the risk of the site in question, that we will never reach a consensus on this today. We have seen what happened yesterday and we would just like to move forward and do what we are responsible to do as a Committee. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Just for procedural clarification, we have first to have a request for the closure of the debate. Is there a request for the closure of the debate? I just want to hear it from you before we move to the vote. Would you turn on your microphone and say that?

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, indeed, Your Highness, we request a closure of the debate.

Chairperson:

Thank you, and then we will go to the vote. Can you please specify what type of vote you are looking for, so that we can move forward? I see a point of order. Russia.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Madam chair. In procedural motions we have precedence, so I moved a motion for the adjournment of the debate sine die and it has precedence to the closure. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Just give me one minute to prepare this properly, so that I do not get confused. Italy, I will give you the floor, just give me some time. Thank you. Okay, so, now, just to be on the clear side, we had an uncontested request for closure of the debate and we had the request for a vote and then we have a request for an adjournment sine die. And now, I would like to give the floor to the Legal Advisor to explain the order of what precedes over what with regard to the type of vote and the request. Legal Advisor, you have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the situation is as follows: first of all, the Distinguished Delegate of Belgium has presented to you a motion to the Committee, a motion for the closure of the debate. This is pursuant to Rule 32 of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee which, with your permission Madam Chair, I will read in full: "A State member of the Committee may at any time move the closure of the debate whether or not any other speaker has signified his wish to take part in the discussion. If application is made for permission to speak against the closure it may be accorded to not more than two speakers. The Chairperson shall then put to the vote the motion for closure and if the committee is in favour of the motion, he shall declare the closure of the debate."

After this request, Madam Chair, you gave the floor to another member of the Committee, and this was the Distinguished Delegate from the Russian Federation who presented a motion for the adjournment of the debate sine die. This is pursuant to Rule 31 of the Rules of Procedure which, once again with your permission, I will read in full: "During the discussion of a matter any State member of the Committee may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. On moving the adjournment, the State member shall indicate whether he moves the adjournment sine die or to a particular time which he shall specify. In addition to the proposal of the motion, one speaker may speak in favour of and one against the motion."

Madam Chair, you are therefore in presence of two motions: one procedural motion, one for the closure of the debate, and another one for the adjournment of the debate. In that case, the order in which the procedural motions are to be considered is governed by Rule 33 and this will be my last quote. I would like to quote that provision in

full: "Subject to Rule 28 the following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the meeting:

- a) suspension of the meeting;
- b) adjournment of the meeting;
- c) adjournment of the debate on the question under discussion;
- d) closure of the debate on the question under discussion."

In these circumstances, Madam Chair, and as was pointed out in from the floor, it is indeed the motion for the adjournment of the debate that should be put to the consideration of the Committee before. Afterwards, depending on how the Committee decides on that motion, you may put to the Committee the motion for the closure of the debate.

I should point out, Madam Chair, that both rules give you the possibility to provide an opportunity to speak to a number of members of the Committee which you might want to do if you believe that would be proper. I remain at your disposal for any further step. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Legal Advisor. If there is a request for an adjournment we may hear from members, if they want to say whether they want to be with or against, but then we are going to move to the vote on the adjournment. Japan and Italy. I have Japan first, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much, Madam chair. I just wanted to confirm one thing before I make any speech. That is, you gave me the floor, fine, and according to the explanation by the Legal Advisor, another country who can say something which is different from what I am saying should take the floor. Is that the end of the discussions before voting or are you willing to hear more from the floor?

Chairperson:

No. It is with regard to the vote because I may give the floor to members who may be for or against, one for or one against, and if you just want to express that, but we are going to move to the vote. Just, if you want to say, I may give you the floor; that is why I gave you the floor. If this has nothing to do with the motion for the postponement of the vote that was requested by Russia, then we will move directly to it.

The Delegation of Japan:

Okay. Well, in that case, can I just say that, in this particular case, Italy should be the one to discuss this motion. And I have an impression that this debate may go on, so I rest my floor. But I would like to ask you, Madam Chair, to give the floor to Italy. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Italy, just to save time, is it about the request by Russia, is it for or against? Because I want to move on. Italy, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Madam Chair. For the reason that I have already explained at length before, we see the need to go to the vote and I wanted to second the motion from Belgium. We have discussed what we needed to discuss. We clearly have reached a stalemate. We are at the point where, clearly, we cannot go any further.

Chairperson:

Point of order, point of order by India. Italy, now we are discussing the motion that was raised by Russia.

The Delegation of Italy:

Yes, I was going there.

Chairperson:

And then, second thing, this would come after, if we finish with this, and depending on the result of this we are going to discuss that, but I need to address the point of order by India. You have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, thank you. I think you have correctly captured it. We are on a very specific technical point. We are discussing on the adjournment motion because adjournment takes precedence over the closure of debate. And as per the Rules of Procedures on this technical point, as clarified by the Legal Advisor, we just want one speaker who is going to speak in favour and we want one speaker who may speak against it; and then it is up to the wisdom of the Chair. Excellency, we are in your hands. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, India. Italy, I believe that your intervention is done.

The Delegation of Italy:

My intervention was to oppose the request of adjournment because this is not what we are called to decide today. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Italy. Now with that, we would like to move to address the request by Russia. Russia, can you please restate your request if possible?

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Yes, Madam Chair, thank you. I requested the adjournment of the debate sine die and since it is my first time in the Committee, I am not aware of the rules.

Chairperson:

Point of order. A point of order by Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, Madam Chair. In our interpretation of the rules, the speaker who speaks in favour cannot be the same State Party that requested the adjournment.

Chairperson:

Yes, indeed. They have requested it. It is not about in favour they requested the floor and I requested for a clarification of their request.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Okay. Thank you and then apologies for the confusion.

Chairperson:

No worries. Now, Russia and the adjournment sine die, and now if the room is not in agreement with that, we would like to move, of course, for a vote in this regard. Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I was just coming to that because I am not very familiar with the Rules of Procedure of this Committee since it is my first time and in my humble reading...

Chairperson:

Point of order by India.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, I would tend to agree with my distinguished colleague from Belgium on this technical point that we are at a very technical stage of this discussion wherein an adjournment motion takes precedence over a closure of debate and we just want to hear two speakers: one in favour and one against, Excellency. That is a technical question we are all in your hands, Excellency. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Indeed, and I have addressed that Russia is a State member that requested the vote. I merely requested a clarification again, that was not to speak in favour but requested the adjournment. That is why I merely want to clarify if this goes for a vote or not and how we can handle this, not to speak in favour. If there is any country who wants to speak in favour, by all means, the floor is there. Russia, you have the floor and let us make it brief so that we do not have further interruption.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

The explanation is that I have requested adjournment sine die and what I see in Rule 28 is that during a discussion any State member may raise a point of order, such point of order shall be immediately decided to point, and then I do not know how the motions are decided. I did not find any reference, because on the closure of debate it is specified that if there is no agreement there is a vote, but here I do not see on the adjournment of debate in Rule 31 how it is decided. Thank you.

Chairperson:

That is why I have clearly stated if the Committee is not in favour of the decision, then, maybe, it may decide to go for a vote. So, now, I am looking at the members here. Are you in favour of the adjournment sine die, so that we can adopt that? Please, raise your plaque if you are and let me know because I want to hear from you. So, are you in favour of adjournment sine die so that we can agree on the adoption of the proposal by Russia? Are you? if you are not, please express yourself, we are still discussing this now. Please, raise your plaque if you want to speak. Raise your plaque if you want to speak as a country. Italy, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Madam Chair. It is a no.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I see there is an agreement of postponement sine die?

[No from the floor]

Then raise your plaque for God's sake. Thank you, we got here. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

No, it is a clear "no" for us.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Greece. Japan no, Belgium no, okay. Oman you requested the floor, you have the floor, Your Excellency. No, as well. Thank you. So, we see none in favour. How do you want to go about it right now, since the procedure is silent on that? Sorry, now it is out of order right now. Just if you want to speak, please, raise your plaque that is what I keep saying again and again. Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

It takes precedence in order of procedural motion, so there was a closure of debate that was requested right? We are against closure of debate, so there should be a vote on the closure of debate, yes? This is Rule 32.

Chairperson:

Can we have order in the room, so that we can hear each other and take a decision, otherwise we will not reach a decision, please. Now, I will hear from you Russia and then I will move to the Legal Advisor because it depends if it is a motion for a vote, then we will have to, if we have a request for a vote, – hold on I am just explaining – start the vote now and there will be no lunch break so that we can manage our time. I want to hear from the Legal Advisor about their reply, and then we can see what the room wants. If there is a request, then we would stop everything and do with the vote. If it is just a motion for closure, then I want to hear from the Legal Advisor what is the procedure in such a manner. Thank you very much to all. Legal Advisor, you have the floor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, as I stated in my previous intervention, you are in front of two motions, procedural motions for the closure of debate and a procedural motion for the adjournment of debate, and in that case the procedural motion for the adjournment of debate takes precedence. This is the reason why you gave the floor to a number of States in order to take position on the matter. You sought consensus in the room which was clearly not reached. At this point in time, the Committee must decide on the motion for the adjournment of debate sine die pursuant to Rule 38 paragraph 1: "Decisions of the Committee shall be taken by a majority of the States members present and voting." And a vote takes place normally by a show of hands unless a different request is made by a Member State.

So, that would be the situation right now since you have not reached consensus on the matter. Madam Chair, if you so wish, you may put to the vote the motion for the adjournment sine die of the debate on the current item. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

If the room is in agreement with the Legal Advisor proposal here or explanation of the Legal Advisor, shall we put this for a vote and move forward? Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Sorry to take the floor again, but it is our understanding actually that the Russian motion was already dismissed in the sense that a country spoke against it and that then you asked the room and nobody spoke in favour. It is our understanding and it is completely understandable since this Committee is today here to take responsibility and to take decisions not to postpone them. So, we think that this motion has been treated and dismissed. That is our understanding. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I will give you the floor, Greece. Now, we have been through this in the Executive Board but my question here, the rules that we are applying to us here are different from the rules that we applied to the Executive Board, as far as I understand. Now, the way I read it was different, but I am not a legal expert. Now, I would like to give you the floor to reply to what Belgium has said. You have the floor, Legal Advisor.

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, although there may be some differences in the precise wording of the rules, the actual principles and rules applicable are the same. I would respectfully disagree with the Distinguished Delegate from Belgium in the sense that the Committee has not made a decision. There was a clear statement by which there is no consensus on the matter, but there is at least one member of the Committee who holds the position that there should be an adjournment of debate. In such conditions Madam Chair, the procedure for the Committee to make a decision on the adjournment of debate sine die is to put the question for a vote. This vote may take place by a show of hands, Madam Chair, and the majority required for such a vote is a simple majority of present and voting. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you. With that, we are going to go to the vote. Just before that, I just will let you know that we have until 1:45 pm because we started at 10:30 am. I would now like to move to the vote by a show of hands and the question is: are you in favour of postponement, adjournment sine die? If you are in favour, please, raise your plaque. I ask the Secretariat to count the numbers. India, point of order.

The Delegation of India:

Excellency, the Legal Advisor mentioned that the vote may occur through a show of hands. The query is, is there an alternative also available which perhaps has not been mentioned? Just a clarification, Excellency. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Legal Advisor, can you please provide the answer?

Legal Advisor:

Madam Chair, although I do understand the question that is asked by the Distinguished Delegate of India, that answer was provided before and I should point out that under Rule 36 on the conduct during voting after the Chairperson has announced the beginning of voting, no one shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. I do not believe this is on the actual conduct of the voting the Chair has proposed that this vote takes place by a show of hands. She has started the vote and I would suggest that the best way is to proceed in that way. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Legal Advisor. I hope this answers your point of order India. If it is about the actual vote, then I will give you the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Excellency. It is unfortunate that the question could not be answered but then so be it. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Now, we will resume with the vote. We asked the question: which members are in favour of the adjournment sine die and we counted the vote. Secretariat?

The Secretariat:

Yes.

Chairperson:

Now, would you, please, lower your plaques and then I would like to ask which members are not in favour of adjournment sine die? Can you please keep your plaque raised? I think you can lower your plaques now. Okay. Thank you. Those countries who abstain – I see a request here that there need to be a show of hands for abstentions – so those countries who abstain, please, raise your plaque. Thank you, you can lower your plaques. Thank you very much.

Okay. So, dear colleagues as a result of the voting by a roll call which has just taken place, the results are as follows: number of Committee members present 21; number of Committee members present and voting 8; number of abstentions 13; votes in favour are 1; vote against 7; a simple majority was required and it is five. Therefore, the proposal is rejected. Thank you.

Now, can we move to the requests that were made on the floor, starting with the closure of the debate. And I would like to hear from the Member States. Russia, you have the floor

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We would prefer continuing the debate and I think we need to analyse the nomination dossier properly. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. I would like to hear from other members. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much. We support the proposal to close the debate and we know what is going to happen, even if we continue our discussions. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Now, I think we had a motion by Belgium and we have heard for and against and I think we can move now to the closure of the debate and then considering the decision, if we can see the decision on the screen. Russia, point of order.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Sorry, Madam Chair, we need to vote first on closure since I was against. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Okay, so let us vote. Now, we would like to vote on the closure of the debate motion raised by Belgium. The voting will be by a roll call. I would like to see a show of hands – not a roll call, sorry – on who is in favour of the closure of the debate. Please, raise your plaque country members in favour of closure of the debates on this item. Thank you, you can lower your plaques. Now, countries against the closure of the debate. Thank you, you can lower your plaques. Now countries abstaining. Thank you, you can lower your plaques. Mexico, India, you can lower your plaques.

Okay, now, dear colleagues as a result of the voting by a show of hands which has just taken place the results are as follows: number of Committee members present 21; number of Committee members present and voting 6; number of abstentions 15; votes in favour 5; votes against 1. Simple majority required was 4, therefore the proposal of closure of the debate is adopted. Thank you.

Now, let us move to the consideration of the draft decision. If we can move paragraph by paragraph. Belgium, you wanted to take the floor?

La Délégation de Belgique :

Merci Madame la Présidente. Compte tenu des votes précédents, nous souhaiterions procéder directement au vote sur la proposition initiale. Merci.

Chairperson:

Okay. The procedural issue here is that if there is an amendment, the vote will be on the amendment and we have an amendment here proposed by Russia, just for your knowledge. So, if there is a vote it will be the vote on the amendment. I see no secondment to the vote request. Belgium, you want to take the floor?

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. We are just seeing these amendments on the screen and in our interpretation of the rules and more precisely Rule 25.3, these are not just amendments: this is a whole new decision in our opinion. Because amendments are slight modifications, suppression of a few words and so forth. So, we cannot on a credible basis examine this text as it is amended. We have to have the initial version. These are actually, basically, sorry to be incoherent, but these are not amendments. This is a new decision basically. That is our first point we want to make. We do not wish to discuss this text. I will not even call it an amendment. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. So, you are explaining your request for a vote, because the vote is if there is an amendment and members feel that it is a new draft resolution, then they should put it to a vote. I mean this happened before. Now the only option that we have for voting is to vote on the amendment. This was my clarification to you. Now, given that there is an amendment that was submitted officially by a Member State, we vote first on the amendment. So, the question will be to vote on the amendment “yes” or “no”. That is why I just wanted to give it to you as an explanation and I saw your request and I saw other members also willing to second this request. So, are you still requesting the vote Belgium?

La Délégation de Belgique :

Merci Madame la Présidente. Pour nous, nous considérons que ceci n'est pas un amendement. Donc, selon l'article 25.3 du ROU définissant un amendement comme étant simplement une addition, une suppression, une modification intéressant une partie de la proposition, pour nous, dans la mesure où cela supprime la décision dans son entièreté, l'amendement russe transforme entièrement l'objet de la décision. Il doit donc être considéré comme décision à part entière qui devrait être examinée séparément par notre Comité. Et donc, nous demandons de voter contre cet amendement. Pardon, on vote pour dire que ce n'est pas un amendement, c'est une autre décision.

Chairperson:

Legal Advisor, can you please explain on the process to take place in this regard?

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the applicable rules at this stage are Rules 25 and 26 relating to proposals. As you rightly pointed out, when an amendment to a proposal is moved, the amendment shall be voted on first. I understand that, as was circulated, the Russian Federation has proposed a number of modifications to the draft decision which it has termed as an amendment. The Rules of Procedure, however, contain a definition of what an amendment is, which is contained in Rule 25 paragraph 3 which I will read in full and it reads as follows: "A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal." If this was not to be considered an amendment, Madam Chair, it would therefore be considered a new proposal. For a new proposal the applicable rule would be Rule 26, which among others reads: "If two or more proposals relate to the same question, the Committee shall, unless it decides otherwise, vote on the proposals in the order in which they have been submitted."

Madam Chair, my interpretation of the current situation is that there is at least one member of the Committee that has considered that what has been proposed by the Russian Federation does not constitute an amendment pursuant to Rule 25.3. If the Committee is not able to reach consensus on the matter, the Committee may decide on whether it considers this to be an amendment or a new proposal, which it may do, if necessary, by a vote. The vote would be by a simple majority and it could be held by a show of hands.

Since I am at this stage, let me allow me to finally respond to the Distinguished Delegate of India to say that the Committee has normally taken its decision when voting by a show of hands, but that vote by a roll call may also be taken if it is requested by not less than two States Members. My apologies for not having been able to respond at an earlier stage for procedural reasons. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Now I would like to hear from the room. I saw several plaques earlier raised. We have Greece, I have Bulgaria, Italy, Russia, Japan in this order. Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Madam Chair. We will be very brief. Our delegation supports the proposal presented by Belgium.

Chairperson:

The question here raised, just to reiterate the question, is: do you see this as a whole new proposal or do you see it as an amendment? I saw Belgium and Greece saying that it is a new proposal. I will give the floor now to Bulgaria then Italy and then Russia. Bulgaria, you have the floor.

La Délégation de Bulgarie :

Merci. Notre délégation aussi soutient le fait que ces amendements constituent un nouveau projet de décision et que cette proposition ne correspond en rien aux exigences de l'Article 25.3 pour qu'il soit traité en tant qu'amendement. Merci.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I would now like to give the floor to Italy to be followed by Russia and Japan. Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I think it goes beyond any doubt that this is no longer the previous and original decision. It is not an amendment; it is a new draft decision and as such has to be treated. Thank you and we oppose it, of course.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Italy. Russia and Japan.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. The Legal Advisor read the definition of an amendment and this is an amendment because in fact it adds, deletes and revises parts of the proposal. And I am glad I speak after the Distinguished Representative of Italy, because in the last ordinary session of the Committee there was one property, namely "Porticoes of Bologna", that ICOMOS proposed to be deferred. However, the Committee amended the decision to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. As you can imagine, from deferral to inscription a considerable amendment is needed, but the Committee treated it as an amendment. So, there is established precedence and we should act accordingly.

Second point I would like to raise is that should for whatever reason the Committee decides otherwise and we vote on the initial proposal, I request it to be by secret ballot. Thank you.

Chairperson:

We will come to this when we reach it Russia, so that we do not get confused with the procedures here. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much. I will be very short. I support the other Delegations who say that this is an entirely new draft decision. It is obvious. One says "inscribe" the other says "no". So, it is obvious, this is a different decision. Thank you. But we do not have to respond to the secret ballot thing now? Great, okay. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Okay. Now, I see the room is generally not in favour of considering this as an amendment, but mostly towards a new proposal. If the room is in agreement, we can move forward. If there is any other motion in this regard, then we will just move to the draft resolution as proposed initially. Ethiopia has the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

I am a little bit confused on the concept of amendments. That is why I raised my plaque. Amendment in its literary definition means you can improve some of the ideas or the concepts in the submitted document, you can omit everything out of it and suggest another new one. I am talking literally but I am not talking in terms of what has been explained by the Legal Advisor. And I heard that all is new, but I can see some two or three recommendations with very minor changes, for example if you take number 6, number 7, and number 1 usually does not require anything; it has to be kept as is. I am confused on the definition.

Chairperson:

Thank you for your explanation, but I think that the Legal Advisor has explained what is an amendment or not. And now, I put the question to the room and you, esteem members, to tell me: do you think it is a new proposal based on this explanation or do you want to consider it as an amendment?

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Hence my question, Madam Chair, this is what I would like the Legal Advisor to explain: is it new?

Chairperson:

Your Excellency, again, I would love to give the floor to the Legal Advisor, but I guarantee that he is going to repeat exactly what he said before because it is clearly defined. This is just for the matter of time because, again, the Legal Advisor cannot judge for the members. But again, if you feel more comfortable, I would give him the floor to explain.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Yes, Madam. I think democratically everyone's idea ought to be properly helped.

Chairperson:

Sure, and you have all my respect, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

I would like to listen to him as I want to be clear on the decisions that I need to take.

Chairperson:

You have all the respect by myself and by all the Committee members here. Legal Advisor, would you please reply to the question of the distinguished representative of Ethiopia?

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. As you already pointed out, I should re-emphasize what I mentioned before, the definition of what an amendment is. It is contained in Rule 25.3 which I will read once again: "A motion is considered an amendment to a proposal if it merely adds to, deletes from or revises part of that proposal." It is for the Committee to interpret its rules for the purposes of the procedure, and it is for the Committee to decide whether it considers that the document that is in front of it constitutes an amendment or a new proposal. This can be decided either by consensus or, if need be, by a vote. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you for your explanation. I would like to give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Ethiopia to be followed by Russia. You may have the floor.

The Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you. In terms of legal explanation. I know you responded to me and thank you for that, but I would like to listen to the Secretariat, technically, what is it?

Chairperson:

Secretariat, I will give you the floor and then I think we will be exhausting this discussion now. Secretariat, please, if you can be brief.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the Legal Advisor has clarified. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Now, Your Excellency the Representative of Ethiopia, the discussion was – please, can we have order in the room? – do you think that this is a new amendment or – I know, Russia, I can see you – if you think that this is a new amendment, a new proposal, sorry, or an amendment? This was the question that was raised to everyone, and we got the answer of everyone. So, if you want to give your opinion in this regard, go ahead. I would like to give the floor to Russia. Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. This is an amendment to the decision. We kept the original text, the structure of the text, we simply added and deleted certain parts and kept many of them and also revised many of them. I draw your attention to the precedent, namely the "Porticoes of Bologna", and I would also like to state that we did not find any precedent in the practice of the World Heritage Committee where any amendment by Member States in the World Heritage Committee was considered as a new proposal, and if this was done on the text originally distributed. If I am wrong, I stand to be corrected by the Director of the World Heritage Centre. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. Since there is no agreement in the room, I think we should go for a vote by a show of hands again. And the question will be. Hold on. So, just to be clear on the question. Oman, yes, I am as much hungry as you are, I know, and even more, but let us finish this one. Thank you. Please, you have the floor, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much. Only we are all confused. We want to know what is the difference between simple majority and the majority. We are confused why we are going by a simple majority and when should we go by the majority. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Very well heard Your Excellency and I will refer to the Legal Advisor before we start with the vote on this regard. Would you please answer this issue to His Excellency the representative the Ambassador of Oman?

Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. In response to the question by the Distinguished Representative from Oman, the rules applicable are Rules 37 and 38 of the Rules of Procedure: the decisions of the Committee are taken by what is called the simple majority unless they are specific cases, in which a qualified majority of two-thirds is required. A simple majority is a majority of the members present and voting, in other words, the members who are in the room and who have voted in favour or against a proposal. And the simple majority is calculated by counting the number of votes in favour and against, divided by two and you add one in order to obtain that majority. I believe this clarifies. This is the way it has been applied up to now in the Committee in these two days. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Okay, I see that Oman raised its plaque. I see Russia. Oman, please, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Oman:

No, what I want to know is when we are supposed to use simple majority and when we are going to choose qualified majority. That is my main question. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Oman. Russia, I would like to refer to the Legal Advisor and then give you the floor. Legal Advisor, would you please answer the question.

Legal Advisor:

In that case, I will read the rules concerned. Rule 37 entitled two-thirds majority and reads as follows: "Decisions of the Committee on matters covered by the provisions of the Convention shall be taken by a majority of two-thirds of its members present and voting". In other words, the two-thirds majority is required for matters covered by provisions of the Convention. Rule 38 paragraph 1: "Except where otherwise specified in the present Rules, all other decisions of the Committee shall be taken by a majority of the States members present and voting." These are procedural questions and therefore they fall under the latter rule. It is what is called a simple majority. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and thank you to the Distinguished Delegate of Oman for his question.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Now, Russia, would you like to take the floor, because I would like to start with the voting on this.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Before the voting starts, I would like to clarify for everybody, so that everybody is conscious of what we are doing. From now on, any amendment by a Member State to a draft decision proposed by the Secretariat changing its character, namely from deferral to inscription, from referral to inscription and otherwise would not be any more considered an amendment, so that everybody is conscious of this. Thank you. Because it would present a substantive amendment, I mean a significant substantive change. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. I would like to give the floor to Belgium and I really need to go to the vote.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, I fully agree. We have exhausted this discussion. I think the Legal Advisor was crystal clear earlier and I just would like to say that we disagree with this presentation of the discussion of the Russian Federation because if you scroll down, you will see that this is an entirely new decision. It is not about what...

Chairperson:

I am sorry to interrupt but I think this discussion has been exhausted.

The Delegation of Belgium:

I agree.

Chairperson:

I would like to remind you that we have five minutes until lunch break and I would like to finish with this talk.

The Delegation of Belgium:

My apologies.

Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Now, the question will be as follow: do you consider that the text submitted by the Russian Federation is a new proposal? That is the question. Now, I will ask countries in favour to raise their plaque. I will repeat the question again: do you consider that the text that has been submitted by the Russian Federation is a new proposal? If you are in favour of that, can you please raise your plaque? You can lower your plaques, please. Now, countries who are not in favour of this statement can you please raise your plaque, or against the statement or question. Thank you, you can lower your plaques. And now, countries who abstain from answering this question. Thank you. Keep it up, yes, can you please keep your flags up? Sorry, Nigeria do you abstain or? Yes, can you please keep it up so that I can count? Thank you. Okay.

Dear colleagues, here are the result of the voting by a show of hands, which has just taken place. The results are as follows: number of Committee members present 21; number of Committee members present and voting 7; number of abstentions 14; votes in favour 6; vote against 1; majority required was simple which was 4. Therefore, the text submitted by the Russian Federation is considered to be a new proposal. Thank you.

With that, I would like to stop the meeting now. I think we do not have any interpreters; we only have the room until 1:45pm. We are going to stop the discussion now and reconvene again at 3:00 pm. Please, be there at 3:00 pm sharp, enjoy your quick lunch and I will see you at 3:00 pm. Thank you.

The meeting rose at 1:45 pm.

SECOND DAY
Wednesday, 25 January 2023

SECOND MEETING

3 pm – 4:05 pm

Chairperson:

H.H. Princess Haifa Al Mogrin

DEUXIÈME JOUR
Mercredi 25 janvier 2023

DEUXIÈME RÉUNION

15h00 – 16h05

Présidente :

S.A. Princesse Haifa Al Mogrin

5. ANY OTHER MATTER: NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST – NOMINATIONS TO BE PROCESSED ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS (ITEM PROPOSED BY JAPAN, BELGIUM, BULGARIA, GREECE AND ITALY) (Ct'd) // TOUTE AUTRE QUESTION : PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL – PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION DEVANT ÊTRE TRAITÉES EN URGENCE (POINT PROPOSÉ PAR LE JAPON, LA BELGIQUE, LA BULGARIE, LA GRÈCE ET L'ITALIE) (suite)

Chairperson:

Please, let us be seated. Do we have a quorum? Okay, with that, I would like to resume our meeting with the Agenda item that we discussed which is “Any Other Matter, Nominations to the World Heritage List and Nominations to be processed on an emergency basis”. The last discussion was about the “Historic Centre of the Port City of Odesa”, Ukraine, with Draft Decision number **18 EXT.COM 5.2**.

Now, the last thing that we had before we took our break was the discussion on the text proposed by Russia, if it is considered to be by the Committee members a new proposal or an amendment, and the vote was taken by a show of hands and it was rejected as an amendment and considered more of a new proposal. With that, I would like to hear from you if we can move forward now. I would like to see the draft decision on the screen, so that we can start adopting the decision without the amendments. So, can we go paragraph by paragraph? Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I have a question which is in the file of the Tentative List presented and as it appears on the World Heritage website, the name of the city is different with one more letter. Here in this decision, it is always just one 's'. In our previous decisions taken by this Committee, namely when we inscribed the city of Saint Petersburg, it was also mentioned with different spellings. So, what? Are we inscribing the same property from the Tentative List? Then, maybe it should be corrected. That is my question to the Secretariat.

I believe there was a request for a vote before we left and I asked the vote to be by secret ballot. And also, since we did not have time because of this debate on whether it is a proposal or an amendment presented by us, I believe countries did not have time to look into and analyze it. I would just like to say that the main gist of our amendment that the Committee considered to be a proposal was to let the file pass, the same way we adopted yesterday on a special procedure to be examined at the 45th session. So, that people would have known what was the main idea: that we see that there is a big potential for Universal Outstanding Value, but there is more work to be done and the Committee could have considered this file properly in the session. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. Now, with regard to your last remark, I would kindly ask the Rapporteur to have it in the report of the discussion. As with regard to your question, I think, since you mentioned the vote, the vote will supersede everything else. Now, when you requested a vote for secret ballot it needs to be seconded, so that we can take it forward and I wish to hear from the floor if there is any member who would like to second the secret ballot. I see none so far. I see none, so with that, we will consider the draft resolution paragraph by paragraph. I would like to take you to start with paragraph 1, and then when we move to paragraph 2 to answer your question with regard to the naming of the name of the site. Russia, do you have an objection to something? Please, go ahead.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I am a little bit at a loss. I remember that Belgium requested a vote right, and I mean, I am confused on the procedure. So, could you please clarify? Also, I believe my question was not answered as for the spelling and what we are transcribing. And another question I have to the Rapporteur and the people from the Secretariat: as per paragraph 184 I believe, if I am not mistaken, the members of the Committee should receive all

information about the nomination file, and I would like to know whether the Secretariat received opinion from expert bodies, NGOs, etc. and if yes, when they were distributed. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. Although I would have appreciated these questions earlier on, but since there was not much time to discuss and do it, as we moved to the vote on the amendments and on the new proposal, then I would give the room the floor to answer but I want to hear from Belgium, and then, maybe we can move forward. Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be happy to clarify. Indeed, we requested to close the debate which was favourably addressed through this question by this Committee, so we could indeed go on and vote. As we see no amendments, we would like to suggest adopting the decision as a whole instead of going paragraph by paragraph and we take note that this is not going to be a secret vote.

As it comes to the matter of the writing, we just would like to say that it is quite common that it changes over time, let us for example, from the top of my head, refer to 'Türkiye' who also changes the official denomination. So, we do not see any objection or this does not add anything to this discussion. The matter is still the Outstanding Universal Value and the emergency and that remains the issue at hand. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium. Since there was a motion to close the debate and I think Russia or Belgium have also participated now in this debate, as I was kindly reminded, I would like to request for a vote and the question here is a request for a vote. It will be a vote with a show of hands. Unless Russia, do you have another vote or do you have a point of order? Go ahead.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you. We would prefer a roll call. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Would that be seconded by anyone a roll call? Are there any members who would like to second this request? I see no other requests for a roll call. Then, I think we should now proceed with a show of hands. Now I would like to kindly ask our colleagues here, based on the request for a vote by a show of hands which has been moved by the Delegation of Belgium. Of course, the question will be on the adoption of the Decision **18 EXT.COM 5.2**. The question will be: are you in favour of the Draft Decision or of the adoption of this Draft Decision concerning this nomination of the "Historic Centre of the Port City of Odesa" as contained in the document WHC/23/18.EXTCOM/5, as you see it here? Now, with a show of hands, Delegation members who are in favour. Oman are you in favour or is it a point of order?

The Delegation of Oman:

If you allow me, we need clarification again about the voting now. Is it by the simple majority or by the majority of two-thirds? We have to clarify this because we are still confused.

Chairperson:

Sure, Your Excellency, thank you. Can you please lower your plaque? Now, exceptionally I would allow this now, but definitely, we want to go on, or maybe, Your Excellency, if you allow me, let us get the vote, and then once we get the vote it can be clarified what we need for it. Because we have started the process, Your Excellency.

The Delegation of Oman:

We need this before we vote. I am sorry, we need this before we vote. I hope everyone should be clear about what we are voting for.

Chairperson:

Sure. Legal Advisor, would you like to give an explanation?

Legal Advisor:

Madam Chair, applicable rule is Rule 37 entitled "Two-thirds majority" reads as follows: "Decisions of the Committee on matters covered by the provisions of the Convention shall be taken by a majority of two-thirds of its members present and voting." It is my understanding that decisions concerning the inscription of a site in the List have been considered, rightly so, as being a matter that is covered by the provisions of the Convention, and therefore, a two-thirds majority is required for the vote to pass. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Now, we shall proceed and I shall repeat the question again: are you in favour of the Draft Decision **18 EXT.COM 5.2** concerning the nomination of the “Historic Centre of the Port City of Odesa”, Ukraine, as contained in the document in front of you WHC/23/18.EXTCOM/5. I would like to ask Delegations in favour to raise their plaque. Okay, thank you. You can lower your plaques. Counted. Now, countries who are not in favour of the Draft Decision, please, raise your plaques. Okay, counted, not in favour. Thank you. Now countries abstaining, please, raise your plaque. Thank you, just keep it raised, please. Thank you, you can lower your plaques.

Dear colleagues as a result of voting by a show of hands which has just taken place, the results are as follows: number of Committee members present 21; number of Committee members present and voting 7; number of abstentions 14; those in favour 6 votes; against 1. Majority required was two-thirds which is five. Therefore the decision is adopted.

Applause.

If you allow me, I need to give the floor to Ukraine. Let me congratulate Ukraine on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List. Ukraine, you have the floor for a brief two-minute statement.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Distinguished Delegates, Secretariat, ICOMOS and especially Legal Advisor, by the time we held this debate a national alert was announced in Ukraine because of the threat of Russian missiles that happens almost each day. Unfortunately, due to the full-scale Russian invasion to Ukraine, Odesa heritage sites are also under threat. In the port, local citizens are discovering Russian mines and Odesa Art Museum was, as other buildings, damaged, citizens were killed.

That is why I am very much grateful that today, your Committee of UNESCO was able to demonstrate its devotion to the principles of Outstanding Universal Value to protect multinational historical and cultural heritage that was created by Greeks, French, Italians, Jews, Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars and other nationalities. We can be happy today, but for me it was a big surprise how one country was trying all the time during this discussion by raising procedural questions to stop the adoption, although they violate all international laws by killing dozens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians, pulling out of their homes millions, ruining and damaging thousands of houses and plus and more than five historical and cultural sites in Ukraine.

They even today questioned the entire existence of the Ukrainian nation in the 19th century. But this is the reason of the war today: they question the entire existence of the Ukrainian nation today. And in this term, I would like to tell you a short story. This Autumn the Odesa Opera presented a premiere of “Kateryna” created on the basis of the poem of a Ukrainian famous poet, Taras Shevchenko, and music by the Ukrainian composer Olexander Rodin. The story tells how Russian soldiers raped a Ukrainian girl. The same that happened in the 19th century continues now in Ukraine. They also robbed several Ukrainian museums, so we can prove now in Ukraine territories...

Chairperson:

Your Excellency, I am sorry to interrupt but your time is up.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

At the end, I would like to say that we have a lot of work to do due to today's decision and also to have a victory. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Now, there is a request for the floor from Belgium and the Russian Federation. Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Your Highness, and sorry for taking the floor again, but there are 39 countries of the Group of Friends of Ukraine who would also like to make a very short statement. If I may ask you to give the floor to the Representative of the United Kingdom to deliver this statement on behalf of the 39 countries, that would be very kind. Thank you to consider this request.

Chairperson:

Very well, based on the request of you as a Member State, I will give the floor to the United Kingdom. United Kingdom, by all means would you like to wait? Ukraine, please, can you turn off your microphone? Yes. Thank you. So, Russia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Dear colleagues, this session could be considered as extraordinary, not only as per the Rules of Procedure but in every little meaning. The only way I can describe it is to quote the words of the famous protagonist of Isaac Babel from Odesa stories: "My brain together with my hair stood up when I heard the news."

Today, we witnessed the funerals of the World Heritage Convention. Under the unprecedented pressure of a group of countries, every single guiding principle, including scientific objectivity, was shamefully violated. If a property can be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of a file copy pasted from Wikipedia and bloggers tourist guide what's next? Next time we would just say: no file is needed, those who are interested should read Wikipedia themselves. If we inscribe without boundaries, why should we the next time bother to present a map? This whole process undermines the credibility of the Convention, endangers the World Heritage List and damages UNESCO as a whole.

The World Heritage Committee is no more the place for professional experts' dialogue, but the flagship cultural Convention, the most famous UNESCO brand, has just become a mere bargaining chip for short-term geopolitical interests. Countries that have pushed for the consideration of the nomination at the same time have blocked any meaningful discussion on the matter. Why? Because they have nothing to say on the substance of the nomination, because their main purpose is not to protect heritage. They do not care about Odesa. They do nothing but harass every single UNESCO Forum to serve the interest of one country. Otherwise, they would at least condemn the destruction by local authorities of monuments that were part of this area they were so fiercely supporting. All these manipulations are obvious to the States Parties of the Convention and the general public. But we do care about Odesa, so-called southern Palmyra, a hero city of the Great Patriotic War.

[singing] "There is a city I see in my dreams,
if you only knew how dear it is to me,
on the black Sea shore, it appeared to me".

I continue. The city deserves to be on the List and deserves a proper nomination file and we would have generously shared the documents from our archives including the decree by the Russian Empress and the regional plans and maps. But now, since the city is inscribed on the List, we expect UNESCO to do its work and to insist that local authorities reinstall back the monuments that they demolished. For those Committee members who have orchestrated this disgraceful decision, I would like to address one more quotation from Odesa stories.

Chairperson:

You have exhausted your time, Russia.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

"Shame, Monsieur Tartakovsky – in which fireproof safe have you hidden your shame?" Thank you

Chairperson:

Russia, thank you very much. Please can I ask for order in the room when anyone speaks, out of respect for our colleagues. If there is anything to be raised, kindly raise your plaque so that we can speak. But I know that the room is now charged one way or another, but I would kindly implore all of you to keep our grace about this and listen to each other, and maybe reply in due course and stick to the time allocated, please. With that, I would like to exhaust the list of speakers from the Committee members on this item and will give the floor to Bulgaria, and then maybe move to the request of Belgium.

La Délégation de Bulgarie :

Thank you, Your Highness. La République de Bulgarie se félicite de l'inscription d'Odesa sur la liste du patrimoine mondial. Cette ville est célèbre pour son exceptionnelle tolérance, son respect de l'histoire, de la culture et des traditions, de la langue maternelle et des coutumes. Notre pays attache une grande importance aux efforts visant à protéger et à préserver la ville d'Odesa. Sa population et sa richesse historique sont menacées aujourd'hui par l'agression militaire russe non provoquée contre l'Ukraine.

La république de Bulgarie, en position ferme et cohérente, soutient l'Ukraine pour sa souveraineté, son indépendance et son intégrité territoriale à l'intérieur de ses frontières internationalement reconnues. Odesa est connue comme une ville où cohabitent environ 130 nationalités dont des Bulgares. La région abrite environ 130 000 citoyens d'origine Bulgares qui ont contribué aux relations traditionnellement amicales et excellentes entre la Bulgarie et l'Ukraine, y compris par l'existence de 52 écoles bulgares.

En ce sens, Odesa et sa région revêtent également une grande importance historique pour la Bulgarie. Le centre des Bulgares de Bessarabie, la ville de Bolhrad, a célébré son 200e anniversaire en août 2021. De nombreux personnages historiques de premier plan ont aussi étudié, vécu et travaillé dans cette région.

On this note, I would like to kindly ask your indulgence to give the floor to Poland on behalf of several Member States of Group II. Thank you, Your Highness.

Chairperson:

Thank you. I would like to give the floor to Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you very much, Chair. Our Delegation is particularly happy with this inscription. Odesa is inextricably linked to our history and particularly significant, as it was here that the Greek struggle for liberation from the Ottoman Empire actually began. It was in building number 18 of Chervonyi lane, which in the early 19th century functioned as a grocery store and home residence of Grigor Ivanovich Maraslis, that the Philikí Etaireía, meaning Society of Friends, was founded in 1814 by three Greek merchants. The secret society played a crucial role in promoting the liberation of Greeks. And today, this historic building, which houses a museum maintained by the Greek State, is a reminder of the importance of commerce as a conduit for revolutionary ideas in the Greek immigrant community.

Madam Chair, after the creation of the independent Greek State, the Greek community in Odesa continued to flourish and Greek wealthy families helped Odesa with benefactions and great buildings, as well as their homeland, which after a 10-year bloody war was now independent but devastated and poor. In particular, I refer to the eminent Greek, Grigorios Maraslis, who served as mayor of the city for 17 years, having been elected four times and whose name was given to one of the main streets of the city, Marazliyivska. During his term in office, Odesa was transformed and brightened up with buildings, housing various public and intellectual institutions, the construction of many of which he financed including theatre, hospital, nursing home, aqueduct and a plethora of schools and large municipal parks.

For these reasons also, the Greek Delegation feels a particular emotion with the inscription of the "Port City of Odesa" to UNESCO's World Heritage List in Danger. Thank you, Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Greece. I would now like to give the floor to Italy; you have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to congratulate together the three countries presenting these three new additions to the World Heritage List. I think we did the right job today. I wish to congratulate all the members of the Committee to have made this possible. I think this is a good day for the World Heritage List, which ultimate goal is the protection of properties. We also and always have to remember this is why we are here and are called to enhance the protection of the properties inscribed. And the three of them needed to be protected.

I am very glad and happy that the Committee realized this urge and need. And we are very much dependent now on the job that relies on the authorities and the World Heritage Centre to permit this enhanced protection. So, once again congratulations to us all and to the three inscriptions. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Italy. Now I would like to see if there are any other members of the Committee who wish to take the floor on this specific Agenda item. I see no request. I will now move to the United Kingdom and Poland. The United Kingdom you have the floor. Two minutes.

Observer of the United Kingdom:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Article 6 of the World Heritage Convention commits States Parties not to take any deliberate measures which might directly or indirectly damage the cultural and natural heritage within the territory of another State Party. Yet, the latest UNESCO figures updated this Monday show that Russia has damaged 236 cultural sites in Ukraine, that is 105 religious sites, 18 museums, 83 buildings of historical or artistic interest, 19 monuments and 11 libraries, including the Odesa Fine Arts Museum.

The imposition of Russia as a Bureau member of this Committee, particularly when it is not the chosen candidate of its regional group, undermines this Convention.

Chairperson:

Please, listen to me, I am talking now about this Agenda item.

Observer of the United Kingdom:

I am talking about it too, Madam.

Chairperson:

No, you are talking about something else which is a different Agenda item. I would highly appreciate it if you can express whatever you want to say with regard to this Agenda item. You have the floor.

Observer of the United Kingdom:

We are dismayed by the undermining of this Convention and our collective protection of cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value given its importance for both Ukraine's rich history and the global World Heritage. We welcome the emergency inscription of Odesa which does indeed need urgent safeguarding from the repeated danger of Russian shelling. Ukraine reports five damaged sites within Odesa, of which two inside the boundaries of the property. We also warmly welcome the emergency listing of sites in Lebanon and Yemen. The deterioration or disappearance of any item of cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world.

We reiterate our calls on the Russian Federation to end its war of aggression against Ukraine and to cease its destruction of Ukrainian cultural heritage, tangible and intangible. With your permission, Madam Chair, I would like to list the 39 countries who subscribe to this statement, but I know that it will take me more than the 24 seconds I have left. Do I have your permission?

Chairperson:

You cannot because the Group of Friends I think is well known to everyone, so, with your permission, I would like to commit to the time. Thank you very much. Thank you for your understanding. I would now like to give the floor to Poland if you have any reflections on this Agenda item. You have the floor.

Observer of Poland:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I am speaking on behalf of the following members, members of Group II: Poland, Bulgaria, Czechia, Latvia, Estonia, Croatia, Slovakia, Romania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Georgia, Albania, Slovenia, actually a majority of Group II members. Let me reiterate that we do not consider ourselves to be represented by Russia as vice-chair of the Bureau from Group II.

Chairperson:

Poland, if you kindly – yes, I see Russia, let me please complete my sentence. No, Poland. What I want to say now, this is an Agenda item that has been discussed and closed. Now, I gave you the floor and I gave everyone the floor here with regard to the site that has just been inscribed right now. And I just kindly stopped our colleague from the United Kingdom even from stating the names of the members, our colleagues also from Oman when they wanted to be explained the vote because we moved to the next item. I regrettably did not give them the floor, so I would not really have any special treatment given to anyone. If you have anything to say about the site of Ukraine that has just been inscribed, I will be very happy and honoured to listen to you.

Observer of Poland:

Thank you, Madam Chair. By congratulating Ukraine and this Committee on the inscription of Odesa on the World Heritage List in Danger, on behalf of these mentioned States, I need to express our deep, deep disappointment that the State Party, Russia, violating Article 6 of the World heritage Committee, was elected yesterday as representative of the Group in the Bureau. Thank you, Madam Chair. I have finished my statement. Thank you for granting me the time.

Chairperson:

Russia, did you want to speak? Okay. Thank you. Okay, now I have two Observer countries and I am inclined to give you the floor. Okay, Russia, I will give you the point of order, but just let me continue my sentence. I am inclined to give you the floor, providing that you are going to speak on the item that was just inscribed and only that, if possible. Or please, if not that, I would refrain from giving anyone the floor. Point of order is by Russia, please, go ahead.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that in this Committee the practice is, when the site is inscribed, the State Party to the Convention to whom the site belongs to speaks, if this State Party is not a Committee member, as an Observer and that is it. My understanding was that one Committee member gave the right that he has to the United Kingdom to voice the opinion of 39 countries, but then, I mean that is it. Especially, since the plaques raised belong to those countries on behalf of whom United Kingdom has just had the floor. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russian Federation. I would like to turn to the Secretariat to explain that, please. After the inscription of a file, what is the Committee role in that and what is the practice? You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Once the decision has been taken already, I think it is at your discretion if you decide to give the floor. Thank you very much. And there is a Rule of Procedure for it, which allows you to give the floor to any Observer at your discretion, should you wish. Thank you very much.

Chairperson:

Thank you. Now, to be honest, since we are in an extraordinary session and given the extraordinary nature of this meeting and the time that it is taking place, it should have been one day and extended to two days, I was really reluctant to also give the floor to other Member States with regard to this Agenda item, or to be honest any other Agenda item to stick only to what we have and limit interventions.

Yet, if there is a plaque raised by a Member State of the Convention and since there is no legal impediment or legal Rule of procedure against it, as far as I was told, please, confirm with me Legal Advisor. If there is none, then I would like to give the floor to Observers, providing that they stick to their time and stick to the item that has been inscribed. With that, point of order, Russia. Please, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I believe that we have just heard the statement on behalf of 39 members and the same members asked for the floor again, being not Committee members. Already, the country that voiced the opinion of these countries is not a Committee member, so by this time, just everybody has two minutes, etc., it is a little bit of an unfair treatment towards Observer States and Member States.

Chairperson:

Please, let us have order in the room, let us have order in the room. Our colleague is speaking, please.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Since the Distinguished Representative of the United Kingdom voiced some critical things about my country, I would like to say, so that everybody hears, that none of UNESCO World Heritage-listed sites in Ukraine have been damaged so far, none of them from the Tentative List. And, I am sorry to say so, but it is not up to the United Kingdom to teach lessons to anybody else after their bombing of Syria, Iraq, Yugoslavia...

Chairperson:

I have to stop you here; I have to stop you here. Hold on. Please, members, if we are going to get into this, then we are getting really out of control as members. I see Oman here also raising a point of order. Please, again, I implore all of you, let us keep our grace together, let us keep our respect to each other together. I said this before and I say it again. So, now we are talking about the site that was just inscribed. If we can continue doing that and respect each other then, please, let us do that. If I give the floor to any other member and they start attacking other members in any manner that is not acceptable, I will stop them. So, please, with that I will give the floor to Spain, France and Lithuania. Spain, you have the floor, you have two minutes.

Observer of Spain:

Thank you, Madam. I am directly relating to what happened yesterday. I am not going to talk about the Legal Counsellor and Secretariat and bashing, but I would like to comment on some speeches of some Ambassador here talking about this Committee being a world peace Committee. For the Spanish Delegation, it is clear what Hamlet said: "Words, words..." Yesterday, the reality is that you, the Committee, chose the vice president from a regional group...

Chairperson:

I am sorry no, no.

Observer of Spain:

But in other Committees...

Chairperson:

I have to interrupt you here. We are talking about this Agenda item and we are sticking to it, I am not giving you a preferential treatment now. No.

Observer of Spain:

I am finishing.

Chairperson:

With all due respects, if you want to speak about the site that was just inscribed, I will gladly give you the floor.

Observer of Spain:

Exactly, so the site that has just been inscribed is an example. That it is a country that has been invaded by the Russian Federation that was chosen yesterday. So, this Committee is going to be remembered...

Chairperson:

I am really sorry; I am really sorry...

Observer of Spain:

As a shame Committee. Universal shame. Thank you.

Chairperson:

You have the floor, France. Thank you.

Observateur de France :

Merci, Madame la Présidente. La France salue l'inscription d'Odesa, ainsi que de Marib et de la Foire internationale de Tripoli, sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial et sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril. Ces inscriptions devront permettre à ces sites endommagés par des situations de guerres et de conflits d'être protégés par les normes internationales les plus strictes concernant des biens patrimoniaux et de bénéficier des politiques de conservation mises en œuvre par l'UNESCO.

À travers l'inscription d'Odesa, le Comité du patrimoine mondial souligne la valeur universelle exceptionnelle de la ville située sur la Mer Noire, de son architecture et de son histoire tant pour l'Ukraine et pour l'humanité. Cette décision d'inscrire Odesa sur la Liste du patrimoine en péril rappelle par ailleurs le danger que fait courir la guerre d'agression menée par la Russie contre l'Ukraine pour le patrimoine ukrainien et l'obligation de tous les États membres et signataires de la Convention de 1972 de s'abstenir de toute destruction du patrimoine d'un autre signataire de cette Convention.

Depuis le début de la guerre d'agression, le 24 février 2022, 235 sites culturels ont été endommagés ou détruits du fait des combats d'après les décomptes de l'UNESCO. Je vous remercie Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you, France. Lithuania, you have two minutes.

Observateur de Lituanie :

Merci Madame la Présidente. J'ai voulu vraiment féliciter l'Ukraine, le Yémen et le Liban pour cette nomination, pas la nomination, mais pour le résultat de cette commission. Et j'ai voulu également remercier notre conseiller juridique de l'UNESCO. Et de regretter, je suis relativement nouvelle, mais je n'ai jamais vu dans ma carrière de 20 ans de diplomatie une contestation aussi ouverte et permanente de la compétence de juristes. Je regrette que cela soit arrivé et que l'on ne puisse pas parler que d'autres choses que ce qui s'est passé ici pendant deux jours, je regrette...

Chairperson:

Lithuania, is this about this item?

Observateur de Lituanie :

Yes, yes, yes. Je pense que la majorité du deuxième groupe électoral préférerait avoir un autre vice-président et un autre membre du Bureau. Merci Madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Now, we have one last request for the floor and I am closing the discussion after that. Germany, please, be brief, two minutes straight to the topic. Thank you.

Observer of Germany:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I congratulate the Committee to have eventually made the right decision by inscribing the three sites in the tortured State of Yemen, the tortured State of Lebanon and the tortured State of Ukraine. The inscription of these sites saved the honour of this Committee, especially the "Port City of Odesa" with links to different cultures, with a unique architectural value and of extreme importance for Ukraine. However, the circumstances, what I have seen since yesterday as an Observer who could not take the floor, are appalling and I think this is not the way we should continue to work in this Committee. The World Heritage Committee is...

Chairperson:

Germany, is this about the site?

Observer of Germany:

It is a business card of UNESCO and in my country people...

Chairperson:

I have a question, would you please answer, is what you are saying now directly related to the inscription?

Observer of Germany:

It is directed and related to the inscription. Because the way we had to fight for this, or you had to fight for this inscription, under circumstances, we are not in the sense of UNESCO and not in the sense of consensus and not in the spirit of the World Heritage Convention. Thank you.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Germany. The Russian Federation you have the right to reply and then we will close the discussion.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Since the name of my country was repeatedly mentioned by several speakers, I will very quickly reply that I reject all the allegations against my country. And again, it is not to NATO Member States that mercifully bombed all places all over the world to teach me lessons.

Chairperson:

Russia, please. On the items that they have raised please.

The Delegation of the Russian Federation:

I am, but they mentioned an item, I mean it was not in relation to Odesa, first thing. And second, I want to thank them sincerely and wholeheartedly, they could not be more revealing than they were, because they closed the debate on the item and then they continued the debate on things that were not related to the item, so they revealed their true purpose. I truly thank them. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson:

Thank you, Russia. Now, dear colleagues, we have come to the end of our Agenda item 5. I would like to recall that, as you remember, we adopted yesterday Decision **18 EXTCOM 4** concerning the Sites associated with memories of Recent Conflicts. By this decision, the Committee decided and referred to the nominations mentioned in paragraph 9 of the decision and taking into account the exceptional circumstances which affected the timetable for such nominations, the procedures will be applied so as to allow, for those States Parties who have requested it at the present extraordinary session, the examination of their nominations by the Committee at its 45th session.

Please note that, as from now, I have received requests from the following countries: Argentina, Belgium, Rwanda, as well as South Africa. Please note that, as mentioned in the decision adopted yesterday, only the nominations from those States Parties that have requested it during the current extraordinary session will be examined by the Committee at its 45th session. On this matter I would like to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr Lazare Eloundou.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci Madame la Présidente. Juste très rapidement, je voulais informer les membres du Comité qu'à l'examen de ce point nous avons reçu plusieurs demandes de clarification sur les modalités de contestation pour les propositions d'inscriptions qui ne sont pas présentées sous le critère (vi).

Effectivement, je confirme que nous avons suivi les travaux du groupe de travail avec beaucoup d'attention et nous vous félicitons tous pour les progrès accomplis et, notamment, nous félicitons la Présidente de ce groupe de travail qui a effectué un travail formidable. Pendant les réunions du groupe de travail, certains États parties ont constaté qu'une série de défis risquent de se poser si les sites ne sont pas soumis au critère (vi), qui pourtant peuvent être assimilés par certains États à des sites de mémoire. Ce point est bien sûr documenté dans le rapport de compte-rendu des travaux du groupe de travail.

Il faut reconnaître que le dispositif adopté aujourd'hui ne pourrait pas couvrir certaines situations, mais le Centre du patrimoine mondial n'a pas été sollicité pour fournir une réflexion à cet égard, et de fait, le mandat du groupe de travail va bien être porté sur les dossiers présentés ou/et avec le critère (vi).

Donc, le Secrétariat du Centre du patrimoine mondial sera bien entendu prêt à appuyer toutes réflexions sur ces sujets à l'avenir, si le Comité décidait de mener un tel travail. Merci beaucoup, madame la Présidente.

Chairperson:

Thank you for this presentation. And with that, dear colleagues, I think I will miss you; I mean I got to get close to you during these two days. This concludes the work of this 18th extraordinary session of the Committee. I thank you all dearly for your contributions and constructive approach during this session. Despite the tension that took place, we withheld ourselves with the utmost respect and constructive work. I think that this session would not have finished today if not for all your cooperation and willingness to reach a decision at the end of it and achieve the results that this extraordinary session was convened for.

Now, I would like to thank our dear Rapporteur for her very efficient work, as well as those who have made this session possible. I would like to thank especially those who ensured that we could understand each other, the interpreters and the room technicians. I would like to thank you, Director of the World Heritage Centre. I would like to thank the Secretariat for their work and their support during this work. I would like to thank ICOMOS for being here today in the presentation of the evaluations, and please forgive me if I forget anyone in thanking them. I think I would like to thank you all, Members and Observers, for your presence and your active engagement in this session. I would like to state that Madam Rapporteur will transmit to you the report of the decisions adopted during this extraordinary session in the best delays.

Now, I am looking forward to welcoming you all in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in September. You will find everyone in Saudi Arabia welcoming you with a big smile and open arms. Saying to you "Welcome to Saudi Arabia" [*said in Arabic, then in English*]. Thank you very much. The session is closed, have a good night. Thank you all.

The meeting rose at 4:05 pm.