



AMENDMENT/PROPOSAL

Agenda Item	8B
Draft Decision	45 COM 8B.3
Submitted by the Delegation of....	THAILAND
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TEXT

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Documents WHC/23/45.COM/8B and WHC/23/45.COM/INF.8B2,
2. Recalling Decisions **18 COM XI**, **24 COM XA.2** and **44 COM 7B.98** adopted at its 18th (Phuket, 1994), 24th (Cairns, 2000) and the extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) sessions respectively,
3. ~~Defers the examination of~~ Approves the significant boundary modification ~~and the renomination based on criteria (ix) and (x)~~ of **Ha Long Bay, Viet Nam**, to include the **Cat Ba Archipelago**, ~~to become Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago on the World Heritage List in order to allow the State Party to prepare a new nomination dossier focused on the basis of criteria (vii), and (viii) and (x), and taking account of the need to:~~ to become Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago on the World Heritage List in order to allow the State Party to prepare a new nomination dossier focused on the basis of criteria (vii), and (viii) and (x), and taking account of the need to:
4. Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value:

Brief synthesis

Ha Long Bay - Cat Ba Archipelago is located in the North East of Viet Nam, 165km from Ha Noi, including Ha Long Bay, Cat Ba National Park, Cat Ba World Biosphere Reserve and Cat Ba marine areas, which is one of the most important areas in the world for karst tower landscapes (fenglin) and the peak-cluster depression (fengcong), and an excellent example of karst matured in humid

tropical conditions containing limestone karst terrains flooded by the sea, with a multitude of majestic limestone towers, and features of shore erosion such as notches and caves. The property has contributed to completing the stages of the process of sea-inundation of tropical karst through examples of the terrestrial and intertidal stages.

Criterion (vii): Ha Long Bay-Cat Ba Archipelago is an outstanding karst example of fengcong and fenglin matured in humid tropical conditions. The outstanding value of this property is the limestone karst terrain being invaded by the sea with a multitude of majestic limestone towers and features of shore erosion, such as the notches, caves creating a wonderful natural landscape. These features are being in almost original conditions which are rarely found anywhere else in the world. Cat Ba Archipelago adds a new dimension to the property, being by far the largest island in the region and, further, it is also a high island with inaccessible wilderness interior, marked by steep, rocky, forested peaks and a myriad of hidden lakes, labyrinthine coastal inlets, and jigsaw puzzle shaped islands.

Criterion (viii): Ha Long Bay - Cat Ba Archipelago is the product of deep dissection of extensive areas of Paleozoic limestones that were uplifted as a consequence of the collision of the Eurasian and Indo-Australian tectonic plates. It is an outstanding and large sample of the sea-invaded karst tower terrain and one of the most important areas in the world for the fenglin and fengcong karst. The transition from terrestrial cone karst to marine-modified tower karst is superbly displayed at Ha Long Bay – Cat Ba Archipelago. The commencement of the present phase of karst evolution responsible for the modern landscape around Cat Ba Archipelago dates from the Pliocene, when uplift would have rejuvenated the landscape by providing more relief and reactivating groundwater circulation. The sequence of geomorphic evolution that followed is now coming to its final stages in Ha Long Bay, but is less advanced on Cat Ba island. The property displays beautifully the progression of landforms from coastal hills to the sea, and in detail reveals the shoreline complexities that arise from repeated shifts of sea level. These include cones, enclosed depressions (cockpits), interior draining valleys (poljes), karren, subterranean streams, caves with speleothems, and an array of these features partly drowned by the sea and modified by coastal processes.

Integrity

All the necessary elements fully reflecting the outstanding universal values of the Ha Long Bay - Cat Ba Archipelago are located within the property as described above and protected by a surrounding buffer zone. In the property, many human activities occur such as tourism, marine transportation, sea product exploiting, and other activities conducted by inhabitant communities living on the sea and islands. However, the natural landscapes, aesthetics, geology, morphology, biodiversity, and typical features such as limestone islands and caves within the property have been maintained and kept intact.

The boundaries include the existing Ha Long Bay World Heritage Site, most of Cat Ba National Park, Cat Ba World Biosphere Reserve, Cat Ba marine protected areas and Long Chau Island group. Additionally, the entire areas of Cat Ba Archipelago belong to the protected areas of the Cat Ba National Special Scenic Site, which is the most highly classified according to Vietnam's heritage laws, and therefore the extended Cat Ba Archipelago is strictly protected in an effective manner.

IUCN already recommended in 2013 that Cat Ba Archipelago be included in the World Heritage Perimeter. The extension will help to better protect the intrinsic values of the property at present and in the future.

The State Party convenes further research and consultation to consider the enlargement of Cat Ba National Park according to the IUCN recommendations.

Protection and management requirements

Internationally, Ha Long Bay was recognized by UNESCO as World Natural Heritage in 1994 and 2000, the Cat Ba Archipelago was recognized by the UNESCO as a World Biosphere Reserve in 2004. Nationally, the Government of Viet Nam ranked Ha Long Bay as a National Scenic Site in 1962 and a Special National Monument in 2009; the Cat Ba Archipelago was designated as a National Park in 1986, a Marine Protected Area in 2003, and was ranked as a Special National Monument in 2012. Accordingly, Ha Long Bay - Cat Ba Archipelago is effectively protected through relevant laws of the State and Decrees of the Government such as Law on Cultural Heritages, Law on Biodiversity, Law on Forest Protection and Development, Law on Tourism, Law on Environmental Protection, Law on Fisheries, Law on Inland Waterway Navigation, Law on Natural Resources, Environment, Sea and Island. On the basis of available legal framework, all activities occurring in the Heritage area that may affect the value of the heritage must be approved by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and other relevant agencies.

Ha Long Bay is directly protected and managed by the Ha Long Bay Management Board. At the same time, the Cat Ba Archipelago is protected and managed by Cat Ba Archipelago Natural Heritage Management Board (whose main human resource is recruited from the Management Board of Cat Ba National Park, Cat Ba Archipelago Biosphere Reserve, and Management Board of Cat Ba Bays). These units base themselves on their assigned functions and tasks as well as the relevant provisions of Vietnamese and international law to implement and carry out the activities of managing and protecting the property. In addition, systematic coordination between the management boards of the two sites is in place. Regular management of the property also receives the active participation of all levels, relevant sectors and local communities monitoring cultural and socio-economic activities happening in the property, maintaining its global outstanding values, and ensuring its integrity.

Socio-economic activities in the site are clearly defined and monitored closely and effectively. Management and preservation have also been strengthened through the regulations, master plans and action plans of Quang Ninh province and Hai Phong city, such as: regulations on the management of cruise ships, dredging of sludge, encroachment of seas, discharge of waste, population, and floating farmhouses, as well as education and awareness raising for the communities on heritage preservation. Besides, there are specific plans for environmental protection, tourism development and management, conservation planning, especially the Master Plan for Conservation, Management and Promotion of Ha Long Bay World Natural Heritage until 2020 has been approved by the Government and the comprehensive management plan of Ha Long Bay World Natural Heritage in the period of 2010 - 2015 approved by the People's Committee of Quang Ninh Province in 2010 and that of 2017 - 2021 period approved by the People's Committee of Quang Ninh Province in 2017. The Cat Ba Archipelago Biosphere Reserve comprehensive management plan, Master Plan for Conservation, Management and Promotion of Cat Ba National Park until 2020 have been approved by the People's Committee of Hai Phong City. Cat Ba Langur Conservation projects have attracted the interest and attention from the

international organizations. Long-term orientations for heritage management focus on such issues as: ensuring the integrity of the natural landscape, geological, geomorphologic and environmental values of the property; continuing to institutionalize current coordination platform; closely supervising and monitoring socio-economic activities; applying science and technology into heritage management; conducting more research to clarify the values of the property; enhancing heritage management competencies; raising public awareness of the communities and involving them in the management and protection of the property, studying the development of a monitoring plan and management indicators in order to manage the property effectively and efficiently; additionally, ensuring to assess impacts of projects on both environment and heritage before implementation as per Paragraph 118bis of the Operational Guidelines.

5. Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following:

- a) Revise the boundaries of Cat Ba National Park to align with the proposed boundaries of the Cat Ba Archipelago extension to the Ha Long Bay World Heritage property, ~~and include the Phu Long mangrove forest within the buffer zone of the nominated property,~~
- b) ~~Cancel large-scale~~ Revise development projects of all kinds ~~located in the buffer zone of the nominated property and adjacent to the buffer zone, such as a new golf course and the Cat Ba Amatina and Domino projects~~ in conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, undertake Heritage Impact Assessment for any relevant projects in the buffer zone and adjacent to the buffer zone, and to continue to strengthen the legal protection status of the buffer zone,
- c) ~~Complete an~~ Expand the existing ecological carrying capacity analysis conducted for Ha Long Bay to the entire ~~nominated~~ property ~~as a basis for revised tourism planning through a comprehensive joint tourism management plan for the nominated property,~~ ensuring that effective tourism management ~~does not negatively impact~~ in full respect to the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the ~~nominated~~ property,
- d) Revise and complete the management plan to ~~A~~address key threats to the ~~nominated~~ property and strengthen law enforcement accordingly, including threats from mass tourism, a major shipping lane, growth of settlements, poaching, exploitation of marine resources and forest products, overfishing, unsustainable aquaculture, pollution (oil, noise, sewage, litter, including from river catchment inputs), and significant developments in the buffer zone, consider to study the development of a monitoring plan and management indicators in order to manage the property effectively and efficiently,
- e) ~~Ensure a new nomination dossier includes accurate, up-to-date and verifiable data on species and habitats both in Ha Long Bay and Cat Ba Archipelago, distinguishing between the biodiversity values found within the nominated property and within the buffer zone~~ Encourage the State Party to also consider nominating the property under the criterion (x),
- f) ~~Demonstrate that~~ Continue appropriate consultations with the local communities, ~~have been appropriately consulted and given their free, prior and informed consent to any relocations from the nominated property and its conditions~~ particularly those who might be affected and be relocated from the core area. Conduct support policy and programs to facilitate the integration of the relocated communities, including subsidy financial schemes and social

services, and consider assessing the needs of relocated communities in order to ensure adequate support from the State Party.

6. Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by 01 December 2024, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for review by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th Session.
