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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

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

Forty-sixth session New Delhi, India 21-31 July 2024

<u>Item 5C of the Provisional Agenda:</u> Implementation of the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa

SUMMARY

In the framework of the follow-up of Decision **45 COM 5C** (Riyadh, 2023), this document presents a progress report on the implementation of the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa and is structured with the following parts:

Part I - Background

Part II – Synergies in the implementation of the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa with the Regional Action Plans adopted for Africa and Arab States regions

Part III – Progress made in the implementation of the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa Additional information on the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa and Third Cycle Regional Action Plan can be found at the following address: https://whc.unesco.org/en/africa

Draft Decision: 46 COM 5C, see Part IV

I. BACKGROUND

- 1. The establishment of Priority Africa testifies to the commitment of the international community and of UNESCO to accompany and support Africa in its development. Since 1989, at its twenty-fifth General Conference (25 C/5), several policy and institutional frameworks have been created to underpin Priority Africa, culminating in its formalisation as one of the two global priorities of the Organization.
- 2. The first Operational Strategy for Priority Africa (2014-2021) identified key priority areas for Africa and the challenges facing their implementation. Focusing on youth and gender, this strategy was divided into six flagship programmes. One of which, Flagship Programme 5, proposed a contribution to 'harnessing the power of culture for sustainable development and peace in a context of regional integration'.
- 3. At the 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee (Manama, 2018), and following the request of the African States Parties, the Committee included for the first time on its agenda (see Decision 42 COM 17) the presentation of a report on Priority Africa, sustainable development and World Heritage. This report prepared by the Secretariat was presented to the Committee at its 43rd session (Baku, 2019) and the subsequent Decision 43 COM 5D was adopted. By Decision 44 COM 5C, the Committee further requested the Secretariat to present a progress report on Priority Africa, sustainable development and World Heritage in line with the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 and Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 at its 46th session (New Delhi, 2024).
- 4. Furthermore, by its Decision **45 COM 5C**, the World Heritage Committee requested the Secretariat to also prepare a progress report on the implementation of the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa in line with the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 and Programme and Budget for 2022-2025 for examination of the Committee at its 46th session.

Flagship Programme 3: Fostering cultural heritage and capacity development

- 5. Responding to the calls of African Member States for its furtherance, a new Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029, featuring five flagship programmes, was presented to the UNESCO Executive Board at its 212th session (212 EX/Decision 5.III.B) in 2021. Pinpointing 'Cultural renaissance challenges' as one of its key themes, this document highlighted the expected role of UNESCO in providing "appropriate responses for issues relating to the promotion and preservation of African cultural heritage as well as the prevention of illicit trafficking of cultural assets and their restitution".
- 6. In November 2021, the draft Operational Strategy of Priority Africa (41 C/56 Rev.) was presented and adopted during the 41st session of the General Conference, following 212 EX/Decision 5.III.B of the Executive Board. The Operational Strategy (2022-2029) has five Flagship Programmes, and the Flagship Programme 3 (Fostering Cultural Heritage and Capacity Development) has two main objectives:
 - a) <u>Main Objective 1</u>: Supporting the African Member States in World Heritage capacity building, particularly for nominations and the removal of sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger;
 - b) <u>Main Objective 2</u>: Supporting the African Member States in the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property, return and restitution requests, and the promotion of museums.
- 7. Following the adoption of the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029 and its key outputs by UNESCO's General Conference at its 41st session in 2021, UNESCO

launched an internal working group. This group, in collaboration with the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), was tasked with crafting a Strategy for World Heritage in Africa. This strategy aims to guide the implementation of the Operational Strategy's Main Objective 1, within 'Flagship Programme 3: Fostering Cultural Heritage and Capacity Development'. Developed after consultations with a multitude of stakeholders including representatives of civil society, youth, women, local and Indigenous Peoples, Ambassadors from the Africa region, National Commissions for UNESCO, World Heritage national focal points, site managers, experts, the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee, and numerous partners on the ground, the report on the outcomes of the working group was presented for examination to the World Heritage Committee at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023) and was approved by Decision 45 COM 5C. Strategy adopted can be found at the following https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2023/whc23-45com-5C-en.pdf

II. SYNERGIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR WORLD HERITAGE IN AFRICA WITH THE REGIONAL ACTION PLANS ADOPTED FOR THE AFRICA AND ARAB STATES REGIONS

- 8. The Strategy for World Heritage in Africa is aligned with the adopted regional action plans for the Africa and Arab States regions, following the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, and endorsed by the World Heritage Committee by Decisions 44 COM 10B and 44 COM 10A (Fuzhou/Online, 2021) respectively. It supports the implementation of the 2015 Policy on the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention and the UNESCO 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. As well, it aims to respond to SDG 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, specifically, notably target 11.4, "Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage", while it complements SDG 5 Gender Equality, SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals.
- 9. The two above-mentioned Action Plans provide each a framework that guides the strategic objectives and targets of States Parties, partners and stakeholders in Africa in implementing the 1972 Convention. Consequently, the Committee has requested not only the monitoring of its implementation in the respective region but also the preparation of a mid-cycle assessment report for examination after three years for each Plan.
- A mid-cycle assessment survey was conducted for the Africa region during the period of January-February 2024. The results of the survey were presented to the national focal points during a workshop organised in Cape Town, thanks to the generous financial support from the government of South Africa. This important workshop, which was coorganised by UNESCO in close collaboration with the AWHF, gathered 66 participants, including around 40 African World Heritage national focal points, representatives of ICOMOS. ICCROM and IUCN. World Heritage experts, as well as African professionals. The workshop also invited important partners such as the African Union, the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs), namely Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), East African Community (EASC), South African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Economic and Monetary Commission of Central Africa (CEMAC), as well as the Islamic World Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ICESCO). It has been a milestone in gathering information on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan for Africa 2021-2027 and confirmed the continued relevance of its objectives and actions of the Plan, which still align well with Africa's heritage and conservation needs.

11. The participants resolved to enhance the synergy between the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa and the regional action plan. As another concluding result of the workshop, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre was requested to continue supporting the States Parties in integrating the objectives and targets of the two frameworks into their national, subregional, and regional heritage strategies, particularly in three areas: nominations (Preliminary Assessment), removal of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger, and capacity building.

III. PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR WORLD HERITAGE IN AFRICA

A. Current situation of nomination and capacity-building in Africa

- 12. Today, the African continent has 145 sites inscribed on the World Heritage List, including 103 sites in sub-Saharan Africa. More importantly, the Africa region still has 11 States Parties with no site on the List, namely: Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and South Sudan. To address this representational gap, the Secretariat continues to support those States Parties lacking World Heritage properties by training their local experts and providing technical support in developing Tentative Lists and preparing nomination dossiers. From September 2023 to June 2024, the Secretariat supported the following activities in nominations and capacity building:
 - a) In the framework of the Sultanate of Oman funded programme, the Secretariat has assisted in the development of Somalia's first Tentative List. In March 2024, Somalia officially submitted its first Tentative List following a technical review from the Centre and the Advisory Bodies;
 - b) In the framework of the government of Japan Fund-in-Trust, the Secretariat continued to facilitate the capacity development for 10 countries with no World Heritage properties on the List in developing the nomination dossier. Two countries, Guinea Bissau and Sierra Leone, submitted their first nomination dossiers to the World Heritage Centre in January 2024 for possible inscription by the World Heritage Committee in 2025;
 - c) In the framework of the multisectoral project "Creating a sustainable heritage ecosystem for socio-economic development in Africa", thanks to the generous financial support of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Secretariat initiated a series of pilot projects to develop capacity on three key areas (i) increasing representativity on the World Heritage List and sustainability of African heritage through the empowerment of government institutions, experts, and communities, including women and youth (ii) harnessing good conservation practices for socio-economic development and boost the livelihood of the local communities living in and around the World Heritage properties, more specifically towards communities, particularly women and youth (iii) developing and enhancing the use of innovative technology to safeguard heritage.

The overarching goal of this project is to support job creation for the youth and livelihood for the communities and contribute to the socio-economic development of Africa by supporting heritage-related cultural and creative industries. It also aims to promote synergies of UNESCO's Culture Conventions, enable a sustainable heritage ecosystem in Africa and promote social cohesion and peace for local communities to enjoy and benefit from their World Heritage in 11 States Parties: Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania;

- d) Thanks to financial support from Norway, France and Japan, the Secretariat will launch the third phase of the mentorship programme in June 2024. This phase will engage an additional 20 mentees (10 women and 10 men), achieving the 2025 target early by increasing the total number of mentored experts to 60 (30 women and 30 men).
- e) In addition, thanks to financial support from the government of Australia through Official Development Assistance (ODA), the Secretariat will support African States Parties, in particular the 11 non-represented countries, as well as countries currently under-represented on the World Heritage List, to train local heritage professionals in the preparation of nomination dossiers through the Mentorship Programme;
- f) These capacity-building efforts are allowing the World Heritage Centre to increasingly engage African experts, particularly those participating in the Mentorship Programme, by involving them in missions, developing nomination dossiers, and training in assessments such as Heritage Impact Assessments (HIA), etc.
- g) In close collaboration with the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH), AWHF, and the Advisory Bodies, the World Heritage Centre also supported African States Parties by organising nomination training and the removal of sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger. In April 2024, a workshop focused on developing corrective measures for the removal of the sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger in East Africa was organised in Nairobi, Kenya. Additionally, a special training session on Preliminary Assessment for local experts from African and Arab States was held in May 2024 in Manama, Bahrain.

B. Initiatives in the implementation of the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa

- 13. Since the adoption of the Strategy, the Secretariat, in close collaboration with AWHF and ARC-WH, together with the Advisory Bodies and partners such as the Ecole de patrimoine Africain (EPA) organised several activities to implement the Strategy. As such, seven key activities of high impact could be underlined:
 - a) From 18 to 20 December 2023, the Secretariat organised training for 26 national authorities, management authorities, a Permanent Delegation to UNESCO, a National Commission for UNESCO, a research institute, universities and local experts from Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea to develop a costed action plan for the corrective measures to reach the Desired state of conservation for the removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) for the Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve transboundary property. This effort responds to the request made by the World Heritage Committee at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023) for refining and implementing the DSOCR in collaboration with international experts and development partners (see Decision 45 COM 7A.4);
 - b) Following training on DSOCR in 2022 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for States Parties in Central Africa and in 2023 in Senegal for States Parties in West Africa, the Secretariat organised a similar training for Eastern African countries in Kenya in April 2024. Thanks to generous support from the government of Norway, 44 participants were involved in a workshop to train local experts and professionals from Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Madagascar to develop their DSOCR and costed action plans and to support them in advancing to the removal of their properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger;
 - c) From 13 to 20 November 2023, the Secretariat, ICOMOS, ICCROM and the State Party of Mauritius organised a training on Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA). 30 heritage experts and practitioners, including experts within the Eastern African

- region (Stone Town of Zanzibar (United Republic of Tanzania), the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda), the Lamu Old Town (Kenya), Fasil Ghebbi, Gondar Region (Ethiopia) and Asmara: A Modernist African City (Eritrea)) participated in the training. The workshop aimed to train local experts on the new Guidance and toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context, facilitating better management of development projects in and around World Heritage sites in urban areas;
- d) From 15 to 17 May 2024, in close collaboration with ARC-WH and AWHF, the Secretariat facilitated the training of experts, including mentees, on the development of Preliminary Assessments, which will be, from 2027 onward, a mandatory desk-based process for all sites that may be nominated to the World Heritage List. The training is designed to build the capacities of African States Parties in preparing the necessary dossiers for Preliminary Assessments and starting their nomination dossiers, thereby increasing the pool of local experts working on Preliminary Assessments and World Heritage sites in Africa;
- e) In March 2024, the Secretariat organised training to support fifteen women from women's associations in the surrounding villages of the Djoudj National Bird Park (Senegal) in developing their entrepreneurship by giving them a set of equipment to improve their working conditions by facilitating the conversion of typha into mats. The equipment creates economic resources for communities while reducing the abundance of this invasive species in the World Heritage property. Supported by generous contributions from Norway, this training serves as an exemplary model of good conservation practice that benefits the social and economic well-being of communities around the World Heritage property.
- f) Valuable support to furthering the goals of the Strategy among African countries is given also by the African Union through H.E. Jose Maria Pereira Neves, President of the Republic of Cabo Verde in his capacity as the African Union Champion for the Preservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage, promoting heritage and education in particular among the youth of the continent, notably on the occasion of African World Heritage Day celebrated on 5th May 2024, in close collaboration with AWHF.

C. Challenges to implementing the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa and the way forward

14. The main stakeholders and beneficiaries of the Strategy are the African States Parties. In promoting a bottom-up approach, particular attention is given to local communities and Indigenous Peoples, including youth and women. In addition, civil society, local experts, heritage professionals, universities, and higher learning institutions are recognized as both beneficiaries and partners. In implementing both the Strategy and the Regional Action Plan for Africa (2021-2027), communication to mobilise and reach the beneficiaries still remains challenging, thus limiting the impact of the activities. To address this, the use of new technologies, the establishment of databases, and the development and dissemination of World Heritage communication materials at regional and subregional levels, coupled with adequate monitoring, etc., will be emphasised.

IV. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 46 COM 5C

The World Heritage Committee,

- 1. Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/5C,
- 2. <u>Recalling</u> Decisions **44 COM 5C**, **44 COM 10A**, **44 COM 10B** and **45 COM 5C** adopted at its extended 44th (Fuzhou/online, 2021) and extended 45th (Riyadh, 2023) sessions,
- 3. <u>Notes with appreciation</u> the continued efforts of the Member States to support effective and sustainable conservation and management of the unique biodiversity and rich cultural heritage of Africa that must be transmitted to future generations, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063;
- 4. <u>Expresses its appreciation</u> for the activities undertaken by UNESCO, the Advisory Bodies, the African World Heritage Fund (AWHF), the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) and other committed partners in implementing the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa;
- 5. <u>Strongly encourages</u> African States Parties to appropriate the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa into their national, subregional and regional heritage strategies, and requests the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Advisory Bodies, AWHF and ARC-WH, and with the support of all partners, to support African States Parties in its implementation;
- 6. <u>Thanks</u> the governments of Australia, China, Flanders (Kingdom of Belgium), France, Japan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Norway, and the Sultanate of Oman for their financial support to implement activities that contribute to meeting the targets of the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa and <u>encourages</u> other States Parties to contribute financially to its implementation;
- 7. <u>Calls upon</u> the entire international community, including the Group of Friends for Priority Africa as well as regional partners and economic communities in Africa, , to provide support to African States Parties in the implementation of the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa and of Flagship Programme 3 and to attain its targets, notably:
 - a) to assist 11 African States Parties not yet represented on the World Heritage List in developing a nomination,
 - b) to provide support to the States Parties with properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger to implement their costed action plans and to achieve a Desired state of conservation for their removal from this List (DSOCR),
 - c) to increasingly engage African heritage experts mentored through the Mentorship Programme to enhance their role and involvement in World Heritage processes in Africa as well as in other regions,
 - d) to support the pan-African network of site managers to foster a strong link between management authorities and communities for sustainable conservation, effective management and entrepreneurship,
 - e) to develop projects focused on entrepreneurship and the adoption of new and innovative technologies.
- 8. <u>Requests</u> the World Heritage Centre to monitor the implementation of the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa and prepare a progress report towards this end, in line with the

Medium-Terr examination	n Strategy i by the Comi	2022-2029 mittee at its	and 47th	Programme session.	and	Budget	for	2022-2025,	for