

**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**

Item 6 of the Provisional Agenda:

**Follow-up to the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy and Progress report on
the World Heritage-related category 2 centres**

**Item 6A. World Heritage-related Capacity-Building activities and Follow-up to the
World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy**

SUMMARY

In Decision **45 COM 6**, the World Heritage Committee requested the World Heritage Centre and ICCROM to submit a progress report on the World Heritage-related capacity building activities and the revision of the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy (WHCBS), for examination at its 46th session. This document includes a progress report covering a period from July 2023 to June 2024.

Draft Decision: 46 COM 6A, see Point III.

I. FOLLOW UP TO THE CAPACITY-BUILDING STRATEGY

1. [The World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy](#) (WHCBS) was developed by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies, category 2 centres (C2Cs) under the auspices of UNESCO, and other capacity-building partners, with support from the World Heritage Fund and the Swiss Government, and approved at the 35th session of the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO, 2011; Decision **35 COM 9B**).
2. The significance of capacity-building programmes was emphasised by the 2017 UNESCO IOS Evaluations and recent meetings of the Open-Ended Working Group (Decision **45 COM 11**), with many States Parties integrating key provisions into national legislations, policies and strategic frameworks, often in alignment with sustainable development priorities, despite variations across cultural Conventions.
3. The World Heritage Centre has developed a dedicated and regularly updated [webpage on Capacity Building for World Heritage](#), aimed to encourage, assist and support States Parties in developing and implementing capacity-building policies, regulations, and training initiatives for World Heritage.

A. Implementation of the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy (WHCBS)

4. Since the adoption of the WHCBS in 2011, the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies and other partners have worked closely on capacity-building activities at all levels, aiming to address challenges and meet the needs of World Heritage practitioners, institutions (including the decision and policymakers) and communities. Strengthening capacity-building remains a priority to equip States Parties and partners, including World Heritage site managers, with the relevant expertise to protect and manage their World Heritage properties, contributing to the representativeness of the World Heritage List and credibility of the Convention, as seen from the results of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting and its subsequent Regional Framework Action Plans.
5. UNESCO Chairs are integral to the WHCBS and continue to function in their capacity as providers of capacity building for World Heritage. Information on World Heritage-related UNESCO Chairs can be found on the [UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme's online platform](#). For example, under the UNESCO Chair Programme on Cultural Heritage and Risk Management, the Ritsumeikan University organised an International Training Course on Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage in 2023 in collaboration with ICCROM.
6. ICCROM continues to update information on regular training opportunities for World Heritage and cultural heritage conservation, along with events and activities, on its [website](#) and social media. These sources also contain significant information on conservation issues and educational and job opportunities in conservation. Other activities can be found in Documents WHC/24/46.COM/5A and WHC/24/46.COM/5B.

B. World Heritage Leadership Programme

7. The World Heritage Leadership Programme (WHLP), coordinated by ICCROM and IUCN and based at ICCROM, is supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment and the Korean Heritage Service (KHS). It works in cooperation with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS to build the skills of practitioners involved in the World Heritage Convention. Detailed information on the implementation of the WHLP can be found on ICCROM's website and in Document WHC/24/46.COM/5B. Other capacity-building partners, such as universities and C2Cs, collaborate on specific programme activities.

8. The WHLP operates on four modules (Establishing Learning Networks, Effective Management, Impact Assessment, and Resilience):
 - a) [World Heritage Management: People Nature Culture \(PNC\)](#) course is the integrated foundational course adopting the “Heritage Place Approach” addressing the full structure and cycle of heritage management, from understanding the place, working through governance arrangements, planning processes to achieve good results that benefit both heritage and society.
 - b) [Improving management effectiveness of World Heritage properties](#) is a workshop activity that works with the management teams of specific properties to assess the health of the management system by utilising the *Enhancing our Heritage Toolkit 2.0* (2023).
 - c) [Impact Assessment for World Heritage](#) course focuses on building capacities for preparing, implementing and reviewing impact assessments with a focus on World Heritage values and attributes, in compliance with the World Heritage Committee decisions and the Operational Guidelines.
 - d) [Disaster Risk Management and Building Resilience for World Heritage](#) course guides participants in developing heritage management actions that consider multiple hazards and risk factors related to disasters, being able to solicit management solutions for risk mitigation, adaptation and preparedness for World Heritage properties.
9. The **Training of Trainers approach** is used in all modules, inviting past participants to provide deeper insights and knowledge in designing and implementing World Heritage related capacity building activities.
10. In 2023, WHLP has organised a total of 14 courses (eight on management, one on disaster risk management, five on impact assessment) and co-organised one Forum for 618 direct beneficiaries from 113 countries. In terms of gender balance, 51.1% of participants identified as female and 48.9% as male. These courses received 1,138 applications, indicating that only 50% of the needs are met with the current resources and capacity.

C. Regional and Thematic Capacity-Building Initiatives

11. As part of the WHCBS, the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, C2Cs, interested States Parties, and other relevant partners have also been developing and implementing regional capacity-building initiatives, some of which are listed below. Details on these activities can be found in Documents WHC/24/46.COM/5A, WHC/24/46.COM/INF.5A, WHC/24/46.COM/5B, WHC/24/46.COM/6B, WHC/24/46.COM/7, WHC/24/46.COM/10A and WHC/24/46.COM/10B.
12. In the **Asia and the Pacific** region, capacity-building activities included a Disaster Risk Reduction workshop in Central Asia, conservation projects in Viet Nam, Sri Lanka and China, follow-up of emergency assistance in Pakistan, training sessions on impact assessment in Nepal and Thailand, and partnerships to stimulate innovation and cooperation for World Heritage properties. Since the Third cycle of Periodic Reporting and its associated Regional Framework Action Plan was endorsed at the extended 45th session of the Committee (Riyadh, 2023), activities were undertaken to implement this Action Plan in close collaboration with the UNESCO Offices in the region.
13. In the **Latin America and the Caribbean** region, capacity-building initiatives enhanced the management of sustainable tourism and conservation for World Heritage properties. Efforts included the development of an updated Management Plan for 2024-2028 at the

Maya Site of Copán (Honduras), mentoring sessions from ICCROM on the new Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0, and an international course targeting site managers and experts in the Caribbean SIDS. Collaborative activities between the C2C Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas (Mexico) and ICCROM involved online courses on digital photogrammetry for cultural heritage. The UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Tourism hosted workshops to implement the Regional Action Plan as part of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting.

14. In the **Europe and North America** region, capacity-building initiatives focused on improving heritage conservation and management, including workshops on disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness in Kyiv and support provided to enhance GIS skills in the Ohrid region. Capacity-building workshops focused on developing and finalising the Regional Action Plan of the Third Cycle Periodic Report. Expert meetings addressed the relationship between renewable energy projects, particularly solar energy, and their impact on World Heritage properties. The aim is to develop guidance for better integration within heritage contexts.
15. In the **Africa** region, training and workshops strengthened the capacity of States Parties, focusing on effective management and conservation, developing nomination dossiers, removing properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger, and addressing Disaster Risk Reduction. Notable activities included workshops to reinforce the capacities of heritage experts to increase the number of African sites on the World Heritage List, with Rwanda achieving a significant milestone with Nyungwe National Park's inscription on the World Heritage List. The Mentorship programme for African Heritage Professionals further engaged 20 mentees; Historic Urban Landscape guidelines were developed, and HIA training was aimed at enhancing local authorities' and heritage experts' capacity to manage World Heritage sites amidst development.
16. In the **Arab States** region, capacity-building activities, in line with the Regional Action Plan adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its extended 44th session (Fuzhou/online, 2021), focused on heritage management and the elaboration of Desired State of Conservation for the Removal of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR). Notable activities included a training workshop to provide insights into heritage management in Egypt, a project in Tunisia to integrate the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape and sustainable development policies in the management of medinas, and meetings to develop DSOCR and related corrective measures for properties in Syria and Iraq.
17. The **Natural Heritage Unit** is actively building capacity to address the avian influenza epidemic affecting numerous natural World Heritage sites. In 2024, cases of avian influenza were reported for the first time in Latin America, impacting sites such as the Galapagos Islands (Ecuador) and Peninsula Valdes (Argentina), affecting both bird species and sea mammals.
18. The **SIDS Programme** participated in the "Regional Workshop on World Heritage in Pacific Island Countries", strengthening the capacities and knowledge of representatives of the Pacific Member States (including Nauru, which is yet to ratify the Convention). It aimed to provide guidance on the development and submission of Tentative Lists through harmonisation, the use of the upstream process and/or of expert advice to identify sites with strong potential to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), and the development of credible nomination dossiers.
19. The **World Heritage Cities Programme** conducted various capacity-building initiatives, including 24 sessions for the Third Member States Consultation, the development of the UNESCO Urban Heritage Atlas, and a guidance document to assist site managers and practitioners in better managing historic cities, and a UNESCO Chair workshop focused on building capacities for urban heritage management of World Heritage Cities.

20. The **World Heritage Marine Programme** organised events to strengthen the capacity of the 50 World Heritage marine properties across 37 countries. The 5th World Heritage Marine Managers Conference in October 2023 brought together site managers and global experts to discuss challenges and solutions in protecting ocean biodiversity. Three online meetings were organised for World Heritage marine sites and were open to global marine protected area managers, covering topics like financing marine protected areas, investing in World Heritage-listed coral reefs, and managing impacts of land-based sources of pollution and water quality.
21. The World Heritage Centre, through its **World Heritage Education Programme** and its diverse range of activities and initiatives, supported the capacities of the States Parties in furthering heritage education and raising awareness among youth globally, the Programme continued to mobilize the local communities (through NGOs, youth organizations, institutions, etc.) to work alongside the World Heritage Site Managers, UNESCO National Commissions and UNESCO Permanent Delegations and implement hands-on conservation activities at the sites. Seventy action camp projects were implemented in 2023 at 62 World Heritage properties and sites on the Tentative Lists, by 54 organizations in 31 countries, which actively involved youth and local communities in concrete preservation activities, through the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative. In a continued concerted effort to incorporate World Heritage into education systems, the programme is engaged in the update of the “World Heritage in Young Hands” Kit (open access), and its adaptation into interactive digital technology and E-learning, in close collaboration with the UNESCO Associated Schools Network at the Education Sector and National Commissions for UNESCO.

II. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE REVISION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CAPACITY-BUILDING STRATEGY

22. As the WHCBS reached its 10th anniversary in 2021, the World Heritage Committee requested a results-based evaluation of its implementation (Decision **43 COM 6** – Baku, 2019). Financial support from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia enabled the contracting of the E.C.O. Institute for Ecology to carry out [the evaluation](#) from May 2022 to April 2023 in consultation with an Evaluation Reference Group and in line with the Committee’s requests (see the [Evaluators’ summary video](#)). The Committee endorsed it at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023), highlighting the Evaluators’ [recommendations](#) to guide the requested revision of the WHCBS.
23. Key recommendations include establishing a global task force, defining capacity building as the ability to manage and coordinate an “evidence-based policy cycle”, enhancing coordination, defining and targeting specific groups, focusing on SDGs, contributing to the 5Cs, outlining expected results, a dedicated budget, development of a portfolio of strategic projects and programmes, strengthening mandate of C2Cs and other key partners, and utilising the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting as a valuable information source on capacity needs, priority and baselines.
24. The Evaluators highlighted the need to address the lack of dedicated funding for capacity-building activities under the World Heritage Fund. At its extended 45th session, the Committee allocated USD 172,000 to the World Heritage Fund’s budget line dedicated to capacity building. While this represents an essential first step, it is far from providing the sustainable, long-term funding required to establish the Capacity-Building programme at the World Heritage Centre, as recommended by the Evaluation and endorsed by the Committee.
25. In Decision **45 COM 6**, the Committee requested the World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with ICCROM, IUCN and ICOMOS, to develop a new WHCBS for the decade 2025-2035, including clear priorities, strategic objectives, expected outputs and

outcomes, relying on the outcomes of the independent evaluation of the WHCBS and the guidelines developed by the Evaluators for this purpose, and taking into account the results of the Periodic Reporting process, to be presented for review at its 47th session, if funding allows.

26. The Committee also reiterated its appeal to States Parties to contribute financial resources to the World Heritage Centre and the World Heritage-related C2Cs to update the WHCBS. To date, no dedicated resources have been provided for this exercise. Nonetheless, the World Heritage Centre and ICCROM have used the limited funding available under the World Heritage Fund to begin implementing a work plan towards a revised WHCBS, in line with the Committee's request, to be fully implemented once the necessary funding becomes available.
27. The overarching goal of the revised strategy will be to enhance the effectiveness and impact of capacity-building initiatives within the World Heritage context. It will be structured according to the key recommendations of the evaluation, ensuring coordinated efforts to address global challenges and achieve sustainable development goals towards safeguarding cultural and natural heritage globally.
28. The revised WHCBS work plan entails reviewing the evaluation outcomes, incorporating the outcomes of the Regional Framework Action Plans from the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, and developing data collection systems for future monitoring and evaluation of capacity-building activities. The compiled data will facilitate drafting a Theory of Change (ToC) with an international expert group. Therefore, the ToC and revised WHCBS will be structured around priority issues, target audiences, programme actions, deliverables, impacts, and indicators. Additionally, reflections are ongoing to optimise data use from capacity-building providers for planning, reporting to the World Heritage Committee, and monitoring the future mid- and long-term effectiveness of capacity-building activities.

III. DRAFT DECISION

Draft Decision: 46 COM 6A

The World Heritage Committee,

1. *Having examined Document WHC/24/46.COM/6A,*
2. *Recalling Decision **45 COM 6**, adopted at its extended 45th session (Riyadh, 2023),*
3. *Recalling the outcomes of the 2023 independent evaluation of the WHCBS and the evaluators' guidelines for the revision of the WHCBS, and also recalling its request that the World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies, develop a new WHCBS for the decade 2025-2035 for review at its 47th session, if funding allows,*
4. *Commends the progress made by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, the States Parties, the category 2 centres under the auspices of UNESCO related to World Heritage, as well as the UNESCO Chairs with the implementation of the 2011 World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy (WHCBS);*
5. *Takes note of the progress made with the revision of the WHCBS;*
6. *Takes note of the progress made with the implementation of the regional and thematic capacity-building strategies and initiatives, and calls upon States Parties and all concerned partners and stakeholders, including the Advisory Bodies, to support and*

follow up on the implementation of the strategies and initiatives developed for each regional and thematic area;

7. *Thanks the governments of Australia, Saudi Arabia, Norway, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland for the continued financial support they extended to the WHCBS and the World Heritage Leadership Programme, and also thanks the States Parties of Belgium, China, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, and Oman for supporting World Heritage capacity-building activities, notably in the Africa region;*
8. *Encourages States Parties and other stakeholders to continue supporting the implementation of the WHCBS by providing financial support and/or reinforcing the human resources of the institutions involved;*
9. *Reiterates its call upon all States Parties to provide dedicated voluntary contributions under the World Heritage Fund and/or extra-budgetary support to the World Heritage Centre and the World Heritage Leadership programme for capacity building;*
10. *Noting that insufficient funding has been provided for the revision of the WHCBS thus far, reiterates its appeal for States Parties to contribute dedicated financial resources to that effect;*
11. *Finally requests the World Heritage Centre and ICCROM to submit a progress report on the World Heritage-related capacity-building activities and the WHCBS, for examination at its 47th session.*