

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

**SECOND EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION
OF THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

**Paris, UNESCO Headquarters
17 March 2025**

**Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda:
Modalities for the organization of the 25th session of the General Assembly
of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in 2025**

SUMMARY

This document presents some contextual information regarding the holding of the 25th session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the World Heritage Convention in 2025.

Draft Resolution: 2 EXT.GA 3, See Point III

I. CONTEXT

1. The [1972 Convention](#) provides that the States Parties to the Convention shall meet in General Assembly "during the ordinary session of the General Conference" of UNESCO (Article 8.1; see also Articles 8.3 and 16.1).
2. According to the Convention, the objective of this biennial meeting is to:
 - a) to proceed with the election of the States members of the Committee (Article 8.1);
 - b) to determine the amount of contributions of States Parties to the World Heritage Fund (Article 16.1); and
 - c) where appropriate, to request representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to attend the meetings of the Committee in an advisory capacity (Article 8.3).
3. Concerning the election of the States members of the Committee, it should be noted that the term of office of the Member States of the Committee is counted "from the end of the ordinary session of the General Conference during which they are elected until the end of its third¹ subsequent session" (Article 9.1).
4. In accordance with these provisions, the [Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly](#) of States Parties, as amended in November 2023 specify that:
 - a) "The Assembly shall meet every two years in ordinary session in accordance with Articles 8.1 and 8.3 of the Convention" (Rule 4.1);
 - b) "The Director-General shall determine the date of the ordinary session, in accordance with Articles 8.1 and 8.3 of the Convention" (Rule 5.1).
5. Rule 5.3 of the Rules of Procedure further states that: "Ordinary and extraordinary sessions shall be held at the Headquarters of UNESCO, unless the Assembly decides to meet elsewhere".
6. On the basis of this legal framework for the holding of the sessions of the General Assembly, and taking into account that the next session of the General Assembly shall take place in 2025 and that, by its Resolution [42C/82](#), the UNESCO General Conference decided that its 43rd session in 2025 would be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, a number of legal and logistical aspects need to be considered in the planning of the 25th session of the General Assembly in 2025, such as its dates and place.

II. CONSULTATION PROCESS

7. Considering the difficulty this could represent for the 196 States Parties to the Convention to attend both the General Assembly and the General Conference sessions simultaneously in two different places, the Secretariat undertook consulting with all UNESCO Electoral Groups to identify the best option to this unprecedented situation for the holding of the 25th session of the General Assembly.
8. Subsequently to a meeting with all Chairpersons of the UNESCO Electoral Groups on 27 November 2024, and following their guidance, a Non-Paper presenting background information and some envisaged options regarding the holding of the 25th session of the

¹ In view of the voluntary reduction of the term of office from 6 to 4 years, the term of office runs until the end of the second subsequent session, in practice.

General Assembly was prepared by the Secretariat with the aim to assist States Parties to consult each other through an inclusive and comprehensive consultation process and reach a consensus on the most appropriate option.

9. Through this consultation, although several States Parties flagged their preference for one option or the other (mostly either option D or option E indicated in Document WHC/25/2EXT.GA/INF.3), a number of States Parties highlighted the legal implications and logistical challenges posed by the various options, and no consensus could be reached. On the contrary, the need to pursue the discussions among States Parties was often stressed.
10. As a result, the Secretariat has been seized of a request by 109 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention (55.6% of all States Parties), either individually or through their respective electoral groups, to organize an extraordinary session of the General Assembly for the purpose of deciding on the modalities for the organisation of the 25th session of the General Assembly in 2025.
11. In conformity with Rule 4.2 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, stating that “[t]he Assembly shall meet in extraordinary session if it so decides or at the request of at least one third of the States Parties”, the Secretariat of the World Heritage Convention, on behalf of the UNESCO Director-General, sent a letter to all States Parties to the World Heritage Convention and observers, to communicate the date and place of the 2nd extraordinary session of the General Assembly, in conformity with the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

III. DRAFT RESOLUTION

Draft Resolution: 2 EXT.GA 3

The General Assembly,

1. *Having examined Documents WHC/25/2EXT.GA/3 and WHC/25/2EXT.GA/INF.3,*
2. *Recalling Article 8.1 of the World Heritage Convention, which provides that the States Parties to the Convention shall meet in General Assembly “during the ordinary session of the General Conference” of UNESCO,*
3. *Also recalling that the 43rd session of the UNESCO General Conference in 2025 will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan,*
4. *Further recalling that Rule 5.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly states that “[o]rdinary and extraordinary sessions shall be held at the Headquarters of UNESCO, unless the Assembly decides to meet elsewhere”,*
5. *Decides ...*