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Convention du
patrimoine mondial

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**CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF
THE WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

**CONVENTION CONCERNANT LA PROTECTION DU
PATRIMOINE CULTUREL ET NATUREL MONDIAL**

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

**COMITÉ INTERGOUVERNEMENTAL DE LA PROTECTION
DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL CULTUREL ET NATUREL**

**Forty-sixth session
Quarante-sixième session**

**New Delhi, India / New Delhi, Inde
21-31 July 2024 / 21-31 juillet 2024**

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The text contained in the present document is a transcription of the debates of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee held on 21-31 July 2024 at New Delhi, India. It is therefore to be considered as a verbatim.

Le texte contenu dans le présent document est une transcription des débats de la 46^e session élargie du Comité du patrimoine mondial tenue à New Delhi, Inde, du 21 au 31 juillet 2024. Il doit donc être considéré comme un verbatim.

N.B: *The languages used for the verbatim of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee are English and French.*

Les langues utilisées pour le verbatim de la 46^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial sont l'anglais et le français.

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INTRODUCTION

The session was chaired by H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma, Chairperson of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee.

The 21 Members of the World Heritage Committee were present: Argentina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Türkiye, Ukraine, Viet Nam, 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. Thanks to the generosity of the Kingdom of Spain, the Russian Federation and China, Spanish interpretation was also available for the entire duration of the meeting, as well as Russian interpretation from 23 to 27 July and Chinese interpretation from 26 to 29 July. Interventions and comments made originally in another language are indicated by *[interpretation from xxx]* at the beginning of the transcription.

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

The following 115 States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, which are not members of the Committee, were represented as Observers:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Haiti, Holy See, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania,

INTRODUCTION

La session a été présidée par le S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma, Président de la 46^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

Les 21 membres du Comité du patrimoine mondial étaient présents : Argentine, Belgique, Bulgarie, Grèce, Inde, Italie, Jamaïque, Japon, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Liban, Mexique, Qatar, République de Corée, Rwanda, Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines, Sénégal, Türkiye, Ukraine, Viet Nam, 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. Grâce à la générosité du Royaume d'Espagne et de la Fédération de Russie, l'interprétation a également été disponible pendant toute la durée de la séance en espagnol, du 23 au 27 juillet en russe et du 26 au 29 juillet en chinois. Les interventions et commentaires effectués dans une autre langue sont indiqués par *[interprétation de/du xxx]* au début de la transcription.

Le Centre du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO a assuré le Secrétariat de la séance.

Les 115 États parties à la Convention du patrimoine mondial suivants, qui ne sont pas membres du Comité, étaient représentés en tant qu'observateurs :

Afrique du Sud, Albanie, Algérie, Allemagne, Andorre, Angola, Arabie saoudite, Arménie, Australie, Autriche, Azerbaïdjan, Bahreïn, Barbade, Bélarus, Bénin, Bhoutan, Bosnie-Herzégovine, Botswana, Brésil, Brunéi Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodge, Canada, Chili, Chine, Chypre, Colombie, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatie, Cuba, Danemark, Égypte, Équateur, Émirats arabes unis, Espagne, Estonie, État de Palestine, États-Unis d'Amérique, Éthiopie, Fédération de Russie, Finlande, France, Géorgie, Ghana, Grenade, Guinée, Haïti, Hongrie, Indonésie, Iran (République islamique d'), Iraq, Irlande, Israël, Jordanie, Kirghizistan, Koweït, Libéria, Lituanie, Luxembourg, Macédoine du Nord, Madagascar, Malaisie, Malte, Maroc, Mauritanie, Maurice, Monaco, Mongolie, Myanmar, Namibie, Népal, Niger, Nigéria, Norvège, Nouvelle-Zélande, Oman, Ouganda, Ouzbékistan, Pakistan, Palaos, Panama, Pays-Bas (Royaume des), Pérou,

Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Philippines, Pologne, Portugal, République arabe syrienne, République démocratique du Congo, République démocratique populaire Lao, République dominicaine, République-Unie de Tanzanie, Roumanie, Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord, Saint-Siège, Serbie, Seychelles, Singapour, Slovaquie, Slovénie, Soudan, Soudan du Sud, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Suède, Suisse, Tadjikistan, Tchéquie, Thaïlande, Togo, Turkménistan, Venezuela (République bolivarienne du), Yémen, Zimbabwe.

Sunday 21 July 2024

OPENING CEREMONY

The Opening Ceremony of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee was held in New Delhi (India).

Speeches were delivered by the following dignitaries:

- H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma, Chairperson of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee
- H.E. Mr Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Culture and Tourism of India
- H.E. Ms Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO
- H.E. Mr Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India

The speeches were followed by a reception at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

Dimanche 21 juillet 2024

CÉRÉMONIE D'OUVERTURE

La cérémonie d'ouverture de la 46^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial s'est tenue à New Delhi (Inde).

Les discours ont été prononcés par les dignitaires suivants :

- S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma, Président de la 46^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial
- S.E.M. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Ministre de la Culture et du Tourisme de l'Inde
- S.E. Mme Audrey Azoulay, Directrice générale de l'UNESCO
- S.E.M. Narendra Modi, Premier ministre de l'Inde

Les discours ont été suivis par une réception au Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

FIRST DAY
Monday, 22 July 2024
FIRST PLENARY MEETING
10:02 am – 1:00 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

PREMIER JOUR
Lundi 22 juillet 2024
PREMIÈRE SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h02 – 13h00
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

1. OPENING SESSION // SÉANCE D'OUVERTURE

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

I am delighted to welcome you once more at the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee. Thank you for your participation at the opening ceremony yesterday evening. I hope that you got some impression of the cultural heritage of Incredible India. I am very pleased and honoured to have you all here and to have the honour to chair this important international event. And I sincerely hope for very active, very productive cooperation between all of the Committee Members and representatives of other States Parties, NGOs and international organizations to proceed for achievement of the results we are expecting from this session. Before we start with our work, the Minister of Culture and Minister of Tourism of the Government of the Republic of India, His Excellency Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, the UNESCO Director-General, Ms Audrey Azoulay, and the Secretary for Culture, Mr Govin Mohan, whom I thank for his hard work in the organization of this session, to honour us with their presence in this first Plenary meeting, and will address the distinguished members of the World Heritage Committee.

It is now my pleasure to give the floor to the Director-General of UNESCO, Her Excellency Ms Audrey Azoulay. Madam Director-General, you have the floor.

The Director-General of UNESCO / La Directrice générale de l'UNESCO :

Honourable Minister of Culture and Tourism, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat,

Honourable Ministers,

Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is the first time that the World Heritage Committee is meeting in India. I would like to thank you, Prime Minister, for your warm welcome. Last night, the presence of the Prime Minister at the gala ceremony powerfully illustrated the importance that the Indian authorities—at the highest level—place on our work. The announcement of a \$1 million contribution to the World Heritage Centre to support capacity-building efforts in Africa and Small Island Developing States in Asia is a renewed symbol of this powerful commitment. And I also would like to thank the Prime Minister for the milestone we reached during the Indian Presidency of the G20 — when Leaders gathered here issued a Declaration calling for the inclusion of culture as a standalone goal in the post-2030 development agenda. It was also under the Indian Presidency, and with UNESCO's support, that the G20 endorsed the Kashi Culture Pathway, which positions culture as a driver for inclusive and sustainable development of communities, peoples and countries, as brilliantly illustrated for India by the Prime Minister last night.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, the World Heritage Convention has 195 States Parties. In a fragmented world, what else unites the world around with such a positive agenda? It is our honour and our responsibility. It is also a symbol of what heritage represents in a turbulent world: a unique link between peoples and cultures, one that fosters resilience, sharing and celebration while respecting differences and preparing the future.

In this World Heritage Committee, we will also have a clear view of the threats heritage faces across the world. I am thinking in particular of natural disasters, which are becoming increasingly acute due to the harmful effects of climate disruption. The most recent studies showed that the climate is changing more rapidly than ever, at more than 0.25°C per decade, and this is already having devastating effects on countries worldwide, from extreme heat-waves in India, Pakistan, Mexico, to the heat dome over California, deadly floods or fires in southern Brazil. This emergency and these concerns are reflected in our Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage, adopted last November.

UNESCO and its partners, governments, local authorities, experts and civil society are joining forces to adapt heritage management to climate disruption with a special focus on training professionals. And there are many examples of this. For instance, we are strengthening earthquake standards at the Historic City of Vigan in the Philippines. We are building the capacities of local communities so they can better address the impact of climate disruption in Antigua, Guatemala and Mozambique, which was recently devastated by Tropical Cyclone Gombe.

And we are studying ways to mitigate bleaching at 29 coral reefs on the World Heritage List with the US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association.

We have to keep adapting our actions to the climate emergency, which has become a priority, while also containing other threats. And once again this year, the sites on the Endangered List require special attention. I think I have to say it again: the listing should not be a cause of fear, nor should it be considered punishment or definitive. These discussions we have on the Endangered List may be difficult sometimes, but they are necessary. They have led to a real increase in awareness and often led to essential, tangible change. Above all, this List is a scientific and political tool to assess the risks facing certain sites and identify appropriate ways to address them. And for instance, with the support of the scientific community, the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi in Uganda have been removed from the List of the World Heritage in Danger, rewarding 13 years of joint efforts.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over-tourism, which affects local populations hit by housing shortages, low wages and environmental risks, must also be one of the focuses of your attention. In this context, we have to work for sustainable tourism; support sites to equip them with systems to better manage and anticipate visitors' flow. With tourism authorities, for example in Thailand, we have also promoted good practices set down in sustainable travel pledges.

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je veux rappeler aussi l'importance de l'inclusion des populations locales, trop longtemps ignorées alors qu'elles sont essentielles à la protection qui est pour elle vitale dans tous les sens du terme. Nous devons valoriser, comme c'est le cas ici en Inde, leur savoir-faire traditionnel qu'une longue pratique a si souvent merveilleusement adaptée aux besoins de conservation des patrimoines. C'est tout le sens aussi de l'Appel de Naples, lancé en Italie en novembre dernier pour avoir enfin une vision holistique du patrimoine qui inclut le patrimoine bâti, mais aussi le patrimoine immatériel, comme c'est le cas dans la réalité que vous connaissez sur tous les sites. Ici en Inde, dans la région, nous renforcerons cette année nos actions d'inventaire du patrimoine culturel immatériel et formerons la jeunesse pour créer des parcours de visite, par exemple autour de la Tombe de Humayun.

Je veux enfin évoquer un autre rôle essentiel du patrimoine, celui de soutien à la paix et à la cohésion sociale dans le processus de réhabilitation et reconstruction de patrimoine culturel. Comme à Odesa où nous soutenons la réflexion du Musée des Beaux-Arts, mais aussi celle de la Cathédrale de la Transfiguration, endommagée par une frappe il y a un an. Au Yémen, où ont été restaurés plus de 500 bâtiments historiques à Aden, Sana'a, Shibam ou Zabid. Nous avons formé déjà plus de 6 000 jeunes. Malheureusement les menaces sur notre personnel au Yémen remettent en question nos possibilités d'agir pour les Yéménites. Alors que quatre collaborateurs de l'UNESCO sont aujourd'hui détenus comme otages, c'est inacceptable.

En Iraq à Mossoul, ville de la diversité, là aussi, notre action conjointe permet à la ville de se remettre de ses cendres grâce au soutien des Émirats arabes unis, de l'Union européenne et de tant d'autres ici présents. Ailleurs dans le monde, comme au Cambodge, au Soudan, en Lybie, le Fond d'urgence pour le patrimoine a multiplié par deux ses opérations depuis 2021. Pour contribuer à répondre aux demandes toujours plus fortes des États membres, nous avons plus que jamais besoin de vos contributions volontaires pour être effectifs.

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Vous allez examiner ces jours-ci pas moins de 27 nouvelles propositions d'inscription. Vingt pour cent d'entre elles proviennent d'Afrique. C'est un pourcentage historique inédit qui est la conséquence directe de nos efforts et de la priorité que nous donnons à ce continent, à son histoire, à son patrimoine, aussi riche que souvent méconnu. Dans le cadre d'un programme de mentorat de cinq ans, soutenu par la Norvège, la France, le Japon, l'Arabie saoudite, l'Australie, nous avons formé des dizaines d'experts africains du patrimoine, et notamment des femmes. Nous continuerons de soutenir activement les onze pays africains qui ne sont pas encore représentés dans notre Liste. Je me réjouis aussi que nous ayons pu soutenir la création du réseau des gestionnaires de sites africains, ainsi que deux nouvelles chaires UNESCO sur le patrimoine mondial en Afrique, au Malawi et en Égypte, portant ainsi à quatre le nombre de chaires universitaires UNESCO sur le sujet dans le continent.

Vos décisions pourront s'appuyer sur une expertise scientifique indépendante encadrée par la Convention du patrimoine mondial, qui est votre œuvre. Vous aurez à cœur que les recommandations des experts soient la boussole de vos décisions souveraines et de la recherche du consensus. À cet égard je veux une nouvelle fois rappeler la disponibilité active qui est celle du Secrétariat pour vous accompagner dans la recherche de ces consensus. Je veux particulièrement remercier les délégations qui ont travaillé en étroite coopération avec le Secrétariat dans un esprit de consensus au texte touchant les sites du Proche-Orient en dépit de circonstances particulièrement difficiles. Je souhaite également remercier toutes les autres délégations qui, dans d'autres situations sensibles pour elles, ont fait confiance à notre médiation et ont permis d'aboutir à des solutions de consensus.

Pour conclure, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je voudrais citer une phrase de l'immense poète indien, Rabindranath Tagore, qui écrit : « Je dormais et je rêvais que la vie n'était que joie. Je m'éveillais, et je vis que la vie n'est que service. Je servis, et je compris que le service est joie. » Je vous souhaite beaucoup de joie dans vos travaux au service du patrimoine de l'humanité, de sa préservation et de sa transmission. Je vous remercie. Bons travaux.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Madam Director-General, for those wise and inspiring words. I would now like to give the floor to His Excellency Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. Please, Excellency, the floor is yours.

His Excellency Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat:

Thank you very much, Madam Director-General, Audrey Azoulay; Chairperson of World Heritage Committee, Mr Vishal Sharma; Secretary, Culture, Government of India, Mr Shri Arunish Chawla; Ladies and Gentlemen,

I once again welcome you all. And I, at the outset, I would like to thank Madam Director-General and the UNESCO office for giving this opportunity to host the World Heritage Committee meeting for the first time in India. India's association with the World Heritage Convention goes back to its early days. We ratified the Convention in 1977, and since then have been unwavering in our commitment to its principles. Our extensive World Heritage List of 42 properties includes some of the most iconic cultural and natural sites globally, such as the Taj Mahal, the Sun Temple of Konârak, and the Kaziranga National Park. Furthermore, we update our Tentative List each year to ensure it captures the entire cultural spectrum of India.

India has been an active member of the World Heritage Committee, having served for four terms so far. Our regular participation in the Committee is a mark of our dedication to advocating the Convention's principles and contributing to the global heritage conservation efforts. We have consistently advocated for the core values of the Convention, such as international cooperation, capacity-building and conservation, and effective management of heritage sites. Our commitment extends beyond borders, which is reflected through various conservation and capacity-building initiatives we undertake with our neighbouring countries.

In the coming years, India will make further contributions to the priority areas of the World Heritage Convention and will work towards achieving a representative, balanced and credible. We look forward to collaborating with the African nations and LDCs and SIDS, and also building capacities of youth and young professionals through targeted and tailored initiatives, by offering workshops, seminars and heritage expeditions in cultural and natural conservation.

We will put in our best efforts to ensure that we are well equipped to address the challenges facing World Heritage sites today. In addition to adhering to the International Framework of World Heritage, our national and regional regulations significantly enhance the effective management of our heritage assets. Programmes like Adopt a Heritage, and Pilgrimage, Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive, and the National Culture Fund ensure that our World Heritage sites are maintained as attractive tourist destinations through active community participation.

With these words, I once again welcome and thank honourable DG, Madam Audrey Azoulay, and you all to this wonderful country, and I wish my very best to all of you for this meeting. Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Excellency, for this very enlightening message that will accompany us through our work during the forthcoming days.

Dear colleagues,

I would like once again to thank our distinguished speakers, and I will now suspend the session for a few minutes to allow them to leave the podium as they have to attend to other commitments. This session is suspended for the time being.

[microphone test]

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

I request you to reassemble. Thank you. I would like to stress that we have a rather heavy agenda. We will therefore need to follow the timetable strictly.

The Secretariat:

The French interpretation doesn't work.

The Chairperson:

We are waiting for the French interpretation.

Dear colleagues, I will start again, and if the French interpretation is not working, then please let me know.

I would like to stress that we have a rather heavy agenda. French interpretation is not working. Can we have the technical team to look into the matter, please? The French interpretation?

I will give the floor to the Director of WHC, he will check whether the French interpretation works. And then, once I get the go-ahead, I will start. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre / Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Can someone just confirm that the French is working?

Est-ce que les interprètes français peuvent parler, pour voir si.

Can the French interpreters? I can't hear you. I can't hear the French.

Je crois que maintenant ça marche.

2. ADMISSION OF OBSERVERS // ADMISSION DES OBSERVATEURS

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Lazare.

We will therefore need to follow the timetable strictly, so I would like to proceed and start Item 2 on our Agenda: Request for Observer status. Thank you very much.

Dear colleagues,

With deep gratitude for your trust in me as Chairperson of this session, I wish to highlight my hope that once again, all of us Committee members and representatives of all States Parties, colleagues from the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies, as well as other organisations and stakeholders, all work together in a true spirit of multilateralism and through dialogue and cooperation, to promote the values of the World Heritage Convention, to forge trust and solidarity, and to make this 46th session successful. I have no doubt that we all have at heart to achieve consensus on all the draft decisions proposed before us, and I will spare no effort in this regard.

Considering the heavy agenda of our session, I would like to appeal to all participants to strictly follow the time limits of interventions and requirements of the Rules of Procedure, so that we can keep in pace with our timetable. Committee members will be given three minutes for their interventions, and Observers two minutes. Please also understand that although I will try my best to let all interested parties make interventions and comments as per our Rules of Procedure, I may not be able to give the floor to every Observer every time. In this regard, I would like to ask NGOs to group their various interventions on a subject matter into one joint statement of two minutes, and to focus on this matter only.

In addition, as Chairperson, I want to make it very clear that I will reserve the right to interrupt any intervention, either by Committee members or Observers alike, which is not directly related to the technical item under examination by the Committee.

Last but not least, under the nominations item, I would like to inform you that once the decision has been adopted, I will give the floor only to the State Party concerned for a two-minute statement. I thank you in advance for your cooperation in this regard.

Dear Committee members,

Now, I would like to proceed with the Agenda and start with Document WHC/24/46.COM/2: Requests for Observer status. Before considering the admission of Observers, I would like to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr Eloundou Assomo, for some general announcements.

Mr Eloundou Assomo, you have the floor, sir.

Le directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Effectivement, le Secrétariat a reçu un nombre de demandes pour un statut d'observateur. Alors, ces demandes sont contenues dans le Document 2 qui a été mis à votre disposition, d'abord le 16 juillet dernier, dans ce Document 2, et ensuite dans le Document 2.Add qui a été publié le 20 juillet. Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr Eloundou Assomo, for this presentation.

We now turn our attention to the admission of Observers. The list is presented in Document 2, in accordance with Article 8 of the Rules of Procedure. For your information, this is a bilingual document. I would like to ask our Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président. Bonjour à vous. Bonjour à toutes et à tous.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendements sur ce point. Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Rapporteur.

Dear colleagues,

I will now ask you if you agree to the presence of these Observers throughout the session. I see none. Let's proceed then. May I take it that the participation of Observers is agreed? Yes. I see no objections. It is so decided. ^[gavel]

Thank you, I declare Agenda Item 2 closed.

3A. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA // ADOPTION DE L'ORDRE DU JOUR

The Chairperson:

Dear Committee members,

We can now move to the review of the Agenda and of the Timetable of our session, Items 3A and 3B. The Provisional Agenda is presented to you in Document WHC/24/46.COM/3A, and the Provisional Timetable in Document WHC/24/46.COM/3B. I would like to invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to present the Agenda and the Timetable of the session, as contained in the relevant documents. These documents should be read in conjunction with WHC/24/46.COM/INF.3A.Rev, which contains the provisional list of documents of our session.

Mr Eloundou Assomo, you have the floor, sir.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you. Mr Chairperson, dear Committee members,

First of all, allow me to recall that the Provisional Agenda of the 46th session contained in Document 3A was already adopted by the Committee at its extended 45th extraordinary session in September 2023, in Riyadh, and this is Decision **45 COM 18**.

The provisional timetable of the session is contained in Document 3B, which was made available on 22 May, and its corrigendum circulated on 10 July last, with a slight change in the starting hour of today's plenary session to allow the elocutions we have just heard by His Excellency the Honourable Minister of Culture and Tourism of India and by the UNESCO Director-General.

You will also note that a message from the 2024 World Heritage Young Professionals Forum will be presented to you at the end of this morning, and another one from the 2024 Site Managers' Forum will be presented to you on Tuesday morning. These messages will be made available in English and French as soon as possible. It is suggested to the Committee to take note of these messages.

Dear Committee members,

I also wish to remind you that all amendments to draft decisions have to be submitted well in advance before the discussion of the item concerned to the Rapporteur, Mr Martin Ouaklani, using the appropriate form. And this form is available in English and French. And please use the Rapporteur's email address, which is wh-rapporteur@unesco.org. But I think most of you already have it, and if you have a problem, please don't hesitate to come to the Secretariat. The form was provided to all of you of course by email, and please check the email we sent to all States Parties and Committee members on 12th July. And while Committee members are entitled to submit an amendment at any moment until the decision is made, oral amendments made during the examination of the item concerned should remain, as far as possible, small changes to the wording to the draft decision. The submission of substantial proposals of amendment should be made as much as possible at least 24 hours before the discussion of the agenda item concerned. This will greatly facilitate the organization of the debate and a well-informed decision-making process.

Furthermore, Mr Chairperson, I want to clarify to the Committee members that cosponsoring 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.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, please note that in addition to the mandatory interpretation in English and French, thanks to the Kingdom of Spain, Spanish interpretation will be ensured throughout the session. The Russian Federation is funding interpretation in Russian from 23 to 28 July, which will cover, as you all know, the items of state of conservation and nominations. In addition, the People's Democratic Republic of China is funding interpretation in Chinese from 26 to 29 July, which will cover the item on nominations. Thank you. Sorry, The People's Republic of China, I meant.

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr Eloundou Assomo, for this presentation.

Dear colleagues,

Before we move with the adoption of our Agenda, I would like to inform you of the outcomes of the first meeting of the Bureau, which took place yesterday, and during which agenda related matters were discussed. Following a request made by the Distinguished Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The Bureau recommends to the Committee the addition, under Agenda Item 14: Other Business, of a discussion related to the Small Island Developing States with the consideration of a proposed draft decision.

Furthermore, three requests were received from States Parties to move the timing for the examination of their nominations, to which the Bureau had no objection. The Secretariat will therefore work on this matter and will prepare an adjusted calendar for the examination of nominations under Item 8B from 26 to 29 July, so as to inform Committee members as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

I would now like to know whether there are any comments on this agenda item. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 3A**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président. Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendements sur ce point.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Rapporteur.

Are there any comments or questions? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 3A** adopted. *[gavel]*

I therefore declare Agenda Item 3A closed.

3B. ADOPTION OF THE TIMETABLE // ADOPTION DU CALENDRIER

The Chairperson:

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 3B**.

Dear colleagues,

I would now like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft Decision **46 COM 3B** proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendements non plus sur ce point, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Are there any comments or questions? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 3B** adopted. *[gavel]*

I therefore declare Agenda Item 3B closed.

4. REPORT OF THE RAPPORTEUR OF THE EXTENDED 45TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE (RIYADH, 2023) // RAPPORT DU RAPPORTEUR DE LA 45^E SESSION ÉLARGIE DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (RIYAD, 2023)

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us examine now Item 4 on our Agenda. As you know, Doctor Shikha Jain, India, was the Rapporteur of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, which was held in 2023 under the chairpersonship of Doctor Abdulelah Al-Tokhais from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I now have the pleasure to invite Doctor Shikha Jain, who is with us today, to present her report, which will highlight the main issues discussed during our last session. Doctor Shikha Jain, you have the floor.

The Rapporteur of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee:

Mr Chairperson, members of the Committee, delegates of States Parties, members of the Secretariat, Advisory Bodies and participants of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee,

I have the pleasure to be here with you today to present my report on the proceedings of the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, which was held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from 10 to 25 September 2023.

Distinguished Committee members,

It was an honour that you allowed me to serve as the Rapporteur of the extended 45th session, which was the first session to be held in presential since 2019. The extended 45th session was chaired by Doctor Abdulelah Al-Tokhais of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and I would like to take this opportunity to commend him for his dedication, his excellent chairmanship and wise advice, as well as the entire team in Riyadh who contributed immensely to the success of the session. Please also let me offer my gratitude to the UNESCO Secretariat, whose assistance was invaluable for my work as Rapporteur during the session.

The session was attended by almost 1500 participants, including members of the Committee, representatives of States Parties to the Convention, Advisory Bodies and Observer organizations. Over almost two weeks, the World Heritage Committee adopted 372 decisions, the highest number ever. Due to exceptional nature of an extended session, some agenda items were adopted without debate, and some were opened on the first day of the plenary meetings to allow the creation of consultative groups.

Under Items 7A and 7B, the Committee examined 263 state of conservation reports, of which 26 were open for discussion. Seven properties were recommended for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. However, the Committee decided to approve only two, Kyiv and L'viv in Ukraine. The reasons given were largely based on the challenges of ensuring conservation, while also addressing the needs and pressures of development. Furthermore, one property was removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger: the Tombs of Buganda Kings of Kasubi, Uganda, thanks to the efforts accomplished by the State Party. Currently, 56 properties are inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Regarding nominations, the World Heritage Committee examined a total of 50 nominations, out of which 24 were foreseen to be examined in 2022 and 26 in 2023. After careful consideration, the Committee inscribed 42 new properties on the World Heritage List, nine natural and 33 cultural. The Committee also approved the extension of five properties already inscribed on the List. Out of this total of 47 properties, 16 were inscribed or extended after the Committee decided to change nine referrals and seven deferrals into inscriptions or approved extensions. Lastly, it deferred three nominations. The World Heritage List now consists of 1199 properties, of which 933 are cultural, 227 are natural, and 39 are mixed.

Mr Chairperson,

Let me add that under Agenda Item 8, the Committee inscribed three memory sites on the World Heritage List, in Argentina, Rwanda and Belgium, France. These are not first sites of this type inscribed on the World Heritage List, but they were the first ones inscribed after the adoption of the specific framework defined after four years of reflection.

Distinguished Delegates,

The Committee also decided to transfer the mandate of the Ad-hoc Working Group to an Open-ended Working Group to start a fundamental reflection on the operations of the World Heritage Convention, notably on the representativity, credibility and balance of the World Heritage List, and the sustainable funding of the nomination process. The first outcomes of the work of this group will be reviewed at this present session.

Before I conclude, allow me to wish all the best to my successor, Mr Martin Ouaklani from Belgium, Rapporteur of the present session, who I am certain will find this an equally demanding and rewarding role. I wish all members of the Committee rich debates, smooth proceedings and a successful session under the wise chairpersonship of His Excellency, Mr Vishal Sharma. Lastly, I present my sincere thanks to the Host Country of India for this excellent organization. Thank you for your attention. ^[applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Doctor Shikha Jain, for your presentation.

On behalf of all Committee members, I would like to reiterate our gratitude to Doctor Jain for such a high-quality work. I also wish to thank once again the State Party of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the marvellous organization and conditions provided for the last year's session. I propose that the Committee takes note of the report of the Rapporteur of the extended 45th session. Is there any comment or question on the report of the last session? I see none. Let's proceed then. I will ask Miss Shikha Jain to answer your questions if you have any. I see no questions or comments. I therefore propose that the Committee takes note of the report of the Rapporteur of the extended 45th session. It is so decided. ^[gavel]

Thank you very much. I now close Item 4 of the Agenda.

13. PRESENTATION OF THE FINAL ACCOUNTS OF THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND FOR THE BIENNIUM 2022-2023, REPORT ON THE EXECUTION OF THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2024-2025, FOLLOW-UP TO DECISION 45 COM 15 [Opening of the item] // PRÉSENTATION DES COMPTES FINAUX DU FONDS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL AU TITRE DE L'EXERCICE BIENNAL 2022-2023, RAPPORT SUR L'EXÉCUTION DU FONDS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL AU TITRE DE L'EXERCICE BIENNAL 2024-2025 ET SUIVI DE LA DÉCISION 45 COM 15 [Ouverture du point]

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

As indicated in our timetable, we are now moving to the opening of the Agenda Item 13, dedicated to budget matters. The relevant document of this item is Document WHC/24/46.COM/13. I would like to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo, who will provide us with some important clarifications regarding this agenda item.

Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Dear Committee members, as you will remember the Committee established, by Decision **35 COM 12B**, a standing Consultative Body for a review of the Committee's biennial budget, in conformity with Article 20 of the Rules of Procedure. This Consultative Body is open, obviously, to all Committee members as well as to States non-members of the Committee that wish to attend its meeting. I would like also to recall that the Advisory Bodies will have the possibility to attend this working group as Observers. In this regard, Mr Chairperson, I would like to clarify that we will not have any general presentation of the documents of the budget in the plenary, but that this is done, as per practice, at the first meeting of the Working Group. I would therefore strongly encourage all the members of the Committee to attend the first meeting of this working group. And, as per practice, the Working Group will be held for three days, at lunch time, to avoid heavy agenda and overlapping of meetings. And it is proposed that the Budget Group meets from 25 to 27 July, from 2:00 to 3:00 pm.

Allow me to finish, Mr Chairperson, to recall that the whole purpose of this working group is actually to examine the draft decision proposed in order to recommend it on a consensual basis for its adoption to the plenary.

So, thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Many thanks, Mr Director.

These are indeed extremely important points to consider in our deliberations.

Dear colleagues,

After having heard the explanation of the Director, can the Committee agree with this proposal? I see no intervention. Let us proceed then.

Furthermore, as there are no more comments or questions, as you know, as per Rule 20.2 of the Rules of Procedure, it is the responsibility of the Working Group to elect its chairperson. I understand that some consultations already took place in this regard. Therefore, I would like to know if a Distinguished Delegation would like to make a proposal.

I see Belgium has raised its plate. Belgium? You have the floor.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président.

Puisqu'il s'agit de notre première intervention, je tiens tout d'abord, au nom de la Délégation belge, à vous féliciter et remercier l'Inde à nouveau pour l'hospitalité généreuse et l'organisation impeccable de cet événement.

Pour la présidence de ce groupe de travail, la Belgique souhaiterait proposer Madame Chiara Franco de la Délégation d'Italie pour présider ce groupe de travail.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Is there any objection to this proposal by Belgium? I see none. It is so decided. Congratulations to Mrs Franco, who will be arriving in New Delhi on 24 July. ^[gavel]

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Based on the previous year's practice, and if you are in agreement with this proposal, I would suggest that the Budget Working Group meets for the first time on 25 July in the Bureau meeting room from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm. This will give sufficient time to Ms Franco to join us.

We can therefore now move to our next agenda item.

5A. REPORT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE ON ITS ACTIVITIES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE'S DECISIONS // RAPPORT DU CENTRE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL SUR SES ACTIVITÉS ET SUR LA MISE EN ŒUVRE DES DÉCISIONS DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We will now move to the next item concerning the report of the World Heritage Centre on the activities it has undertaken since the last session of the World Heritage Committee in September 2023 until May 2024, which is contained in Documents WHC/24/46.COM/5A and WHC/24/46.COM/INF.5A. If you allow me, I would like to thank on the behalf of all the Committee members and States Parties, the World Heritage Centre for the excellent work conducted under the leadership of Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo. The report of the World Heritage Centre on its activities will now be introduced by the Director of the World Heritage Centre.

Mr Eloundou Assomo, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, and thank you for your words of appreciation.

Dear Committee members,

I will now present the report of the World Heritage Centre on its activities and the implementation of the World Heritage Committee's decisions. Next. Another. Go back to the previous one. Thank you.

This report mainly covers the period from the last Committee session in September 2023 up to May 2024. As usual, this report is aligned as much as possible with the approved C/5, and it follows the structure of Output 5.CL1 which is about Member States' capacities strengthened to identify, protect and manage tangible heritage. This is under Outcome 5 of Major Programme IV, as approved in the 41 and 42/C5. And during this reporting period, the Secretariat undertook numerous activities aimed at protecting and managing World Heritage properties in line with the overall framework of sustainable development. These activities are aligned with two performance indicators, Mr Chairperson. The number of Member States protecting and managing their World Heritage properties, which is the first performance indicator, and the second one, which is the support provided in the identification and preparation of potential World Heritage sites for nominations.

As requested by the Committee last year in Riyadh, the focus has also been placed on the results of activities not otherwise covered in working and information documents prepared for this particular session. More detailed information about all the World Heritage Centre's activities is available in Document INF.5A. Next slide please.

For what concerns the World Heritage Centre, which is an entity of the culture sector, and as Director of the World Heritage Centre and the World Heritage Centre, I am supported by a Deputy Director, five regional units supporting the implementation of the Convention in the different regions, a specific unit dedicated to Natural Heritage, a unit dedicated to nomination matters, and a unit responsible for policy and statutory meetings. So currently, the World Heritage Centre has 28 established posts, financed under UNESCO Regular Programme to support the 195 States Parties. With a workload in constant increase, partly, but not only, due to the increase of the World Heritage List, of course we are facing a situation that is not sustainable in the long term. In this regard, it is clear that there is an important need of extra budgetary support. And the 29 positions are financed through voluntary contributions from Member States and partners. It will be very difficult for the World Heritage Centre to cope with the current workload. This gives me the opportunity, of course, to thank all the States Parties who are financing and continuing to finance such positions within the World Heritage Centre. Next slide.

We now come to the report on the activities implemented and the results achieved during the reporting period and to the first Performance Indicator on protection and management of World Heritage. Next slide. The Secretariat has played a pivotal role in supporting the Governing Bodies of the World Heritage Convention, ensuring smooth operations and effective decision-making processes. Key activities, including the holding of the extended 45th session in Riyadh last year, which was a landmark event where significant decisions were made regarding the conservation and management of World Heritage sites. We have just heard the report of Doctor Shikha Jain, the Rapporteur, on the key outcomes of this session. I would also like to thank her for her excellent work and professional work that she did last year. The decisions report, the summary report and the video recording of the session are available on our website for all of you. Another highlight of last year was the holding of the 24th session of the General Assembly in November 2023, which adopted by consensus, as already said by the Director-General in her speech, the Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage, reflecting the growing recognition of climate change as a critical factor in heritage conservation. It also adopted a revision of its Rules of Procedures to harmonise the equivalent rules for the seven assemblies of the cultural conventions, and of course, it elected the new Committee members who are serving in this Committee. Workshops, including the Open-ended Working Group

established by the Committee last year, whose mandate covers matters related to credibility and representativity of the List, as well as those relating to sustainable funding solutions for nomination process. This involved meticulous planning, agenda setting and documentation preparation, ensuring that all stakeholders were well informed and prepared for discussions. Next slide please.

Now I want to speak about capacity-building. Capacity-building is a cornerstone of the Secretariat's effort to enhance the management and conservation of World Heritage sites. Indeed, dear Committee members, as you all know, capacity-building is one of the five C's that have been set as strategic objectives by the Committee. And capacity-building activities serve as catalysts for sustainable development. They also foster collaboration, innovation and the transmission of knowledge. In the interest of time, I will not repeat here what is already contained in the document that you will examine in the next item, which is Document 6A and 6B, which are dedicated to this specific topic.

During the reporting period, the Secretariat organised numerous training workshops, notably across Africa, the Arab States and the Europe regions, focusing on sustainable conservation practices and effective site management. Noteworthy initiatives, including the Mentorship Programme for African Heritage Professionals, which the Director-General also mentioned, designed to foster a new generation of heritage leaders and to provide region-specific workshops that addressed unique challenges and opportunities in heritage conservation.

In 2024, during a series of workshops in Cairo, Egypt, over 100 heritage managers received hands-on training in advanced site management techniques covering areas such as risk management, sustainable tourism and community engagement, significantly enhancing local capacity to address complex heritage conservation challenges. A number of workshops organised with the three Advisory Bodies also served to introduce the guidance and toolkit for impact assessment in a World Heritage context. The Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.02 and the Online Guidance for Wind Energy Project in a World Heritage Context, and I would like to thank the three Advisory Bodies for their great cooperation and great work.

To ensure wider reach, the Secretariat also relied on online workshops on various aspects of heritage management, facilitating access to a regular, larger number of heritage professionals globally.

Last but not least, the two fora that are organized this year again in this beautiful country, in the margin of the World Heritage Committee session, they are also good examples of capacity-building and networking activities. Indeed, the Young Professionals Forum harnesses the potential of capacity-building and prepares the young professionals in creating a sustainable future for our cultural and natural heritage. And the Site Managers' Forum creates opportunity for the empowerment of site managers in expanding their networks and exchanging knowledges and experiences at an international level. I would like to extend here really my gratitude, and the one of the World Heritage Centre and this whole Secretariat, to the donors and partners who have supported this capacity-building initiative, ensuring their success and, in particular, their impact. Next slide, colleague.

As recognized by the Committee on numerous instances, including during the recent discussion of the Open-ended Working Group, the involvement of civil society, local communities and Indigenous Peoples is essential for the sustainable management of World Heritage sites. To address this, the Secretariat has implemented several initiatives to enhance community engagement and participation. And just to name a few of them, numerous projects have been launched to involve local communities in the conservation process, for example: in collaboration with the Kilimanjaro National Park Authority, the Secretariat has implemented a project entitled Empowering Young Women and Men for Adaptation to Climate Change at the Kilimanjaro National Park World Heritage site, and this was funded by the Netherlands Funding Trust, which I would like to thank. And this was on the impact of climate change on nine villages adjacent to the park, where they collected. Some of the key findings included the provisions of conservation education, awareness on climate change, strengthening the conservation of projects.

The Secretariat has also partnered with local NGOs to implement conservation projects and educational programmes such as for the World Heritage Volunteers Initiative, thanks to which young people and local communities were involved in concrete awareness-raising preservation activities at 70 Action Camp projects in 62 World Heritage properties and sites on the Tentative List and implemented by 54 different organizations in 31 countries around the globe.

Educational and outreach programmes aimed at raising awareness about the importance of heritage conservation have been conducted in schools and communities, notably through the very active role of the World Heritage Education Programme. And these programmes, Mr Chairperson, emphasize the role of heritage in cultural identity and promote a sense of ownership and responsibility among younger professionals. These initiatives have fostered a sense of ownership and stewardship among local communities, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the heritage conservation effort. Mr Chairperson, in this regard, I will request your permission to pass the floor for five minutes to Mrs Chrissy Grant, who is the Chairperson of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage, to present to the Committee the outcomes of an international experts Workshop on Recognizing and Respecting Indigenous Peoples' Heritage Values in World Heritage sites, which was organized in Geneva, in Switzerland, in January 2024, after my presentation.

The Chairperson:

You may do so.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre / Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Next slide please. Integrating World Heritage conservation with Sustainable Development Goals is a key priority for the Secretariat, as you know. And further to the adoption of World Heritage Policy for Sustainable Development, the World Heritage Centre continues to mainstream sustainable development in all its activities as appropriate, including in statutory processes, operational projects and capacity-building activities in this regard. Notably, projects and initiatives were undertaken during the reporting period, for example: in the face of ongoing armed conflict and natural disaster, safeguarding World Heritage property has remained a paramount concern of the Secretariat through rehabilitation efforts, capacity-building initiatives, several interventions trying to mitigate the impact of this crisis. The Secretariat has implemented several projects aimed at enhancing the resilience of World Heritage sites to climate change by introducing a series of measures to protect sites from rising sea levels, for instance, or why not, extreme weather events.

Sustainable tourism was also promoted as a means to support local economies while ensuring the conservation of heritage sites. We've worked with local authorities in various countries to develop sustainable tourism strategies in order to balance visitor access with site preservation. We also supported projects and conducted some of them to support local economies through heritage conservation. And for example: we supported initiatives that promote traditional craft and heritage tourism, providing economic opportunities for local communities while preserving their unique cultural and natural sites. And in view of providing innovative tools for enhancing World Heritage sustainable conservation, the Secretariat is also preparing the second phase of a World Heritage Online Map platform, which is actually a web-based GIS for World Heritage Properties, and it was launched last year at the last World Heritage Committee, and this is developed with the support of the Flanders Trust Fund at UNESCO with co-funding from Sweden. Initially developed with properties located in Europe, now we are making this effort to expand the platform to include World Heritage properties in Africa. So, all this effort demonstrates the Secretariat's commitment to achieving the SDGs while ensuring the protection and conservation of World Heritage sites. I will now continue my presentation in French, Chairperson, if you allow me.

Prochaine diapo s'il vous plaît. Nous arrivons maintenant aux activités mises en œuvre en lien avec l'Indicateur de performance numéro 2 sur la Liste indicative et les propositions d'inscription. Suivante. Au cours de la période considérée, le Centre du patrimoine mondial a reçu 37 dossiers de proposition d'inscription à la date annuelle de dépôt de dossier. Et sur ces 37 dossiers, 32 étaient considérés comme complets conformément au paragraphe 132 et à l'Annexe 5 de l'Orientation. Et tous ces dossiers ont été rigoureusement évalués en collaboration avec les Organisations consultatives, ce qui a permis de mener à bien un processus décisionnel approfondi et éclairé. En ce qui concerne l'exhaustivité des dossiers de proposition d'inscription, ces dernières années, les États parties ont eu la tendance dans toutes les régions à soumettre des dossiers de proposition d'inscription considérés comme incomplets après vérification par le Secrétariat, mais l'analyse des tendances des Listes indicatives a montré une augmentation du nombre d'États parties préparant des sites pour des propositions d'inscription. Donc cela indique un engagement croissant en faveur de la préservation du patrimoine, de plus en plus d'États qui reconnaissent l'importance de documenter, de protéger celui-ci. Toutefois, M. le Président, nous avons une tendance nette dans la catégorie de sites faisant l'objet d'une proposition d'inscription avec une proportion élevée de sites culturels. Au 15 septembre 2023, première date limite volontaire pour la soumission des demandes d'évaluation préliminaire, un total de quatorze demandes ont été reçues, onze culturelles et un site naturel, et deux mixtes, et non pas 24, comme indiqué par erreur dans le document, au paragraphe 92, qui vous a été soumis, toutes les régions. Et la liste de toutes ces demandes est incluse dans le Document 8. Et le Secrétariat a fourni un appui technique et a formulé des conseils aux États parties pour la préparation et la mise à jour des Listes indicatives. À travers des ateliers, par exemple, des missions d'experts et de conseils quant à la, en essayant de trouver la manière la plus adaptée, selon les opportunités, pour essayer de répondre aux demandes et aux besoins des États parties. Et le Secrétariat a travaillé particulièrement pour accompagner cinq pays africains pour avancer dans leurs efforts pour la révision des listes indicatives et la préparation des dossiers de nomination. Diapo suivante.

En ce qui concerne les synergies avec les autres conventions, cultures et programmes culturels, le Secrétariat continue de promouvoir activement de telles synergies en veillant à une approche globale dans la conservation du patrimoine. Et parmi les principales collaborations, le Centre du patrimoine mondial a été activement impliqué dans l'organisation de la dernière Conférence de Naples par l'UNESCO sur le Patrimoine Culturel au XXI^e siècle, qui s'est tenu du 27 or 29 novembre 2023 à Naples et qui a été accueilli gracieusement par le Gouvernement de l'Italie. Les discussions qui visaient notamment à mener une réflexion sur les accomplissements des Conventions de 1972 et de 2003 ont montré que c'est la démarche qui va être certainement la plus encourageante, la plus importante à suivre dans les années futures parce que la plupart des experts ont estimé que les deux Conventions avaient besoin de travailler véritablement ensemble et de se soutenir afin d'avoir cette approche holistique qui est absolument importante aujourd'hui.

Et au niveau du secteur de la culture, un groupe de travail interne a été établi, par exemple dédié aux rapports périodiques, afin d'encourager les synergies dans les diverses conventions, recommandations et programmes. Nous y reviendrons effectivement plus tard, sur ce document qui sera examiné sous le Point 10. Et en ce qui concerne les synergies avec les conventions et programmes ayant trait à la biodiversité, les interactions ont considérablement renforcé la conservation des sites naturels et du patrimoine mondial. Par exemple, le Centre du patrimoine mondial a participé en janvier 2024 à la Conférence de Berne III, qui portait sur la coopération entre les conventions relatives à la biodiversité pour la mise en œuvre du Cadre mondial pour la biodiversité de Kunming Montréal. Et nous avons donné à cette occasion un large éventail d'idées concrètes pour la collaboration accrue qui est nécessaire entre toutes les conventions qui tournent autour de la biodiversité. Prochaine diapositive, s'il vous plaît.

Le Secrétariat s'est associé aussi à la Convention sur la diversité biologique pour élaborer des lignes directrices pour la gestion des points chauds de biodiversité qui sont également des sites du patrimoine mondial. Le Secrétariat

a collaboré avec la Convention de Ramsar pour renforcer la protection des sites du patrimoine mondial des zones humides. Et le Secrétariat a également été impliqué dans une série de collaboration ensemble avec le Programme Homme et biodiversité de l'UNESCO dans une série d'ateliers, de webinars, notamment sur le terme de la grippe aviaire et ses effets sur les sites du patrimoine mondial et les réserves de biosphère et les sites Ramsar qui sont reconnus à l'échelle internationale. Diapo suivante.

En termes de défis et voies à suivre, Mesdames et Messieurs, les membres du Comité, M. le Président, les activités de conservation du patrimoine mondial sont confrontés à des défis majeurs tels que, comme vous le savez déjà, le changement climatique, les conflits, l'urbanisation rapide et le tourisme de masse, pour n'en citer que quelques-uns qui sont repris dans le document, le Point 7 de l'Agenda. Les partenariats stratégiques avec d'autres conventions culturelles et programmes de biodiversité, permettent une approche plus intégrée de la conservation. Et ici, l'adoption de technologies innovantes telles que la surveillance par satellite et les systèmes d'information géographique est devenue de plus en plus cruciale pour une gestion proactive des sites.

Et enfin, M. le Président, l'engagement des communautés locales des peuples autochtones et la promotion des politiques de tourisme durable sont aussi indispensables et de nombreux projets de conservation communautaire démontrent en effet l'importance de la participation locale en développant des stratégies de tourisme durable et en éduquant les visiteurs et en établissant des capacités d'accueil, nous pensons qu'il est possible d'équilibrer la conservation du patrimoine et le développement économique, tout en assurant que la préservation des sites soit essentielle pour les générations futures.

M. le Président,

La complexité technique croissante des enjeux liés à la conservation et les efforts de conservation de plus en plus sophistiqués appellent à un besoin de conseils techniques spécialisés de plus en plus important. D'où la nécessité que nous avons déjà dit, de bénéficier de ressources humaines et financières supplémentaires que, pour l'instant, nous continuons d'appeler à votre considération, à la considération de tous les États membres. Prochaine disposition.

M. le Président, chers membres du Comité,

Conformément à la Résolution 42/7, qui avait été adoptée en novembre dernier par la Conférence Générale, les organes gouvernementaux comme le Comité du patrimoine mondial, sont invités à contribuer au processus de réflexion sur les futures orientations et priorités programmatiques pour le prochain 43 C/5, c'est à dire le programme et budget de l'UNESCO pour 2026 et 2029. Et à l'issue de vos discussions sur ce sujet, un rapport de synthèse sera préparé par le Secrétariat et reflété dans la contribution du secteur de la culture aux propositions préliminaires de la Directrice générale sur le Projet 43 C 5 dont la présentation est prévue à la 220^e session du Conseil exécutif. Et les domaines de réflexion suivants peuvent être pris en compte dans le cadre de ces débats. Les tendances qu'on observe aujourd'hui qui sont les tendance mondiales, les opportunités, les difficultés relatives à la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial au niveau national, les quelques mesures stratégiques et les investissements pour accroître et l'impact du patrimoine mondial, par exemple, pour les régions prioritaires que sont l'Afrique, et ensuite aussi pour l'égalité des genres et les groupes prioritaires et domaines thématiques que sont les petits États insulaires en développement, les jeunes, la préparation ou réponse aux crises. Les priorités thématiques dans le cadre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial aussi seront importantes, et enfin la nécessité de solliciter un financement supplémentaire auprès des différentes sources. Prochaine diapo.

Mesdames et Messieurs les membres du Comité,

En conclusion, le Secrétariat a fait des progrès significatifs dans la protection et la gestion des sites du patrimoine mondial et le Secrétariat va continuer à travailler sous votre encadrement, avec vos décisions et avec votre soutien, à poursuivre ses efforts. Et ces efforts seront en matière de renforcement des capacités, de communication, de coopération internationale. Et à l'avenir, la coopération continue, la mobilisation des ressources et le renforcement des capacités devraient nous permettre d'atteindre nos objectifs stratégiques et assurer la préservation de notre patrimoine mondial commun, notamment avec les priorités que vous avez établies, les priorités régionales, les priorités stratégiques, les priorités thématiques, et avec un accent plus important notamment et une attention particulière pour l'Afrique et les petits États insulaires en développement.

Et, M. le Président, le projet de Décision **46 COM 5A** vous fournit des éléments précis pour nous aider et vous aider à relever les défis actuels, à saisir les nouvelles opportunités en matière de conservation du patrimoine.

Je voudrais encore une fois, M. le Président, remercier tous nos donateurs et partenaires pour leur soutien indéfectible, qui a été crucial pour nos réalisations, et qui sera vital pour nos efforts futurs. Je voudrais également remercier tous mes collègues du Centre du patrimoine mondial, tous mes collègues du secteur de la culture et M. l'ADG de la culture, avec qui nous travaillons en étroite collaboration, pour être arrivé à ce résultat qui est extrêmement important. Voilà, M. le Président, chers collègues, Mesdames et Messieurs les membres du Comité, la présentation du rapport du Secrétariat qui vous donne une idée de l'éventail des activités entreprises par le Centre du patrimoine mondial aujourd'hui.

Et je vous remercie de votre attention. Merci, M. le Président. *[applaudissements]*

The Chairperson:

I am now going to give the floor to that lady. As requested by the Director, I now give the floor to Mrs Chrissy Grant, Chairperson of the International Indigenous People's Forum on World Heritage for five minutes.

You have the floor.

The Chairperson of the International Indigenous People's Forum on World Heritage:

Thank you, Mr Chair, and thank you for the opportunity to verbally report back to the World Heritage Committee and the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and all States Parties on the recent very important Expert Workshop at this COM 46. The intention of the workshop was to follow up on World Heritage Committee's Decision **37 COM 88.19** in 2013, in which the Committee noted that the nomination of Pimachiowin Aki in Canada had raised fundamental questions in terms of how the indissoluble bonds that exist in some places between culture and nature can be recognized on the World Heritage List. In particular, the fact that the cultural and natural values of one property are currently evaluated separately, and that the present wording of the criteria may be one contributor to this difficulty.

We know that the majority of World Heritage sites in indigenous people's territories are designated as purely natural sites, without any recognition of Indigenous People's heritage, values and their relationship to the land, in the justification for inscription in the statement of OUV [Outstanding Universal Value], and in disregard of the fact that, for Indigenous Peoples, cultural and natural values are inseparable, interwoven, and should be managed and protected in a holistic manner. It is well documented that where indigenous people's perspectives, cultural values and customary roles are not recognized and reflected, when the OUV of a site is defined, their role in site management and decision-making is diminished. In this way, their customary rights to their ancestral lands, territories, and resources are being violated.

Following the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007, various efforts have been made to enhance respect for indigenous people's rights in World Heritage sites. This includes the establishment of the Independent International Indigenous People's Forum on World Heritage, referred to as the Indigenous Forum, which has been recognized by the World Heritage Committee for its role in the involvement of Indigenous Peoples in the identification, conservation and management of World Heritage properties since 2017. The Expert Workshop also connects to a resolution by ICOMOS General Assembly in 2023, to advocate for the recognition of interconnections between culture and nature in the OUV of World Heritage sites. ICOMOS board has been requested to collaborate with other Advisory Bodies and the Indigenous Forum in order to develop options for changes to the criteria for the assessment of OUV that would address this issue for the consideration of the World Heritage Committee.

More specifically, the aim of the Expert Workshop is to raise awareness about the concerns of Indigenous Peoples regarding the nature/culture divide in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the lack of recognition, respect and protection for the rights of Indigenous Peoples, their heritage and their traditional role as custodians in many World Heritage sites.

In summary, the main key findings dealing with the fact of the current situation are Indigenous Peoples rights to their cultures, livelihoods, lands, territories and resources continue to be violated in connection with World Heritage properties. Some progress has been made by all actors to prevent these violations connected with the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, but they have been insufficient, ineffective and inconsistent. Many States Parties continue to inadequately give effect to free prior informed consent in their engagements with Indigenous Peoples around World Heritage properties despite the provisions in the *Operational Guidelines* requiring State Parties to obtain FPIC. Articles 1 and 2 of the World Heritage Convention do not adequately provide for indigenous people's relationships with their cultural and natural heritage. Some of the recommendations from the Expert Workshop with the main headings, with background, justification, references and further clauses in the full report will include:

1. Refinement. Refine the interpretation of OUV so that it is respectful of Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and consistent with the international community's commitment to the protection of cultural diversity.
2. Abolish the nature/culture divide in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention going forward. Ensure that the implementation of the World Heritage Convention is consistent with the human rights based approach.
3. Ensure that the indigenous people's right to free prior informed consent and informed consent is operationalised in the processes of the World Heritage Convention in a systematic and consistent manner, in accordance with the international standards and obligations.
4. Ensure the direct and meaningful participation in Indigenous Peoples and in all World Heritage Convention processes affecting Indigenous Peoples.
5. Establish grievance and redress mechanisms at the UNESCO World Heritage Committee level to help remedy injustices suffered by Indigenous Peoples in World Heritage sites and World Heritage processes.
6. Develop capacity-building programmes to support the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in World Heritage processes and increase understanding of indigenous people's status, rights and heritage within the World Heritage system.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you very much for this detailed presentation on the work accomplished.

I would like to know whether there are any comments on the agenda item. I see none. Let's. Sorry.

Viet Nam, you have the floor, to be followed by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Mr Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I wish to thank the Chairperson, His Excellency Vishal Sharma, and the Government of India for the warm hospitality and excellent organization. It is an honour for Viet Nam to serve as a member of the Committee for the second time, and we thank the States Parties for the wholehearted support. Viet Nam commends the World Heritage Centre for its high-quality report, hard work and professionalism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Viet Nameese people are mourning and remembering with great sadness of our late top leader, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, I wish to emphasize his insightful thoughts about culture as the spiritual foundation of the society, the goal and internal strength for national development. With this in mind, Viet Nam is firmly committed to the World Heritage Convention, including effective cooperation with the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies. We have made efforts to mainstream the spirit of the Convention into Viet Nameese laws, a ten-year national target programme on cultural and heritage development and a revised law on cultural heritage are submitted for the National Assembly's approval this year. We have well preserved and promoted the values of eight World Heritage sites in Viet Nam, where local communities have a crucial role to play.

Mr Chairperson,

We welcome the good work of the Open-ended Working Group established in 2023. It is necessary to ensure a better regional representation of sites, balanced between preservation, development and sustainable tourism, and effective implementation of Priority Africa, gender equality, SIDS, youth through enhanced knowledge exchange, capacity-building and cooperation. In these endeavours, Viet Nam is willing to contribute to the World Heritage Fund and ready to join hands with other States Parties of the Asia-Pacific and the whole international community to harness the power of heritage for peace, sustainable development and inspiration for the future.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

We have heard the passing away of your leader, and please accept our humble condolences on that solemn occasion, Excellency.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I now give the floor to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to be followed by Belgium. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

And as I am taking the floor for the first time in the plenary, I would like to thank India for the organization of this session, and you can count on our full cooperation under your Presidency.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks the Secretariat for all the activities undertaken in the implementation of the Convention, despite the difficulties and the lack in financial and human resources. We take note that the need for capacity-building is increasing, notably in Africa and in Small Island Developing States, which are UNESCO's priorities, as well as in all the regions, Latin America and the Caribbean, Arab region and Asia.

The Chairperson:

Can you please speak near the mic? Thank you.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Okay. It's fine. It's better? Yes?

We welcome the activities implemented in Latin America and Caribbean region, and we take this opportunity to emphasise the need to analyse the gap in the World Heritage List for natural heritage in the region and the growing importance of raising awareness and for updating public policies for the conservation of the properties, including among youth, indigenous people, civil society, and enhancing their role in the protection of the World Heritage in the region. We thank all the donors who contribute to make the implementation of the Convention more effective, and encourage the collaborative efforts through partnerships and also which align several SDGs. I refer here to paragraph 86 of the document, about the Resilient Reefs Initiative, led by a private public consortium including UNESCO, focusing on building local capacity to address climate change impacts in four World Heritage listed coral

reefs, in Australia, in Belize, in Palau and New Caledonia. This is a key example for building strategies tailored for each site in the conservation of the World Heritage.

Mr Chair,

Having said that, paragraphs 115 until 119 under Key Challenges and the Way Forward part are alarming. On the challenges faced by the World Heritage Centre and the Convention itself, and we heard also the Secretariat speaking about the sustainability of the action and of the Centre, especially in conservation and protection of the site as climate change impact on the properties, the overtourism, the conflicts. And we would like to consider at this session to request to increase the budget of the Centre during the preparation of the 43 C/5 by the Director-General. And also, we would like to see maybe more flexibility for the Centre to allow the fundraising activities to help all the activities needed in all the regions. Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I will now ask the Director to read the names of the Member States that have raised their nameplates. And after you hear your name, please lower your name plates.

Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following Committee members will take the floor, in the order I'm reading the names Belgium, Argentina, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Jamaica, Türkiye, Qatar, Bulgaria, Rwanda, India and Greece, and then Ukraine. Thank you. And they will be followed by a States Parties Observer: Angola, the USA, Ireland, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Pakistan, Colombia, and Thailand.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Belgium, you have the floor, to be followed by Argentina.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, Monsieur, pour nous accorder la parole.

Notre Délégation est composée, à part moi-même, d'experts en patrimoine de nos trois régions, la Flandre, la Wallonie et Bruxelles Capitale. Et nous vous félicitons, M. le Président, de votre élection.

Nous remercions le Centre pour un rapport détaillé et bien lisible qui reflète des nombreuses activités et on ne peut que le féliciter. De nombreuses d'entre elles visent notamment au renforcement des capacités, ce qui est également apprécié dans ce domaine.

Nous souhaiterions soumettre à la réflexion quelques propositions concernant les synergies, comme notamment avec les autres conventions et programmes de l'UNESCO. Dans un monde où les conflits et les catastrophes naturelles ou humaines se multiplient et impactent de plus en plus le patrimoine mondial, on devrait encourager plus de synergies avec la Convention de 1954 et ses protocoles additionnels. La complémentarité entre les deux Conventions est une évidence et des synergies ne pourrait qu'être positives pour les États parties et pour le patrimoine. En outre, dans un contexte où nous souhaitons d'inscrire davantage, plus de sites naturels afin d'avoir une meilleure représentativité géographique sur la Liste du patrimoine, nous pensons qu'une synergie avec le Programme sur l'Homme et biosphère devraient également être explorée. La Belgique vient notamment de conclure un partenariat de 4 millions d'euros avec l'UNESCO pour le parc Yangambi en République démocratique du Congo. Et la cohésion entre la population locale et la préservation de la biodiversité sont prioritaires. Cette cohésion est un défi que nous rencontrons dans la gestion de beaucoup de sites inscrits sur la Liste. Les Forums des gestionnaires et des jeunes sont des initiatives importantes et intéressantes, mais qui impliquent un nombre limité de participants. Nous souhaiterions encourager d'examiner des moyens d'impliquer un public plus large.

Nous exprimons également notre inquiétude par rapport à certains défis exprimés dans le rapport, comme notamment la capacité du Centre pour faire face à une charge de travail qui augmente incessamment. Dans ce cadre, le soutien au Centre peut également prendre la forme de la mise à disposition des stagiaires, comme cela se fait par le biais des bourses, comme par exemple du Gouvernement de Wallonie. Cela apporte une aide au Centre du patrimoine mondial tout en permettant à des jeunes de percevoir des enjeux et défis du patrimoine. Beaucoup d'autres défis auxquels la conservation du patrimoine mondial fait face sont traités dans le Groupe de travail à composition non limitée. Nous remercions le Centre pour mettre tout en œuvre pour faciliter ces travaux afin d'aboutir à des solutions durables, notamment pour ce qui concerne la simplification des procédures, la vitalité financière du Centre, une représentativité plus équilibrée sur la Liste et bien d'autres défis. Notre Délégation confirme sa détermination de rester fortement impliquée dans ces travaux.

Pour conclure, M. le Président, nous tenons à rendre hommage à la mémoire de l'artiste et graphiste belge Michel Olyff, le concepteur de l'emblème du patrimoine mondial, décédé en novembre dernier. Adopté quelques années après l'entrée en vigueur de la Convention de 1962. Le bien-known logotype du patrimoine mondial est aujourd'hui arboré sur 1 129 sites exceptionnels à travers le monde entier. Son losange central symbolise les résultats de la compétence humaine logée dans un cercle protecteur représentant les cadeaux de la nature sur le globe terrestre. La Belgique est reconnaissante de ce créateur qui a contribué à la visibilité du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, I request you to please keep your interventions to the time limit. Three minutes is roughly 300 words. I now give the floor to Argentina, to be followed by Italy.

You have the floor, sir.

La Délégation de l'Argentine :

Merci M. le Président.

Je vous demande seulement si, une question technique, si je peux m'exprimer en espagnol, où l'interprétation est seulement passive ? Bon, sinon je continue en français.

Et je voudrais profiter de cette opportunité pour féliciter, comme c'est la première fois que je prends la parole, pour féliciter le Gouvernement de l'Inde pour la réception et pour l'organisation de cet événement. Pour vous féliciter à vous, M. le Président, pour votre élection.

Et je voudrais faire un petit commentaire sur le rapport que nous a fourni le Centre du patrimoine mondial. Il n'a pas mentionné très, très, très fort l'aide de chacune des personnes qui intègrent le Centre. Sans l'activité humaine, nous ne sommes personne, et nous trouvons tout le temps entre les employés, les membres du Centre, du Comité, des personnes qui nous aident. Et la capacité c'est ça : c'est parler, c'est avoir un contact humain.

Et je veux vous remercier, M. le Président, et le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial, pour l'aide permanente de votre équipe dans chaque question que nous devons suivre pour inscrire nos biens et pour solutionner les problèmes liés au patrimoine mondial de chaque pays.

Merci, Monsieur.

The Chairperson:

I will give the floor to the Director of the WHC to respond to the question on Spanish language, which he had already mentioned in the morning but, nevertheless, please mention it once more.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

C'est juste pour rassurer M. le Délégué de l'Argentine, que l'interprétation en espagnol est disponible tout au long de la session.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Director of WHC for your clarification.

I now give the floor to Italy, to be followed by Japan. Italy, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

And first of all, allow me to congratulate you once again for your election and to thank India for this exquisite and wonderful hospitality. I would like to make a short statement on behalf of Italy, followed, with your permission by a statement on behalf of several countries.

We thank the World Heritage Centre for this comprehensive report on the activities carried out since the last session of the Committee, and we commend it for the results achieved, we praise all the initiative meant to ensure the sustainable management and protection of the Outstanding Universal Values of World Heritage properties, and we continue to believe in particular in the value of capacity-building activities. Italy is proud to have hosted the Naples Conference on Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century and we thank the World Heritage Centre for its support and active participation. We are also glad to have supported the third cycle of Periodic Reporting in Europe and North America and other local activities.

We believe it is particularly important to safeguard World Heritage in the face of ongoing armed conflicts and natural disasters. At this regard, we comment the initiatives carried out by the World Heritage Centre in Ukraine and Libya.

Mr Chair,

Please allow me now to deliver a statement on behalf of 46 countries in connection to the comprehensive report of the World Heritage Centre, with the specific reference to information on its activities in Ukraine. Since the start of Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable full-scale invasion of Ukraine, UNESCO has verified damages to 412 cultural sites in Ukraine, including World Heritage sites in Odesa and L'viv. Odesa in particular continues to be the target of horrific attacks, resulting in the destruction of civilian sites, in addition to the appalling civilian casualties, and a number of historical and cultural buildings have been severely damaged by Russia's attacks, including the Archaeological Museum, the Maritime Museum, the Literature Museum, as well as the Transfiguration Cathedral and the first and foremost orthodox church in the city. Russian Federation has consistently discredited UNESCO's repeated appeals to cease these attacks and safeguard the cultural heritage and World Heritage sites, going against the value of the Organization as well as the 1972 Convention. We recall that Article 6 of the World Heritage Convention calls on States Parties not to take any deliberate measures which might damage directly or indirectly the cultural and natural heritage as defined by the Convention itself. We believe that such obligation lies at the very core of UNESCO's values and objectives. Such decisions include the inscription of sites in Kyiv, Odesa and L'viv on the List of World Heritage in Danger, which we commend and which we hope will mobilize even greater support for their protection. We also commend UNESCO's emergency response to Ukraine, in line with the mandate of the Organization. We finally call upon the Russian Federation once again to immediately cease all hostilities against Ukraine, to unconditionally withdraw.

The Chairperson:

Please, please, no political statements. Please conclude, you've already crossed your time.

The Delegation of Italy:

Okay. The statement was delivered on behalf of the following countries.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you. Now I give the floor to Japan, to be followed by Mexico. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Government of India for hosting the World Heritage Committee with warm hospitality, and wish you, the Chair, all the best and the successful organization of the meeting. Rest assured; you have our Delegation's full support.

For this agenda item, we would like to express our appreciation for the activities of the World Heritage Centre, as was just explained by the Director of the Centre. With regard to its global priorities, namely Africa and gender equality, and its priority target groups, namely SIDS and youths, those are exactly the areas which Japan also attaches great importance. Now, with your indulgence, Mr Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to mention three major priority items for our future contribution to the World Heritage Convention.

First of all, Africa. Since we would like to say more about our activities in Africa in Item 5.3 later, let me just touch upon one project. In Zanzibar, Tanzania, we carried out an emergency rehabilitation of Stone Town, and support capacity-building training for management.

The second point is SIDS. Let me touch upon some of our concrete activities for this in the area of tourism and disaster relief. Japan supports the capacity-building activities through the promotion of sustainable tourism in collaboration with World Heritage and Sustainable Development Programme of the World Heritage Centre. We are also making a contribution to strengthen disaster response capacity in East Rennell of Solomon Islands, a World Heritage site in Danger, by incorporating participatory resource management techniques. We highly expect that our activities in African region and States countries will contribute to make the World Heritage List more balanced and represented.

Finally, the mitigation of the impact caused by natural disasters. Japan is supporting a UNESCO project designed to introduce the early warning system for natural disasters in Africa, making use of advanced technologies. This is a project in natural science sector of UNESCO. We could utilize this technology for the protection of World Heritage. We should be better prepared to deal with natural disasters.

Furthermore, Japan has decided to initiate two programmes in this field this year. One is to bridge Japanese and UNESCO IOC's expertise on geohazard early warning system to support Pacific and Caribbean seas, and the other is to secure emergency fund to swiftly mobilize experts upon the occurrence of a disaster. All these activities are part of our JFIT programme in various sectors of UNESCO and should be useful to support conservation and management of heritage sites in the world, in line with the framework of sustainable development.

Mr Chair, Japan will continue its support and cooperation for implementation of World Heritage Convention in various ways, fully keeping in mind UNESCO's priority areas and its unique multisectoral mandate.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Excellency, I now give the floor to Mexico, to be followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

Chair, I wish to thank you and the Government of India for the hospitality they have provided and the excellent organization of this session of the Committee. I also wish to thank all of the members of the Secretariat, represented by Mr Ottone and Mr Eloundou, for all of the excellent work undertaken. Mexico wishes to reiterate its support to the World Heritage Centre, and we recognize the work that has been undertaken to promote its mandate and to ensure the conservation of World Heritage sites. We are particularly thankful for the close collaboration with my country, Mexico, and Latin America as a whole, and we reiterate our readiness to continue to work with the Latin America and Caribbean region on the implementation of the Convention. I have three points to make here.

First, I'd like to congratulate the work that's been done with Indigenous Peoples.

Secondly, I wish to appreciate the support provided for the workshop held in Oaxaca in Mexico in June this year for World Heritage site managers, which was supported by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Third, I wish to welcome the reference to Berne III Conference on Synergies with Biodiversity-related Conventions in collaboration with the UNDP, which was co-chaired by Sweden and Mexico.

Lastly, Chair, I wish to appreciate the generous support provided by Spain to ensure interpretation into and from Spanish.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mexico. I now give the floor to the Republic of Korea, followed by Jamaica.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

First of all, I would like to congratulate and thank India for successfully organizing this session and for the warm hospitality. I also extend my congratulations to you on assuming the chairmanship of this session. Under your able leadership, I am sure that the 46th WHC will be where we all reaffirm our commitment to safeguard our heritages. I would like to express our gratitude to the World Heritage Centre and Mr Lazare for their comprehensive report on the Centre's activities and the implementation of the World Heritage Committee's decisions. Taking this opportunity, the Republic of Korea reaffirms its commitment to supporting the World Heritage Centre in our joint endeavour to protect our World Heritage.

The Republic of Korea welcomes the active integration of the Global Biodiversity Framework within the realm of World Heritage. We also wish to highlight the importance of addressing climate change, as it poses a significant threat to the conservation of diverse World Heritage sites. This underscores the necessity of collaboration with global initiatives on climate change, such as those led by the UNFCCC.

The Republic of Korea also warmly welcomes the successful organization of the Naples Conference, which encourages a holistic approach to both tangible and intangible heritages, including natural heritage, in line with the desirable direction guided by MONDIACULT 2022, as described in the action plan titled The Spirit of Naples. It is expected that the integrated perspective encompassing the two crucial heritage conventions will serve as a landmark for boosting human and community-centred heritage programmes for the sustainable future.

Lastly, Korea believes that respecting the diverse values held by local and international stakeholders for World Heritage properties is essential in preventing potential conflicts and promoting heritage conservation. In this regard, in March this year, in collaboration with experts of e-commerce and ICCROM, we held a meeting to discuss the participatory approaches to World Heritage, to share the outcomes of this meeting with the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention, we have organized a side event on July 24, Wednesday, at 1:00 pm at the Side Event Room 4. We look forward to your participation.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Jamaica, to be followed by Türkiye.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you. Chair.

And as Jamaica is taking the floor for the first time, we want to express our thanks to the Government of India for welcoming us so warmly and for our opening ceremony yesterday, we thoroughly enjoyed that. And we thank you very much for the efforts and the actions toward welcoming us. Thank you.

Jamaica thanks the Secretariat for the comprehensive report that has been presented. We have noted the actions of the World Heritage Centre in the work towards capacity-building, the actions toward emergency situations, and building resilience in the face of negative impacts of extreme weather events. The Caribbean is extremely vulnerable to these impacts, with the recent example of Hurricane Beryl impacting Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and Jamaica in early July. We thank the Centre for its increasing efforts to engage the Caribbean states and look forward to more capacity-building activities, in particular to address gaps in areas of resilience among our heritage resources, including within Caribbean urban centres.

We also note the disparity in geographical distribution of inscribed properties and the imbalances represents. In this regard, we welcome the work of the Open-ended Working Group and reiterate our commitment to same.

Jamaica was pleased to have been a part of the Conference on Cultural Heritage in the 21st Century, which took place in November 2023, in Naples, Italy. Synergies among other conventions and recommendations, such as the underwater cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage and historic urban landscapes is appreciated. We also look forward to the increased collaborations focused on natural heritage, such as those which resulted in the webinars focused on the avian flu.

We too note with concern the financial and human constraints and its impacts on the work of the Centre and how States Parties can be supported. We are hopeful that this can be addressed through the 43 C/5, and we take this opportunity again to reiterate Jamaica's commitment to the work of the World Heritage Convention and its implementation.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Türkiye, to be followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Let me begin by taking this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair and our thanks to India for the organization of this Committee meeting and for the warm hospitality. We believe that we will have a successful meeting under your leadership. We would like to thank the Director of the World Heritage Centre for presenting this comprehensive report on the activities in implementing the Committee's decisions.

As a newly elected member, Türkiye is committed to further strengthening the role of the World Heritage Convention, which served as an inspiration for the protection and preservation of tangible, natural and cultural treasures in the world. Recognizing the imperative of safeguarding these invaluable assets, Türkiye became a Party to the Convention in 1983. As a long-standing State Party to the Convention, we have tirelessly endeavoured to maintain the principles of the Convention. Our commitment is also coming out from our dedication to preserving the essence of our common cultural identity for future generations. During our tenure on the Committee, we will do our utmost to uphold our responsibilities for the better implementation of the Convention.

A priority during our membership will be achieving a more balanced World Heritage List. In this regard, we encourage nominations from non-represented and under-represented countries, bearing in mind the maintenance of the quality and the high standards of the World Heritage List. Acknowledging the Committee's vital work in safeguarding global cultural heritage, we welcome the ongoing initiatives in terms of capacity-building and the framework of the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy, and highly appreciate the Secretariat's activities to support States Parties lacking World Heritage properties in training their local experts and providing technical support by developing Tentative Lists.

We would like to particularly emphasise the significance of transparency, improvement of dialogue, providing early advice to States Parties and strengthening efforts to ensure better regional representation, taking into consideration the divergence of expertise, views based on profession, geographical and cultural perspectives. Türkiye believes in the importance of increasing dialogue between States Parties and the Advisory Bodies, and the World Heritage Centre at different stages of the nomination process, and in evaluations of the state of conservation of listed properties.

In addition, we also agree that the preliminary evaluation is significant in terms of enabling rich and constructive exchanges of views on the nominated strategies and helps to prepare more effective and robust nominated dossiers.

We appreciate works carried out by the Open-ended Working Group, and this was established at the 45th World Heritage Committee, and we actively participated in these meetings. We believe the Working Group has so far been fruitful in terms of discussions.

The Chairperson:

Please conclude.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

After the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee, Türkiye will continue to contribute to the Working Group, and we hope the work of the working group will be concluded by the 47th World Heritage Committee.

Distinguished participants, we are ready to strive to further strengthen the role of the World Heritage Convention and provide our expertise to help achieve the objectives of the Member States of UNESCO.

Thank you, Chairperson, and I wish for a fruitful discussion.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would request States Parties to kindly restrict themselves to the allotted time limit, which is three minutes per State Party, and that is approximately 300 words. Thank you. I now give the floor to Qatar, to be followed by Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of India for providing the opportunity for the World Heritage Committee to meet under such excellent organizational conditions. And we will thank the Secretariat for its report and the Advisory Bodies for their efforts.

Qatar, a State Member of the World Heritage Committee, contributed to achieving the goals of the Convention for the Protection of the World Heritage, and to enhance the implementation mechanisms of the Sustainable Development Goals. This effort not only focuses on heritage, culture and education, but also on empowering and enhancing the capacities of actors in these humanitarian sectors. Our aim is to promote peace and stability with all partners across the globe.

Our Group, our Arab region, has witnessed many crises that directly affect human cultural heritage. As the world is witnessing, there are many heritage sites affected by the aggression on the Gaza Strip. It is crucial that the international community takes decisive action to protect heritage sites worldwide.

Since joining the Convention for the protection of the World Heritage, the State of Qatar has supported all efforts of the World Heritage Centre and the work of the Committee, particularly in facing contemporary challenges such as climate change and achieving the SDGs. The commitment was demonstrated by the launch of Emergency Heritage Protection Fund in Doha during the 2014 World Heritage Committee meeting.

Qatar Museum actively promotes the values and objectives of the World Heritage Convention by highlighting the archaeological site of Al Zubarah as a global cultural platform. The site emphasizes the role of cultural heritage in achieving development goals, given its historical significance dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries. It conveys the values of coexistence, tolerance, and acceptance of diverse cultures to future generations to Qatar.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today more than ever, we seek to support efforts to enhance UNESCO's international mechanism for protecting World Heritage, especially in light of the unfortunate numerous armed conflicts affecting humanity, as well as natural disasters and climate change. Qatar has not only developed national policies for the professional management of heritage sites according to the standards of the World Heritage Convention.

The Chairperson:

Please conclude.

The Delegation of Qatar:

And thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I request Member States to please restrict their interventions to three minutes.

I now give the floor to Bulgaria, to be followed by Rwanda.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

The Chair of the World Heritage Committee, the Director of the World Heritage Centre, your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to assure you that you can count on the Bulgarian Delegation to be part of every constructive dialogue and decision. We would like to thank India for its warm hospitality of this inspirational session. Bulgaria would also like to thank the Director of the World Heritage Centre for the report submitted and his activities, and on the implementation of the Committee's decisions. The Bulgarian Delegation notes with appreciation the activities carried out in the various regions of the world, with particular attention paid to UNESCO priorities such as Africa, Gender Equality, Youth and Small Island Developing States.

Last year has been challenging for the implementation of the decisions of the extended sessions, and we would like to congratulate the Centre and the Advisory Bodies for their support to States Parties in different regions, including to Bulgaria, for which we are indeed very grateful.

Last year we have expanded our regional cooperation through different initiatives, including a joint nomination. We will also submit a new nomination by September this year.

The multidisciplinary approach and the promotion of synergy between cultural conventions are a priority for Bulgaria, and we are pleased to see that strong collaboration on biodiversity and heritage.

Our country welcomes the relevance of the efforts of the World Heritage Centre in pursuing sustainable and responsible development goals, and in encouraging the inscription of sites from countries that are not represented on the World Heritage List to make them more equitable, credible and representative.

Bulgaria considers that new technologies should be used in sustainable and responsible manner to help preserve and protect the World Heritage, and we would like to express our appreciation to all countries that have contributed to the World Heritage Map platform and to congratulate the Centre for this initiative. Bulgaria will continue to contribute to this platform. In fact, right now, the Cultural Heritage Digital Platform is one of the very important issues in Bulgaria.

At a time when civilization seems to have lost its focus and vision for the future, the knowledge of our cultural history, of our cultural and natural heritage, can be for us that anchor that calms the storms inside ourselves down and gives us the strength to continue forward.

I thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Rwanda, followed by India.

La Déléation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Rwanda tient à vous féliciter, M. le Président, pour votre nomination en tant que Président de la 46^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial. Vous pouvez compter sur notre pleine coopération durant votre mandat.

En ce qui concerne le rapport d'activité du Centre du patrimoine mondial, nous remercions le Directeur du Centre pour sa présentation claire et détaillée des activités du Centre depuis notre dernière rencontre à Riyad. Nous félicitons le Secrétariat pour les activités entreprises et pour le soutien apporté aux États parties malgré les contraintes budgétaires, et remercions également les pays donateurs.

Le Rwanda soutient les actions entreprises par le Centre, particulièrement celles qui visent à accompagner et à soutenir les États parties d'Afrique qui n'ont aucun site inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial dans le cadre des priorités globales de l'UNESCO et des groupes cibles prioritaires. Pour rappel, lors de la 45^e session élargie du Comité tenue à Riyad, le Rwanda, grâce aux efforts conjugués de divers partenaires, dont le Centre, le Fonds pour le patrimoine mondial africain, le Japon et d'autres, est sorti de la liste des douze pays africains n'ayant aucun site inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

M. le Président,

Nous tenons à remercier le Secrétariat pour l'organisation des réunions du groupe de travail à composition non limitée, établi par la 45^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial, dont le mandat couvre, entre autres, la représentation équitable sur la Liste. M. le Président, ce matin même, la Directrice générale a mentionné que 20 % des nominations cette année proviennent du continent africain. C'est inédit et cela témoigne des efforts communs au niveau africain et de la collaboration accrue avec le Secrétariat et les organes d'évaluation.

Malheureusement, et c'est un fait, ce pourcentage, ces avancées, ces améliorations vont subir un recul considérable avec la mise en place de l'analyse préliminaire, qui sera une charge supplémentaire pour un nombre important d'États parties, et plus précisément des États sous ou non-représentés sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Nous plaçons pour une réflexion approfondie sur l'implémentation et le caractère obligatoire de cette analyse préliminaire.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to India, to be followed by Greece.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Since India is taking the floor for the first time, my Ministry and the Archaeological Survey of India take this opportunity to welcome all the Distinguished Excellencies and Delegates present in this hall.

Mr Chair, we've read the report and the exhaustive presentation made by the Director of World Heritage Centre, and we commend their untiring initiatives taken by them over the last one year. Commenting within the time frame of three minutes is quite inadequate, so I'll try to be brief. At the outset, India commended the remarkable capacity-building initiatives undertaken by the World Heritage Centre over the past year. These efforts are not only important in safeguarding the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage properties, but also in building a global network of empowered stakeholders who are well equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and resources. The Mentorship Programme for the African Heritage Professionals stands out as a significant achievement, reflecting a profound commitment to enhancing the capacities of the African experts. This initiative, alongside the targeted training for the under-represented African States Parties, exemplifies a thoughtful strategy towards inclusive and sustainable heritage conservation. Additionally, the World Heritage Centre's diverse and inclusive collaborations over the past year, particularly with youth, indigenous people and women, have significantly contributed to the global heritage conservation movement. This dedication to working with a broad range of stakeholders is truly inspiring and sets a high standard for future initiatives.

We extend our appreciation to the World Heritage Centre for its impactful contribution to the sustainable management and protection of the World Heritage worldwide.

However, Mr Chair, the challenges are enormous, and we have also noted them with great concern. For example, it was presented that the workload of the Secretariat is increasing constantly, they're facing situations in the long term due to the lack of capacity. Mr Chair, another important point that was raised by the Director of the World Heritage Centre, that the time has come for the reflection on the synergies with other conventions and programmes. This is important from India's point of view, wherein the tangible and intangible overlap significantly at many of our living World Heritage properties. Similarly, challenges such as climate change, conflict, urbanisation, mass tourism are also worrying and impacting many World Heritage properties across the world. Not only that, this needs technical and scientific interventions, but there needs to be an effective management involving local communities. I think at this moment we will stop with our comments here because my comments are fairly long.

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving India the floor.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Greece to be followed by Ukraine.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Chair.

Let me from the outset, extend Greece's warm congratulations to the President of the Committee, His Excellency Ambassador Vishal Sharma, and the government of this big country and great nation for the impeccable hospitality they have offered us. I would like also to thank the Secretariat for the work accomplished in view of the 46th World Heritage Committee. We thank as well for the comprehensive and, I would say, impressive report on the Centre's activities undertaken in very demanding circumstances and under well-known budgetary constraints.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Budget and capacity-building have always been pressing challenges as far as the full implementation of the Convention is concerned. As we all know, an Open-ended Working Group has been established with the aim to deal, among other issues, with these particularly important questions. The work of this group is still in progress. We expect that the outcome of this procedure will contribute substantially and effectively to meet these challenges in a sustainable manner.

It is through this angle that we have considered with due attention the proposed amendment under this item. In view of the examination of the draft decision, we feel that it would be advisable, I would say important, to receive some clarifications in order to better understand the proposed texts. Actually, I have three questions that we feel that need some answers so that we understand fully the importance of the amendment presented.

- Is there something really new in relations with the challenges that the World Heritage Committee has been faced with?
- Are there any new budgetary and/or human resources constraints affecting the work of the Centre?
- And, one particularly important question, do we want at this stage the Committee to request the DG to take action while the Open-ended Working Group has not yet concluded its work?

These are questions that I am sure that we are going to deal after a while.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Those questions were for the Secretariat. Excellency, is that correct?

The Delegation of Greece:

I would say these are questions if the Secretary would like to answer. But, it also goes for the author of the amendments presented throughout. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

I now give the floor to Ukraine, to be followed by Kazakhstan.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Dear colleagues, your Excellencies, Esteemed Delegates, Honoured Chairman,

On behalf of Ukraine, we express our profound gratitude for the solidarity and support we have received from the international community, particularly from the nations that have spoken today. Regrettably, the reality we face is more harrowing than reported. According to the data received by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, the damage to Ukraine's cultural heritage is twice as extensive as documented by UNESCO. It is critical to underline that such dramatic losses are not confined to direct missile strikes alone. The deliberate destruction of the Kakhovka hydropower plant and the constant explosions in the cities create the sound and blast waves that cause severe damage to ancient buildings and monuments.

We also would like to draw special attention to the Ancient City of Chersonese and its Chora, UNESCO World Heritage site located in the temporary occupied territory of Crimea. This invaluable monument of archaeology, history and culture has been brutally damaged, and illegal construction activities are taking place around it right now. We call for an urgent action to be taken by the Committee in regard to these unacceptable actions of Russian Federation. Ukraine resolutely condemns these actions and calls on the international community to take all necessary actions and measures to stop them.

We urge UNESCO and all Member States to intensify the monitoring of, and documentation of the destructions of Ukraine's cultural heritage, ensure the protection and preservation of cultural assets in temporary occupied territories, call for changes and adaptation of procedures and protocols to such burning challenges worldwide as wars and military conflicts.

Dear colleagues,

We are now in the third year of a full-scale war, a time when it has become unconditionally clear that norms and protocols are falling. Appeals, installations of signs and expressions of concern do not stop missiles. It is high time to reassess the relevance of major guidelines and amend the conditions those States Parties that outrageously violate all laws of humanity. We must ask ourselves, does a full-scale war in the heart of Europe in the 21st century, which has an impact over the whole world, propel us towards development or degradation?

It was mentioned yesterday by the Prime Minister of India, at the inauguration ceremony, that heritage is not a history, it's consciousness. So let us not compromise, and preserve both heritage and conscience by taking just and fair actions and decisions.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Kazakhstan.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Good morning to everyone, *namaste*, Distinguished Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee,

At the outset, the Delegation of Kazakhstan would like to congratulate you on your election as the Chair of this Committee and reiterate our confidence in your able stewardship of our joint work in this session. I would also like to commend the Government and the people of India, as well as all the staff involved in securing our smooth work, on the great arrangements and the wonderful hospitality. I also thank the teams of the UNESCO Secretariat, represented here by the Assistant Director-General for Culture, the World Heritage Centre and its Director, and the Advisory Bodies for their hard work in preparing the meaningful work of this Committee session. We will be brief in our intervention.

I would like to say that Kazakhstan is proud to contribute financial resources to the activities of the World Heritage Centre through its Extrabudgetary Fund, and we look forward to working together with the Secretariat, the Advisory Bodies of the 1972 Convention, fellow members of the Committee and its States Parties to advance the shared goals of safeguarding our common World Heritage.

I thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Observer State Party, Angola. But we will stop at 12:35, wherein I will make an announcement.

Angola, you have the floor.

La Délégation de l'Angola (Observateur) :

M. le Président, M. le Sous-Directeur général pour la Culture, M. le Directeur du patrimoine mondial, Excellences, Messieurs les Ministres, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Remercier pour la chaleur que nous a réservé le Gouvernement de la République de l'Inde dans cette ville hospitalière de New Delhi. Remercier le Directeur du Patrimoine mondial pour son excellent rapport de travail.

La 47^e session de ce Comité débute avec de grandes attentes, surtout après l'an dernier à Riyad où le continent africain a réussi à inscrire un nombre record de sites, contribuant aussi à un meilleur équilibre sur les Listes du patrimoine mondial. En plus d'être un instrument important pour la requalification des zones historiques, la sauvegarde du patrimoine mondial favorise la mobilisation du capital financier et renforce la coopération entre les États sur la base de principes d'horizontalité dans la relation entre les peuples. C'est dans cet esprit que l'Angola reste engagé dans la préservation de son unique site, Mbanza Kongo, avec le support du patrimoine mondial. L'Angola est engagé dans l'inscription des nouveaux sites tels que celui du Corridor du Kwanza, itinéraire culturel, Tchitundu-Hulu, site archéologique du Cuito Cuanavale, site des Mémoires pour la libération de l'Afrique australe, figuraient également sur la Liste indicative de l'Angola des autres biens patrimoniaux dotés des valeurs exceptionnelles comme les sites potentiels à inscrire. Nous pensons que le débat sur cette question importante constitue une stratégie appropriée pour les implications des jeunes générations en faveur du respect des biens culturels et naturels, permettant aussi des formules durables pour les générations futures.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

Dear colleagues, as you know according to our timetable, we were to hear the outcome of the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum today at 12:35. Due to the fact that some of the youth participants are leaving at lunchtime, I suggest to stop our discussion at this point and resume it at 3:00 pm. When we reconvene, I will ask the Director of the WHC to read out the list of the remaining speakers on this item.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

The following States Parties Observers have requested to take the floor, and I will read their names in the order in which they are going to intervene. The United States of America, Ireland, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Pakistan, Colombia, Thailand, Poland, Brazil, Grenada, Russian Federation and Guinea. Thank you, Chairperson, I hope I did not. And the State of Palestine. So, I'll add the State of.

The Chairperson:

Any other Member State Party.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Ecuador.

The Chairperson:

Observer State Party, that would like to also intervene? You may raise your plate. We see none. Okay.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

MESSAGE FROM THE WORLD HERITAGE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FORUM 2024 // MESSAGE DU FORUM DES JEUNES PROFESSIONNELS SUR LE PATRIMOINE MONDIAL 2024**The Chairperson:**

We have another very important outcome, a declaration of the World Heritage Young Professionals. As you know, it is the practice to have a forum for young professionals as an integral part of the session of the Committee and in the framework of UNESCO's World Heritage Education Programme. The theme of our forum this year was set as World Heritage in the 21st Century: Building Capacities and Exploring Opportunities for Youth. It is customary that the young professionals present a message prepared during the forum, and of which the Committee will take note.

Allow me in this regard, to give the floor first to Mr Ernesto Ramirez Ottone, the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture. Mr Ottone, you have the floor, sir.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture / Le Sous-Directeur général pour la culture :

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Le 15 juillet 2024 a effectivement commencé le Forum des professionnels du patrimoine mondial à Greater Noida. Cette année le forum a eu 50 participants de 31 pays, représentant toutes les régions, notamment des représentants du pays hôte. Ces jeunes de différentes origines sont venus avec la même conviction, qui est de façonner un avenir meilleur pour notre patrimoine. Au cours des huit derniers jours, ils ont exploré différents sujets liés au thème : Le patrimoine mondial au XXI^e siècle – renforcer les capacités et explorer les opportunités pour les jeunes. Ils ont visité des sites du patrimoine mondial, participé à de multiples discussions, conférences, ateliers, animés par des collègues et plusieurs experts de renom. Ils ont approfondi divers concepts, dont notamment les technologies innovantes pour la promotion du patrimoine mondial, le tourisme durable, la compréhension de l'impact du changement climatique, ou encore l'engagement des communautés. Les résultats du travail et les recommandations des jeunes professionnels ont été formulés dans un document final qu'ils ont rédigé tous ensemble sous la forme d'une déclaration. Avant de donner la parole aux professionnels qui vont communiquer leur message, démontrant leurs engagements en faveur de la protection et de la conservation du patrimoine mondial, je vous invite à regarder la vidéo qui monte l'expérience enrichissante vécue par ces jeunes durant ces huit derniers jours.

Ainsi nous invitons les jeunes professionnels pour présenter leur déclaration. Merci.

World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2024:

[first speaker] We, the participants of UNESCO World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2024 would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Chairperson of 46th session of the World Heritage Committee and to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. We are grateful to the Government of India, the Ministry of Culture, the Archaeological Survey of India for hosting the forum. Our transformative time in India was enriched by the invaluable insights of the experts, facilitators, site managers who shared their experience, knowledge and passion. Through our exchanges, in the last few days, we explored critical challenges of World Heritage, including participatory engagement with communities, sustainable tourism, climate change and its impact, and integration of innovative technologies.

We address you as the representatives of the future leaders of World Heritage, and this is what matters to us. We honour the sovereignty, right, land, knowledges of indigenous people and local communities who will continue to inhabit and steward World Heritage sites. As young professionals, we recognize that World Heritage conservation depends also on the communities within or near the sites. We commit to reinforcing spaces for meaningful dialogue with local communities that enable a participatory approach for learning, and collaborative documentation towards revitalization of local and indigenous knowledges. We therefore urge the responsible Committee members, States Parties and UNESCO to support community engagement by encouraging youth-led initiatives and social inclusion as drivers for sustainable World Heritage management. Community participation strengthens protection, longevity and continuity. Therefore, we commit to engaging with communities to preserve our outstanding value for posterity.

We recognize the importance of sustainable tourism and that it must be incorporated in national regulation, tailored to our specific needs of World Heritage sites. We highlight the significance of traditional knowledge of communities living in and around World Heritage sites, in the formulation of sustainable tourism policy as an integral component of management plan, ensuring they can be both economically and culturally beneficial. We believe that sustainable tourism starts with accountability, prioritizing people, communities and preservation of their heritage. To achieve this, we recommend fostering strong partnership between government, NGOs, the private sector and educational institutions. Accordingly, we advocate for empowering young people with training and educational opportunities in heritage management and sustainable tourism practices. We encourage stakeholders to cooperate on developing a common inventory of best practices for sustainable tourism that is accessible to us.

[second speaker] We call upon all States Parties to take immediate and comprehensive action to recognise the need for enhanced, for enhanced collaboration and robust implementation of climate policies at all levels. We propose a multidisciplinary approach empowering local communities through education and knowledge and global knowledge sharing network work to ensure effective management. We urge the use of methods which will prioritise climate resilience, climate adaptation and utilisation of sustainable resources. Continuous risk assessment and monitoring of climate impacts through innovative technologies will encourage wider reach and rapid action for the protection of World Heritage. Such unified actions to safeguard our irreplaceable heritage is a critical step in tackling climate change and securing a sustainable future. Innovative technologies have the potential to improve heritage experience through education and entertainment, connecting with local communities while contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

We encourage stakeholders engaged with technologies to consider human rights, ethics and Outstanding Universal Values. Technological approaches should be in close association with traditional techniques and practices to balance the digital with the tangible. Technologies have the power to enhance accessibility and connection to World Heritage, making it more inclusive, facilitating protection, management, disaster resilience and security. The

effective implementation of technologies can benefit from the investment in training, future thinking and the integration of multiple knowledge systems.

Our World Heritage is all of ours, and with that comes a shared responsibility. We have laid before you a blueprint of the future. And we spent, we will spend our lives working to make this vision a reality. This future, however, relies on all of us building a strong foundation. We are the future and now is our time to act.

Dhanyawad. Thank you all. *[applause]*

Le Sous-Directeur général pour la culture :

Au nom de l'UNESCO, nous vous remercions. Et nous vous remercions en tant que jeunes décideurs de demain pour votre participation et pour l'excellent travail durant ce Forum. Nous vous souhaitons le meilleur pour votre future carrière en tant que partenaires du patrimoine et j'espère vous voir travailler au patrimoine dans quelques années. Maintenant, j'invite bien sûr nos collègues qui ont travaillé avec eux pour prendre une photo si vous le permettez.

The Chairperson:

We have managed to end the Young Professionals component ten minutes before schedule. We still have ten minutes in our hand if we can give the floor to the remaining Observer speakers, if there are no objections from the floor. I see no objections. I would now like to give the floor to the US, followed by Ireland. The USA, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the United States of America:

Great, thank you. Distinguished Chairperson, Esteemed Delegates and colleagues,

It's an honour to address, let's see if this is still working, it's an honour to address the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee on behalf of the United States of America. Let me start by expressing our deep gratitude for the tremendous hospitality of the Government of India in hosting this meeting.

The United States remains steadfast in its commitment to preserving the world's cultural and natural heritage. In fact, we are thrilled to be celebrating, this week, the one-year anniversary of the United States full return to UNESCO. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the countries and Permanent Delegations here for your partnership.

Through the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, we support projects around the world. Since 2001, we've supported more than 1250 cultural preservation projects worldwide, including 240 projects at 123 UNESCO World Heritage sites, a number of whom are going to be nominated in this session.

In Ukraine, we remain deeply concerned about the threats to cultural heritage, and we support the statement on Ukraine by the Group of Friends of Ukraine read by Italy.

The United States strongly supports and has prioritized World Heritage related capacity-building through programmes that train heritage professionals in conservation techniques. This is particularly important for underrepresented countries and regions, and we'll continue to emphasize this in our role as co-chair of the Group of Friends of Africa, as well as a member of the Executive Board. The United States remains committed to partnering with you to ensure that our shared heritage is celebrated and preserved for generations to come. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. And I now give the floor to Ireland, to be followed by Azerbaijan.

The Observer Delegation of Ireland:

Thank you Chair for giving us the floor, and congratulations to India for its excellent hosting of this meeting, and the warm Indian welcome extended to all Delegates.

Ireland thanks the World Heritage Centre for the comprehensive report on its activities, which provides a good basis for our present discussion. In the report, we note with appreciation that special attention is paid to UNESCO's two global priorities – Africa and Gender Equality – in all activities of the Secretariat, and as well as to UNESCO's two priority target groups: youth and Small Island Developing States.

As an island nation, Ireland has a strong cultural affinity with small island states and appreciates the unique challenges facing these islands who are on the front line of the climate crisis, and the impact that it has on protection of their rich cultural and natural heritage. Ireland is committed to building a long term, ambitious partnership with our fellow islanders. This is reflected in our second National Strategy for Partnership with SIDS, which was launched in December 2023 together with our SIDS partners. This strategy integrates new areas of partnerships and reflects Ireland's commitment to promoting the World Heritage Convention, to developing new initiatives to support SIDS. In recent months, we have developed a number of initiatives to translate these commitments into tangible actions. By next year, we will have contributed funding of €105,000 to the World Heritage Centre to help implement the Operational Strategy for SIDS through the support for Accelerator Programme 3, which includes capacity-building for identification, conservation and management of cultural and natural heritage. One of our universities in Ireland.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I now give the floor to Azerbaijan to be followed by Armenia, and then we will break. Azerbaijan, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Azerbaijan:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

First of all, I would like to thank the Host Country, India, for the excellent organization of the work of the Committee and the generous hospitality.

As a State Party, Azerbaijan has always been committed to the values and principles of the Convention. Azerbaijan actively supports the programmes and initiatives for the effective conservation and protection of cultural and natural heritage in different parts of the world through Azerbaijan UNESCO Fund and Trust established in 2013. Last year in October, we hosted the first subregional conference of UNESCO Japan Fund and Trust Project to support the Silk Road's World Heritage nomination process, the phase 3. And this year, the Ministry of Culture is in close consultations with the World Heritage Centre to host the second conference of this project. In March this year, the National Commission of Azerbaijan for UNESCO, together with different partners, organized the Conference entitled Study and Preservation of the Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Turkic World from the Perspective of UNESCO.

Capacity-building activities of the World Heritage Centre has vital meaning on all regions. It should be mentioned that such activities are of utmost importance, namely in the context of regions where the cultural heritage is affected by armed conflicts. As a country affected by the destruction of its cultural heritage during the 30 years of occupation by Armenia, were highly aware of the importance of protection and preservation of the cultural heritage in this regard. During the occupation period, Armenia subjected Azerbaijani cultural heritage to large scale destruction, plunder and vandalism. The same fate faced Azerbaijani cultural and historical heritage totally erased and destroyed across the present-day Armenia. Azerbaijan also faces a significant challenge due to the landmine contamination as a result of Armenian military occupation.

Azerbaijan places great emphasis towards the establishment of a balanced, representative and credible World Heritage List, which is a significant challenge. In this regard, we will participate in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Decision **45 COM 11**, and we support the extent of the work of the Group.

The impact of climate change on the World Heritage properties is another matter of concern. The Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage is a big step forward to tackle the negative impacts of climate change on World Heritage sites. As the host of COP 29, Azerbaijan has put climate action at the heart of its national agenda.

Lastly, Mr Chair, Azerbaijan has submitted its candidacy to the World Heritage Committee as a country which proudly and successfully hosted the 43rd session and has considerable potential knowledge and technical capabilities in this field related to conservation and protection of heritage sites. Would appreciate the valuable support of the Member States.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Armenia, you have the floor. And then we break for lunch.

The Observer Delegation of Armenia:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

We thank the Government of India for the warm hospitality and the excellent organisation of the session. Our appreciation to the Director of the World Heritage Centre for the comprehensive report.

Armenia has been a beneficiary of the valuable support of the Centre through the pilot project Management of World Heritage Properties of Religious Interest in Armenia, which assisted in developing comprehensive conservation strategy and guidelines for three World Heritage sites.

We commend the engagement of the Centre and of UNESCO in general, in addressing armed conflict situations that persistently threaten cultural heritage in many parts of the world, including our region. Armenian cultural and religious heritage remains under threat of destruction, appropriation and vandalism in Nagorno-Karabakh. These threats must be duly addressed by international organisations, especially UNESCO and its relevant bodies. In this respect, without entering into polemic, allow me to voice our deep regrets in respect to the spiteful statement by the Delegation of Azerbaijan targeting my country.

The protection and preservation of the common heritage of humankind remain a priority for Armenia. Building on our engagement in the initiative to revive the spirit of Mosul, we are eager to make a meaningful contribution to the effective conservation of cultural heritage by sharing Armenia's experience and vision. Driven by this aspiration, Armenia has decided to submit its candidacy to the World Heritage Committee for the period of 2025-2029.

To conclude, we would like to express our appreciation to the World Heritage Centre for its efforts aimed at strengthening the capacities of Member States and for its programmes in support of the global priorities of UNESCO.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. And, now we break for lunch. We meet at 3:00 pm. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 1:00pm. // La séance a été levée à 13h00.

FIRST DAY
Monday, 22 July 2024
SECOND PLENARY MEETING
3:01 pm – 6:06 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

PREMIER JOUR
Lundi 22 juillet 2024
DEUXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h01 – 18h06
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

I will give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Good afternoon to everyone. Dear Committee members, dear Delegates, we know that some technical problems occurred this morning, notably regarding access to Wi-Fi and sound issues. Please note that the Host Country has taken all the necessary arrangements to fix these issues, and I would like to thank them, really, for working hard during lunchtime.

Thank you, Chairperson.

5A. REPORT OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE ON ITS ACTIVITIES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE'S DECISIONS (Ct'd) // RAPPORT DU CENTRE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL SUR SES ACTIVITÉS ET SUR LA MISE EN ŒUVRE DES DÉCISIONS DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Director.

Dear colleagues,

I hope you all have had a good lunch break. We will now resume our examination of Item 5A, which started in the morning. We have already heard 22 speakers. I will give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to read out the list of the remaining speakers.

Mr Eloundou Assomo, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I will now read the list of the remaining Observer speakers who requested to take the floor. Pakistan, Colombia, Thailand, Poland, Brazil, Grenada, Russian Federation, Guinea, State of Palestine, and Ecuador.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Mr Director.

I now give the floor to Pakistan, to be followed by Colombia.

The Observer Delegation of Pakistan:

Thank you, Chair. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to appreciate the Secretariat for its overall activities, including its operational work and implementation of the World Heritage Committee's decisions.

The World Heritage Convention is one of the most ratified legal instruments in the world, with near universal recognition, and thereby shows the importance of the Committee. We are pleased to see that special attention is being paid to UNESCO's two main global priorities – Africa and Gender Equality – in its overall activities, as well as two priority groups: Youth and Small Island Developing States.

During the reporting period, the World Heritage Centre carried out a successful reactive monitoring mission to the Archaeological Ruins of Moenjodaro in consultation with our provincial and local authorities. Moreover, conservation plans and disaster risk-reduction strategies were also developed for World Heritage properties of Pakistan. These

properties were not immune to frequent climate change related disasters such as August 2022 floods which left more than a third of our country submerged. Lastly, the report states that the World Heritage Centre is developing a Toolkit on Climate Action for World Heritage. We therefore would request the Secretariat to share further information with us about this toolkit. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I now give the floor to Colombia, to be followed by Thailand.

The Observer Delegation of Colombia:

Thank you, Mr Chair. First of all, I wish to thank you and the Government of India for hosting this important session and welcoming us to your wonderful country. I will now proudly continue in Spanish, and for that, all my gratitude to the Kingdom of Spain.

[interpretation from Spanish] The Colombian Delegation commends the World Heritage Centre for all of the activities undertaken, in particular the areas that create synergies between the 1972 and 2003 Conventions in order to improve the management of intangible and movable heritage around the world. There are synergies between these Conventions, which were discussed during the Naples Conference. In Colombia, we are developing initiatives to connect the environment and cultural sectors. For example, the National Park Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta as a World Heritage site, alongside the Cultural and Intangible Representative List of the four Indigenous Peoples of Santa Marta: Arhuaco, Kankuamo, Kogui and Wiwa.

I would also like to particularly thank UNESCO for its participation in COP16, which will take place in the month of October in Cali in Colombia. And I wish to invite all of you to take part in this conference to ensure that we can step up global efforts to protect our biodiversity. We need to set out clear targets to protect our cultural heritage and continue to move towards the mobilisation of resources to ensure the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Framework. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I now give the floor to Thailand, to be followed by Poland.

The Observer Delegation of Thailand:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mr Chairperson, dear Committee members,

At the outset, allow us to express our gratitude to the Government of the Republic of India for hosting this meeting and for the warm hospitality extended to us. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr Chair, the Ambassador Sharma, on assuming the presidency of this 46th session. We also wish to thank the Secretariat for the comprehensive report presented under this item.

Mr Chairperson,

Thailand was member of the World Heritage Committee during 2019-2023, and during this mandate, we have been working with Committee members, States Parties and the Secretariat to support a balanced, representative and credible List of the World Heritage. In this matter, we recognise the importance of the cooperation among developing countries. Strengthening capacity-building in terms of nominations, preparation and effective conservation is key.

Resources should equitably be mobilized so that countries with World Heritage potentials should be better represented. In this regard, the Government of Thailand supported the hosting of a number of relevant events and activities. For example, the International Conference on Southeast Asian Archaeology and Fine Arts, dedicated to sharing and updating archaeological knowledge and cultural heritage in Southeast Asia, held in Bangkok, Thailand in June this year. The Conference was hosted by SEAMEO SPAFA. Scholars, researchers in archaeology, as well as professionals working in related fields, have had the opportunity to exchange their views on conservation, protection and research findings, fostering further cooperations.

Lastly, we would like to emphasise the significance of collective efforts, the spirit of multilateralism and consensus, as we all desire to uphold the value of the Convention. Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I now give the floor to Poland, followed by Brazil.

The Observer Delegation of Poland:

Thank you, Mr Chair. First of all, let me congratulate you, the Ambassador Vishal Sharma, for assuming this important function. And as I have had the pleasure of working with you for a while, I am convinced that your able leadership will make this session a successful one. Allow me also to express gratitude for our Host Country, India,

for its warm welcome and hospitality. India, with its diversity, cultural diversity and richness, exemplifies all what 1972 Convention stands for. So, *namaste, namaste* very much.

I wish also to commend the Secretariat WHC for its daily work and for the very comprehensive report that has just been presented.

Mr Chair,

Poland aligns itself with a statement made earlier by Italy on Ukraine.

Mr Chair,

Poland is very much committed to promoting and safeguarding 1972 Convention and its goals. Therefore, we are happy to support financially, through voluntary contributions, World Heritage preservation efforts, including in emergency situations. As a member of Priority Africa Group of Friends, we note with appreciation all efforts made by WHC in this regard and we encourage everybody to continue these activities.

We also welcome strengthening synergies between the Convention and the biodiversity-related conventions and programmes. Climate change is one of the key challenges we are facing, particularly with respect to culture of SIDS.

Finally, Mr Chair, we are happy to see that our initiative of organising World Heritage Site Managers' Forum is continued by India. Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I now give the floor to Brazil, followed by Granada.

The Observer Delegation of Brazil:

Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr Chair.

Brazil extends its heartfelt congratulations to India for hosting another exceptional international event. We are deeply impressed by the organization's efficiency and the warm hospitality of our Indian colleagues.

This Committee meeting holds special significance for us. We are honoured to present the nomination file for the National Park called Lençóis Maranhenses, a site of unparalleled natural beauty and unique geomorphic features. This nomination embodies Brazil's renewed commitment to natural heritage protection. It is a national joint effort across different government levels, alongside the very important involvement of local communities.

Recognizing and supporting the vital role of World Heritage sites play in biodiversity protection is crucial. Inscribing a new natural site, particularly those identified as key areas for biodiversity, can significantly enhance UNESCO's role in global conservation efforts.

Brazil takes pride in being part of the network of Category 2 Centres. The Lucio Costa Centre plays a vital role in promoting heritage within the Global South. We remain committed to providing resources to fulfil its mandate.

Mr Chairman,

In concluding, I would like to raise the issue of geographical imbalance and requesting the Secretariat's assistance. When you go through the list of inscribed sites, we realise that during the last Committee session, only three sites were inscribed from the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. This year, the situation is even more concerning, with only one site from our region under consideration. Therefore, I urge the Secretariat to outline concrete plans for achieving a more balanced representation of Latin America and the Caribbean on the World Heritage List. I thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Obrigado, Brazil. I now give the floor to Grenada, to be followed by the Russian Federation.

The Observer Delegation of Grenada:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

I would like to start by congratulating and thanking the Government and the people of India for their great hospitality, and to commend the Director of the World Heritage for his report and the members of the World Heritage Centre's team for all their intense efforts and work. We strongly appreciate the activities undertaken, in particular capacity-building development, notably that addressed to youth and communities, as well as for all the support given to Africa and Small Island Developing States. We commend the Centre for its support to the preparation of Tentative Lists and nomination dossiers, including the implementation of the Upstream Process for the Grenadine Islands site, in cooperation with the Advisory Bodies.

We equally appreciate the assistance provided in emergency situations and notably, a possible support following the catastrophic effects of Hurricane Beryl in Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados and other islands in the Caribbean. We commend the efficient organization of the Open-ended Working Group decided by the

45th session of the Committee for a more balanced and credible World Heritage List, and we look forward to its positive outcomes.

As mentioned by other interventions, we are also alarmed by the difficult situation facing the World Heritage Centre, and we call for its strengthening in the framework of the future programme and budget 43 C/5.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Russian Federation, to be followed by Guinea.

The Observer Delegation of the Russian Federation:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. We are grateful to India for a warm hospitality and excellent organization of the session.

We would prefer to give our opinion on the report of the Secretariat. As stated by the Director-General, the Secretariat seems ready to assist the Committee in dealing equitably with different sensitive issues.

But it is evident that some of the biased Committee members, instead of prioritizing collective action to protect heritage worldwide, have again opted for double standards and selective approach. Russian Federation firmly rejects the inadmissible allegations and false accusations made by one newly elected Committee member and Delegations of the Western countries, the main sponsors of the conflict. It is obvious that they care less of the World Heritage and more of pursuing their own short-term political interests, thus putting this UNESCO flagship Convention in danger. It is regrettable that they escalate and use this valuable expert forum to spread misinformation and politicized rhetoric, while the world majority is endeavouring to find a way out of the current situation.

In conclusion, I would like to recall once again that the Russian Federation is firmly committed to the World Heritage Convention and fulfil vigorously all the international obligations.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I now give the floor to Guinea, to be followed by the State of Palestine.

La Délégation de la République de Guinée (Observateur) :

Merci, Monsieur le Président.

La République de Guinée se réjouit de participer à cette rencontre du Comité du patrimoine mondial et remercie particulièrement le peuple et le Gouvernement de la République indienne pour avoir abrité la 46^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

La Guinée est un État partie de la Convention sur le patrimoine mondial, culturel et naturel depuis 1979 et demeure consciente de l'importance de la préservation des ressources naturelles. C'est cette volonté qui a motivé la préservation des ressources naturelles. Le classement des Monts Nimba en site du patrimoine mondial en une zone impressionnante de biodiversité qui constitue aussi l'habitat de nombreuses espèces.

Monsieur le Président,

La contrainte de la conservation et de la gestion durable et de la biodiversité des Monts Nimba réside essentiellement dans les activités minières en cours. La réserve qui a lui d'ailleurs fait valoir beaucoup depuis 1974 : le statut de réserve naturelle intégrale, réserve de biosphère en 1980, et patrimoine mondial en péril 1981. Pour parvenir à une possible collaboration mine/environnement, le tout fondé sur la protection du site du patrimoine mondial, l'État guinéen s'est engagé à déployer des efforts en vue d'une synergie d'actions avec tous les acteurs concernés par la préservation de ce haut lieu à la fois culturel et naturel que constitue la réserve de biosphère des Monts Nimba.

Monsieur le Président,

Je voudrais rassurer que les autorités guinéennes veillent de près à ce que les activités minières, je répète, des activités minières, n'altèrent guère l'équilibre écologique des Monts Nimba, un site assez précieux pour la Guinée, la sous-région, mais aussi l'humanité tout entière, car c'est la source de plusieurs cours d'eau internationaux qui coulent à travers l'Afrique de l'Ouest. La réalisation des études d'impact environnemental et social prenne en compte, tiennent compte de la conservation du bien des Monts Nimba, qui reste aussi une exigence pour l'octroi d'autorisation des activités minières dans la réserve. Il est certain que les actions comme la surveillance des patrouilles nationales et mixtes, la restauration des zones dégradées vont se poursuivre davantage avec l'appui.

The Chairperson:

Please conclude.

La Délégation de la République de Guinée (Observateur) :

Des communautés ainsi que la recherche scientifique. Enfin, Monsieur le Président, l'État partie de la République de Guinée souhaite vivement le retrait des Monts Nimba du statut du patrimoine en péril.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I request States Parties to please restrict yourself to the time allocated.

I now give the floor to the State of Palestine, to be followed by Ecuador.

The Observer Delegation of the State of Palestine:

Thank you, Mr Chair. *Namaste*.

Let me join first my voice to those who congratulated you for your able leadership. Let me also express my deep appreciation to the Government and the people of India for hosting this session of the Committee and for the amazing organization and the warm hospitality. Thank you, India. Thanks also to the Secretariat for its report, but also for its activities that are very useful for the implementation of our Convention. Special thanks also to the Secretariat for its assistance and support to our experts for the development of management and conservation of World Heritage sites in Palestine. And thanks to both the Secretariat and India for the successful organization of the Youth Forum and the World Heritage site Managers.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, I call upon all States Parties to this Convention to loudly and strongly denounce the destruction of cultural property in Gaza during the ongoing war there, and to ask Israel, the occupying power, to halt such illegal and immoral attacks against cultural property in Palestine.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

I request no political statements please.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Ecuador.

The Observer Delegation of Ecuador:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you Chair.

Allow me first of all to thank and congratulate the Government of India for the excellent organisation of this meeting, as well as the people of India for the warm welcome we've received from this wonderful country. I also wish to join in congratulating you on your election as Chair. I particularly wish to thank the Director of the World Heritage Centre for the comprehensive report presented to us this morning, which sets out the work undertaken despite the budgetary constraints.

Within this framework, I wish to highlight in particular the support provided to States, and in particular my country, with work to be initiated soon thanks to the support of the World Heritage Fund for the finalisation of the Tentative List for natural, cultural and mixed lists for their inclusion on the World Heritage List. I wish to reiterate Ecuador's commitment, as one of the first countries which had sites inscribed, to the principles of the Convention and the work of this Committee.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Gracias.

I see that the State of Israel has raised its plate. I give the floor to Israel.

The Observer Delegation of Israel:

I thank you.

Thank you so much, Chairman. Thank you for India for this beautiful hospitality. And thank you for the Secretariat.

I wish to refer to the issues of the Palestinian Authority that spoke before me. I wish to reiterate the fact that it was Hamas who started the war in Gaza, and therefore the responsibility is on them. My colleague Mounir does not even represent the Hamas. The Hamas is a terror organization that still has 120 hostages, Israeli hostages in his hands. So, before we speak about culture and heritage, we should speak about humanity and human lives, which the Hamas does not hold dear. This includes the lives of the Palestinian Authority themselves. So, I think he should take an extra caution when protecting the Hamas, which is actually his enemy and a terror organization.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Now that we have exhausted the list of speakers, I will ask the Director of the WHC, Mr Eloundou Assomo, to answer your questions.

Mr Director, you have the floor, sir.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre / Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Let me first start by thanking all the Committee members and all the States Parties who took the floor to commend and appreciate the report of the Secretariat, and it is an opportunity for me to say that we are truly, we really thank all of you. And we appreciate your words. We also appreciate your effort to continue supporting and facilitate the work of the Secretariat. So again, thank you very much.

For the sake of time, Mr Chairperson, I would like to, first of all, reiterate that, as I said, that many of you in your interventions have insisted on the importance to continue giving priority to Africa, to the Small Island Development States, to capacity-building, to projects, to local communities, and we will continue to do so with your support. And I think this is important.

I also would like to now maybe try to answer some specific questions or comments or requests for clarifications that were made by some of you, the Committee members. On the question raised, the request for clarification, raised by the Delegate, the Distinguished Ambassador of Greece. I want to say, of course, that we took note, and I think definitely, I'm sure, when you consider the examination of the draft decision, we will come back to it to clarify or provide our views and understanding of it later. But I believe that some of the precisions were also to the author of the amendment. So, thank you for that. I also would like to.

Je voudrais un peu faire référence à l'intervention de la Distinguée Déléguée du Rwanda, notamment sur la question de l'évaluation préliminaire. D'abord, je voudrais vraiment remercier le Rwanda et le soutien du Rwanda au travail du Secrétariat et profiter, parce que c'est une question tellement importante que c'est l'occasion, certainement, de peut-être réexpliquer un petit peu pour tous les membres du Comité et les délégués présents, l'importance de, et pourquoi, l'évaluation préliminaire aujourd'hui. D'abord que l'évaluation préliminaire, elle a pour but d'améliorer la qualité des propositions d'inscription qui sont soumises et aussi de réduire les chances de ne pas avoir du succès. Donc, pour dire qu'elle, c'est un processus en fait qui vise à renforcer la capacité des États parties à aller vers la soumission, la proposition d'inscription qui sont satisfaisantes et ne pas les obliger aussi à mobiliser énormément des ressources financières pour la préparation de dossier, et après qui n'auront que peu de chances pour aboutir. Et c'était ça un peu, cette idée globale autour de l'évaluation préliminaire. Et cette analyse préliminaire, c'est une procédure en fait qui intervient à un stade précoce de la proposition d'inscription, mais elle permet plutôt de mieux planifier dans le temps le travail et de bénéficier d'un meilleur conseil des experts et des recommandations au cours de cette phase-là. Mais pas simplement cela, mais aussi de favoriser le dialogue que vous, les États parties, vous avez toujours, vous nous demandez de continuer de faciliter dans un travail, comme celui-là. C'est juste pour dire que, lorsque le Comité a pris la décision de lancer ce travail, c'était vraiment pour que sa mise en œuvre permette d'améliorer aussi la représentation sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial aussi des régions qui ne sont pas encore assez représentées sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Et nous allons continuer à travailler avec vous, tous les États parties, dans ce sens-là et clarifier peut-être quelques questions qui ne sont pas très claires sur la question de l'analyse préliminaire.

Now, I want to come back to one of the last questions that several States Parties raised concerning the issue, important issue of climate action. And, I think, I wanted, and precisely, what we were trying to do around the Climate Action Toolkit. So let me just clarify that this work that we are doing, it's thanks to the support of the Government of Australia, and this initiative is being carried jointly with the World Heritage Centre, but with ICCROM, IUCN and ICOMOS, the three Advisory Bodies. And the purpose here is to collect a range of diverse existing tools and kind of measuring techniques currently available for different types of World Heritage sites. So, the initial efforts have been made to identify and gather these tools, and we are working to see how best to make sure, to make them available for capacity-building effort, for instance. And I think also we are doing this also thanks to the support also of the Netherlands that has joined also this initiative. And we will continue to work because this issue of trying to really move with finding a number of solutions to tackle the issue of climate change is absolutely important. And I take this opportunity to again tell you how important your action and your support will be to implement the policy document that has been adopted by the General Conference last time.

And lastly, it's an opportunity also for me to conclude by saying that I wanted to express our gratitude to the Government of India for the generous support that was announced to support capacity-building for Africa and the Small Island Development States, and this is going to enable us to continue to work together with the support of the Advisory Bodies on some of these important points and subject that we need to do in order to reinforce the representativity of these two, Africa and the Small Island Developing States, on the World Heritage List, but also provide more tools so that they can continue to increase their capacities to protect and conserve all the World Heritage sites.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Director.

I see that there are no more questions or comments.

I therefore invite you, dear colleagues, to proceed with the adoption of draft Decision **46 COM 5A**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We have indeed received one amendment submitted by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Kenya, asking for an inversion of paras 8 and 9, without text modifications, as well as new paras 10 and 11. However, before reading them, I would like to inform you that I was alerted by the Honourable Delegate of Saint Vincent that the amendments changed in the meantime. So, I would suggest hearing directly from one of these two submitting States Parties, Mr Chair.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Rapporteur.

I will give the floor now to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, we are proposing this amendment, I start with paragraph 10. The language is taken from the document, paragraph 115, when we say, "Notes with concern that the World Heritage Convention faces several significant challenges that impact its effectiveness and ability to fulfil its mandate". It is written in the report, paragraph 115. And we were, we are very concerned by this situation. And, also, the constraints and sustainability of the Centre, because we know that the Centre is facing, as many units in UNESCO, lack of human and financial resources. But if we look, for instance, in paragraph 118 and 119, it's clearly said that there is a widening gap between available resources and the workload of the Secretariat. We know that the Convention is growing, and that's why we believe that this paragraph is important just to express our concerns. It is very nice to see in the decision, Mr Chair, "we thank, we congratulate, we welcome, we commend". It's very important, but also, we have to express the concerns and to see how we can find altogether solution, and to enhance the Convention and its functioning. This is paragraph 10.

Paragraph 11, "We request the Director-General to strengthen the ability and functional autonomy of the World Heritage Centre to better conduct its work as the Secretariat, notably by allocating more UNESCO financial and human resources to the World Heritage Centre when preparing the programme and budget, and by enabling it to undertake fundraising activities to increase voluntary funding" etc. We added this paragraph because we know that we are preparing now the 43 C/5, and given the conditions, and when we heard from the Director of the Centre about the sustainability of the work and to facilitate, maybe we should think about such a solution. Because if we want more capacity-building, we know, you know, Mr Chair, we adopted in the Open-ended Working Group many recommendations, and this recommendation will not be applicable if we don't give the ability to the Centre and to the Convention to have more fundraising activities to enable us, to enable the Secretariat, to implement these recommendations, especially capacity-building. Having said that, after a consultation with a member of the Committee and with our colleague from the Delegation of Kenya, maybe we could replace paragraph 11 by the following paragraph, if I can say it. "Invites the Director-General". So, 11 will be: "Invites the Director-General to reinforce the World Heritage Centre, notably by allocating more UNESCO financial and human resources to the World Heritage Centre and by supporting its fundraising activities from the private sector, the civil society, multilateral funds and institutions in line with UNESCO's financial rules and regulations". I hope this paragraph will be acceptable as it is. You know, Mr Chair, it is the only way to reinforce the ability of the Secretariat to undertake its activities as they wish and as the Member States are wishing to do so.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I'll now give the floor to the ADG culture, Mr Ottone, to answer the questions or comments. You have the floor.

Le Sous-Directeur général pour la Culture :

Merci, M. le Président.

Donc, par rapport aux questions posées par le cher Délégué de la Grèce, l'Ambassadeur, et ainsi qu'aux explications données par Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines, il y a deux choses. Un, sur le paragraphe 10, comme vous avez mentionné, effectivement, la première partie que vous mentionnez est reprise du rapport de IOS, par contre dans la seconde partie de votre texte y a une interprétation de la part de votre Délégation. Vous faites référence, quand on parle de la Convention, au Centre, et vous mettez un mot que j'ai essayé de trouver qui n'apparaît pas dans le rapport de IOS, c'est la "sustainability" du Centre. C'est quelque chose qui n'existe pas dans le texte. Donc effectivement il y a une confusion par rapport au texte, dont la première partie est reproduite intégralement et la deuxième qui tout un coup met apparemment en danger le Centre tel qu'il est mené aujourd'hui dut au manque de financement et capacité, "constraints". Donc face à la première partie, je ne vois pas de problème. Par contre sur la deuxième, je ne sais pas de quelle "sustainability" du Centre on est en train de parler, puisque ça n'existe ni dans le rapport de IOS, ni, comme je l'ai compris, selon la lecture du paragraphe 115 jusqu'au 118. Il n'y a pas mention que le Centre puisse être en danger. Quand je lis ce texte, c'est apparemment ce qui est dit dans cet amendement.

Par rapport à la deuxième proposition que vous faites du changement du paragraphe 11, tel vous l'avez aujourd'hui exprimé après les consultations avec les États membres, c'est effectivement quelque chose qu'on voit souvent dans toutes nos conventions. Et vous le savez, qu'on a besoin de plus de support au niveau des ressources financières, ainsi que ressources humaines, pour pouvoir être confronté au suivi de 1 199 aujourd'hui, sites du patrimoine mondial, dont nous devons faire par année 120, 140 états de conservation, qui nous demandent effectivement un renforcement de nos équipes.

Donc, pour dire tout cela, effectivement, sur le Point 10 nous avons une lecture différente, clairement, par rapport à ce qui vous présentez, puisqu'on parle de la Convention, et la Convention est confrontée à tous ces problèmes. Mais là vous fait une référence au Centre, chose que je ne partage pas en tant que Secrétariat. Et par rapport au changement que vous avez fait dans l'amendement que vous avez déjà présenté, il paraît que le paragraphe que vous proposez aujourd'hui va exactement en ligne à ce qui est repris dans plusieurs de nos conventions, où nous avons besoin de renforcement pour venir en aide aux États membres. Voilà, M. le Président. Merci beaucoup pour avoir l'opportunité de s'exprimer.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr ADG Culture.

If there are no further comments or requests for interventions from the Member States or the Secretariat, we will go to the draft decision of this document and explore it para by para. Could we go to the decision please?

I will give the floor now to the Rapporteur to summarize all the amendments which he has received.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I would like to proofread para 11, if I may, so that we make sure it's the version that was submitted by Saint Vincent and Kenya as newly amended.

So, the new para gives: "Invites the Director-General to reinforce the World Heritage Centre, notably by allocating more UNESCO financial and human resources to the World Heritage Centre and by supporting its fundraising activities from the private sector, civil society, multilateral funds and institutions in line with UNESCO's financial rules and regulations". Is that correct? It is. Okay. Thank you very much. Maybe we can then go back to paras 8 and 9, which were inverted without text modifications.

Onto para 10: "Notes with concern that the World Heritage Convention faces several significant challenges that impact its effectiveness and ability to fulfil its mandate, and expresses its concerns regarding the World Heritage Centre's sustainability while it is facing growing financial and capacity constraints, as well as the increasing technical complexity of conservation related issues".

Para 11, as I just read: "Invites the Director-General to reinforce the World Heritage Centre, notably by allocating more UNESCO financial and human resources to the World Heritage Centre and by supporting its fundraising activities from the private sector, civil society, multilateral funds and institutions, in line with UNESCO's financial rules and regulations".

Onto para 10, which becomes para 12 without any modifications anymore.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

I would like to ask the Rapporteur, can you please clarify on para 11? Okay. Now it's been clarified. As I had mentioned before, we'll go para by para.

Para 1. Are there any objections for adoption of para 1? I see none. Para 1 is adopted.

Para 2, recalling Decisions **44 COM 5A** and **45 COM 5A**, adopted at its extended 44th session and 45th extended sessions, respectively. Are there any objections to the adoption of para 2? I see none. Para 2 is adopted.

Para 3. Are there any objections to the adoption of para 3? I see none. Para 3 is adopted.

Para 4. Are there any objections to the adoption of para 4? I see none. Para 4 is adopted.

Para 5. Are there any objections to the adoption of para 5? I see none. Para 5 is adopted.

Para 6. Are there any objections to the adoption of para 6? I see none. Para 6 is adopted.

Para 7. Are there any objections to the adoption of para 7? I see none. Para 7 is adopted.

Now we go to the amendments. There is a request to move para 8 into 9.

Argentina. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

I had requested the floor before we had actually started analysing the draft decision because I had an overall comment to make, and that is, maybe I should do it now because I think it's actually relevant to the amendments, and our way of thinking is that, if we want to genuinely strengthen the Centre and give it the wherewithal that it needs, we all agree with that, but the idea is how and where to do it. If there, before we could go through word by word, if there was one thing that does not actually correspond with the mandate of this Committee, and not even to the GA, but actually the remit of the General Conference, then we've got to be a little careful. What we want to do is bolster the Centre and therefore what we heard a few moments ago from the Secretariat and from the ADG is very important. If there is already established and accepted language, then that is the language that we should be using. Otherwise, we're going to have to discuss it in another forum, not here. And that is why I just wanted to make this statement before we actually start analysing word for word, each of these proposed amendments, because we share the same aim. We want to strengthen. We want to thank all the work undertaken and continue strengthening the Centre. But what we do have to be a bit careful about is the accepted wording, and that's what we wanted to say.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Argentina, from what I understand, you wanted to intervene on the para that is going to be amended. We are right now on para 8, which says "thanks the State Party". So, para 8 is the old para, the new para 8 is the old para 9. And that has been shifted down.

So, is there any objection to the adoption of this new para 8?

Qatar, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci beaucoup monsieur.

On est un peu convaincu de la demande de notre collègue de l'Argentine. Est ce qu'il est d'accord ? C'est que on a compris, c'est remplacer le paragraphe 9 et remonter vers le paragraphe 8. C'est ce que j'ai compris. Est ce qu'il est d'accord ou non ? Sinon, pour qu'on puisse avancer, je pense que c'est nécessaire de clarifier la discussion.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, I think that it's a very good question. Argentina, first of all, are you okay with switching these paras or not? Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Yes. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Yes. It's a technical problem that we want to clarify. We had actually requested the floor a long time before, and since we didn't get the floor, I thought when we get to these proposed amendments, then we could make our statement. We agree with the way that you are saying. We have absolutely no objection to the way we are going through, but each of these changes that are being proposed, what we want to do is say how careful we have to be,

how careful we have to be with the overall, with the overall use of language, we need to use established, accepted language if we're going to be making the right message.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Okay. So right now, we are at the point of change. Up to now, we have not changed anything. And I understand that when a change has been proposed at that point in time, you want to intervene. So that point has arrived. The question is very specific. Are you okay with the interchange or not? If you are not, then it's good. If you are okay, please let us know. That's also good. So, are you okay with the interchange? Okay. Qatar, he is okay with the interchange as of now. Would you like to? It's okay? All right.

So, the new para 8, which has been. Are you okay for the adoption of the new para 8 as it is appearing in, only the number 8 is appearing in blue. "Thanks the States Parties that have provided georeference data". So, there is no change in the wording as proposed by the Secretariat. The only change is it is being shifted up and down. So, if I don't see any comments or observations, I will be accepting this para. Are there any objections? No.

The para 8 is adopted.

Now we go to the para 9, which is an amendment. This is Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Kenya have moved the original para 8 down to 9. So, can we have the original wording in black instead of having the entire thing in blue? Only the original wording, I require it to be in black, so we understand. Okay, now we are on the original para 8 which has been moved down. There is no change in the wording, as suggested by the Secretariat originally. Can we adopt this para, the new para 9 which is moved down of old para 8? Are there any objections? No, I see none.

Para 9 is adopted.

Now we go down to the amendments which have been suggested by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and supported by Kenya. "Notes with concern".

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to be followed by Greece and Belgium.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Chair.

After listening to the ADG culture, maybe we can. The aim, it was not to say that the Centre is not really sustainable, but when I have read what it's saying in paragraphs 118 and 119, there are many, many constraints and problems. Even we said that there is a widening gap between available resources and the workload of the Secretariat, and this is a very big problem. So maybe we can just remove the wording "sustainability" and we can express our concern regarding the World Heritage Centre while it is facing growing financial and capacity constraints, as well as the increasing technical complexity of conservation related issues, which is mentioned in paragraph 118.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I will give the floor now to Greece, to be followed by Belgium.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Chair.

And I think that the intervention made by our colleague from Grenadines goes to the right direction, though I feel a little bit uncomfortable with the wording regarding the World Heritage Centre. Maybe we should, maybe talk about programmes implemented by the World Heritage Centre, but not the Centre itself, or the activities of the Centre, but not the Centre itself. But I can live with the latest change proposed by the author.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

First of all, on the outset, I would like to thank the Distinguished Delegate of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to raise this important issue. It is indeed known that we have an increasing workload and availability of resources is at risk at times. So therefore, it is an important debate. So, we agree with this text. But we would like to suggest maybe a small amendment that would also maybe answer to the concerns of Greece. That is, if we would change

"fulfil its mandate" into "implement the 1972 Convention", then we can maybe address the concern that was expressed by Greece. And for us that would, if agreeable to the Committee, we would have maybe a better text that way.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I will let the editors put in the right text. Okay.

I now give the floor to Viet Nam. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Well, thank you very much, Mr Chair.

We highly appreciate the flexibility of our colleague from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. We wish to suggest another amendment, that may go so that: "Notes with concern that the World Heritage Convention faces several significant challenges that impact the effectiveness and ability to fulfil its mandate". And also, we can live with a proposal from Belgium "to implement the 1972 Convention" and that the World Heritage Centre is facing growing financial and capacity, capacity constraints, as well as the increasing technical complexity of the conservation related issues.

The Chairperson:

So, do you support the Belgium amendment to replace the words "ability to fulfil its mandate" with the words "ability to implement the 1972 Convention"?

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Yes.

The Chairperson:

So, you can add the name of Viet Nam next to Belgium. Okay.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you. Excellency.

I see India has requested the floor, and then Kenya. India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Sorry. Though I understand where is this coming from, but I'm slightly confused, and I just thought I'll seek a clarification from the Secretariat or from the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The first part of this amendment talks about the challenges that are being faced by the World Heritage Convention or its implementation. And the second part focuses more on the growing financial and capacity constraints, and this was what the report from the Director also indicated. But we have an Open-ended Working Group, which is looking into the reflections on the World Heritage Convention. We've had several meetings in this regard, and it is an inconclusive, I would say, or rather not inconclusive, it's a continuing discussion. It is proposed to be extended to another, I would say, by another year. So, is it appropriate at the moment to make a remark like this when we are still debating and discussing. Because this has come all of a sudden, you know, we would also need time to reflect on it and see what is the more appropriate text to be inserted here. So, I just thought I would seek this clarification before we proceed in actually looking into the, you know, micro aspects of correcting or amending the text further.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

You are seeking clarification from the Delegate and the Delegation. The Delegate. So first I'll give the floor to ADG culture, and thereafter I will give the floor to the Saint Vincent and Grenadines, with a request to Kenya to please permit me to do so, because I had taken your name before that.

But since there is a question, Mr ADG Culture, you have the floor.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

I'll be speaking Spanish. Well, when it comes to this proposal, as I mentioned, the first part directly aligns itself with the IOS report. As the Distinguished Representative of India said, it refers to the Convention and the sentence you can see there is in line with paragraph 115. However, the second part mixes mentions of the Convention and aspects related to the complexities faced by the Secretariat. When we're talking about the financial aspects, we're talking about the Convention. The financial constraints are not just faced by the Secretariat, it's the Convention as a whole – the manager, the site managers, the Secretariat, all of us. So, we can't just extract matters here and display them as only being faced by the Secretariat. The financial resources which are lacking are faced by the site managers as well. This is set out in paragraph 11.

Now, when you propose changes, and we have Belgium's proposal here, we're saying that the World Heritage Convention faces significant challenges to implement the Convention. So, we're saying that the Convention is unable to implement the Convention, which is not the case. It is being implemented. Yes, it is facing challenges because we've now got 1000-odd properties on the list. So, the first part comes from the IOS report – that is not being called into question, that's the exact wording. It states that if we continue in this situation, the mandate may be jeopardized. That was set out in the text. However, in the second part, there's a mix up between aspects referring directly to the Convention and aspects that may apply to any Secretariat or Convention facing the budgetary constraints of UNESCO. So here we shouldn't be calling into question the first part of this paragraph, which referred to the IOS report wording, but the second part is mixed up – that's not contained in the IOS report. The concern is about not having the capacities as a Convention as a whole, all entities involved, when it comes to addressing financial constraints. And in light of the capacities we have available to us, given the initiatives that have been introduced by you over the past few years, including the Preliminary Assessment, for example.

Here I wish to thank the Representative of India. There is a dialogue process underway to look at how we can improve this. So, we don't want to prejudge the outcomes of that discussion. Perhaps we could wait to see what is the outcome of that Open-ended Working Group, which is currently analysing the complexities that the Convention may face in the future? I just wanted to try and clarify things, but I think if we begin changing words here and there, we may end up with a sort of Frankenstein text.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, ADG Culture for the detailed explanation.

I now give the floor to the Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr Chair, I think Kenya asked for the floor before me. I am not sure.

The Chairperson:

The last I checked was that I am the Chair.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Okay.

The Chairperson:

And I have given you the floor. After seeking permission from Kenya. So, I request you to please focus. The reason why I am giving you the floor is because the Distinguished Representative of India asked a specific question to the Secretariat, as well as to the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. And thereafter I asked the Kenyan Delegate that, although I had taken their name first, but because this question has been asked and the Secretariat has been has responded, it's only fair that I give you also the opportunity to respond and then I go to Kenya. Is that acceptable to you? Thank you. You may still continue. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, I think that I agree with the ADG Culture that we should leave the wording as it is in the paragraph 115 "to fulfil its mandate", and it's in IOS report. So, we should keep maybe "to fulfil its mandate".

For the second part, I agree with the proposal of Viet Nam, saying that the World Heritage Centre is facing growing financial and capacity constraints, as well as the increasing technical complexity. Because, Mr Chair, it is a reality.

It is even, it is written in the document that there are a lot of constraints for the Secretariat. When we talk about the World Heritage Centre, it is a Secretariat of the Convention. And I know that there is an Open-ended Working Group, but the Open-Ended Group is not, I mean, maybe we will not discuss about all these things. But the Committee is sovereign, and we can express also our concerns or our comments, and to add our comments on the functioning of the Convention. And we do prefer to keep the second part of the sentence just to draw the attention that there is growing financial capacity constraints, and this will justify paragraph 11.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Kenya, followed by Argentina. Kenya, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

This being my first time to address this esteemed Committee, I would want on behalf of the Republic of Kenya, to express our deepest gratitude to the Government of India for being very generous and for hosting us in an unprecedented way. Thank you so much.

On this particular issue, I only have two points to make. The gist of the matter, as has been emphasized before, is the fact that we are responding to Item 5A, a report of the World Heritage Centre on its activities and implementation of the World Heritage Committee decisions. And we observe here that the World Heritage Centre has been allocated an enormous responsibility to steer us in the implementation of the 1972 Convention, 195 members, cannot be an easy assignment, and all that we are saying, together with the other States Parties, is that we have observed the weight that they carry on one hand, the complexity of it, and also the financial responsibilities that go with this critical assignment. So, as we edit this, that is really the spirit of what we are looking at.

It is my considered opinion that the last part of this paragraph is repetitive. The point is already made by the time you get to conservation related issues. If you look at it, the point is already made by the time you get to issues. So, the last part tends to be kind of repetitive.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Do we understand that you will, you desire that the last part be struck out? Kenya, we need to be specific.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Yes, please.

The Chairperson:

I request the editors to kindly implement what Kenya has said. Strike out the last part.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Argentina. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

When we took the floor previously, it was precisely to avoid this. So here, we'd like to make a specific request. Let's separate the paragraph. Paragraph 10 would remain without any amendment, as was previously accepted as part of the IOS report wording. And then we would separate the second part of the paragraph. We believe that this would help us. We need to separate the two parts. The IOS wording is very clear, and it should be included. On the other hand, we have no concern among my Delegation as regards the Centre itself. We understand that they'll be doing their utmost, but how will they be doing that? That is our concern. We're not concerned about the Centre itself. So, this is why we want to separate the paragraph and retain the agreed upon IOS wording.

And the second part will look into how the World Heritage Centre will be able to address these issues.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Argentina.

I now give the floor to Japan, followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Having listened to the intervention by India, also explanation by ADG Culture, I echo with the view of the Distinguished Ambassador of Kenya in striking out the second part of the paragraph 10. I think that the first paragraph, the first part of the paragraph 10, is comprehensive enough.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I give the floor to Qatar.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci beaucoup, Monsieur le Président.

Ma Délégation veut intervenir en exprimant vraiment notre position. On est, après avoir bien écouté Monsieur l'ADG pour la culture, les explications profondes et toutes les délégations précédentes, ma délégation veut garder vraiment la position des préoccupations qui étaient bien sûr mentionnées tout d'abord dans le rapport et d'autre part, vraiment sortira parce que cette préoccupation, bien évidemment, nous partageons avec le Secrétariat de la Convention représentée par le Centre, on est d'accord, et la préoccupation c'est pas sur les travaux et sur les efforts du Centre. Je voudrais juste clarifier, je pense, à cette situation. La préoccupation, vraiment, c'est les ressources, sur les ressources et les moyens. Et c'est pas la capacité, ce n'est pas les efforts du Centre-même. Si la raison pourquoi ma Délégation veut garder vraiment l'expression de préoccupations d'une part, et d'autre part, et garder bien sûr la mention du Centre du patrimoine mondial qui représente l'exécution, la mise en œuvre aussi de la Convention. Ça va faciliter l'expression, je pense, dans le texte. Et c'est pour ça, nous partageons ensemble, vraiment, entre nous et le Centre, cette préoccupation, nous voulons renforcer le rôle du Centre. Et deuxièmement, on peut partir avec cette réflexion du Comité aussi, parce qu'on a, je pense, l'habileté de prendre des décisions, à ce Comité.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Can I ask the editor to make a new para as suggested by Argentina. Can you put it on a separate line, so you have an understanding? Okay.

Now if we consider the old para 10, how it appears, "Notes with concern that the World Heritage Convention faces several significant challenges that impact its effectiveness and ability to fulfil its mandate" or "implement the 1972 Convention". So, there are two options, "ability to fulfil its mandate" or "ability to implement the 1972 Convention". Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Saint Vincent, SVG and Kenya want, had originally suggested "to fulfil its mandate", but Belgium and Viet Nam supported the idea to replace that with the words "to implement the 1972 Convention".

Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I'll be very short and make your life easier. We have no strong feelings about our suggestion. So, we can go along with the initial text, if that's agreeable to everyone.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I assume Viet Nam would also have no objection? All right, so now the text stands as: "Notes with concern that the World Heritage Convention faces several significant challenges that impact its effectiveness and ability to fulfil its mandate". Is there any objection to this draft amendment text that appears as para 10?

I see none. Para 10 is adopted.

We go to para 11.

As Argentina had suggested to put it in the para. Argentina, would you like to suggest a beginning for this para? You have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

No, we don't have any text to suggest here. We just wanted to make things more clear, and we'd like to thank all the other Delegations for their indulgence here and not adding new language. We believe that this paragraph is agreeable, and we will look at any other suggestions in light of the comments we've already made.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Argentina.

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you Chair again for giving India the floor.

May I request if the para 10 is once again put back on the screen? Thank you. If you look at the para 10 which has been which has been agreed by everyone, in fact, the para 11 that has now been suggested is actually already subsumed in para 10. If we are talking about that, that there is a concern that there are challenges wherein, you know, we are looking at its impact on fulfilling the, you know, the mandate, basically the capacity constraints, the financial constraints, the technical complexities that we are talking about. In fact, it is not only the technical complexities, there is much more to it. In the report presented by the Director of World Heritage Centre, he indicated 28 or 29, you know, initiatives that have been taken. So, there is much more to it. But para 10 I would, I think that it incorporates whatever we are trying to say in para 11.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Distinguished Delegate from India is saying that the para 10 suggested by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Kenya is a complete para that covers it, and para 11 may not be necessary.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, would you agree to that? You have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, we showed a lot of flexibility, and we have done a lot of compromises. We accepted to remove the wording "sustainability". And then now we don't have any more "expresses its concerns". And we left a paragraph without any introduction. I mean, we have to say that the World Heritage is facing growing financial and capacity constraints. It is also a reality. As I have said, I don't want to repeat the same things and this will justify also the following paragraph, especially that why we are putting this here? Because we are preparing the 43 C/5, and we have to accept this reality. And it is said here, it is clear. So, I prefer to start the paragraph with: Notes, also notes that the World Heritage Centre is facing. I do prefer to keep them in one paragraph. But also, we had done compromises. So, we should say something, because I am sure that Open-ended Working Group, as has been said by India, will also think about it. But we are now preparing the 43 C/5. The preliminary proposals will be presented at the next Executive Board in October. So, it is time to reflect on the financial situation and to help the Centre, because the Centre is implementing the Convention.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

"Also notes", editors. The Distinguished Representative had said "also notes". Now, the Indian Delegate had said that the World Heritage notes with concern that the World Heritage Convention faces significant, several significant challenges now, financial, growing financial, capacity constraints are also significant challenges. Increasing technical complexity is also a significant challenge. Conservation related issues is also a significant challenge. So, you know, if this were an English course, one would say that it is technically and grammatically, it is already covered in para 10 what it appears. And I think the Delegate of India was trying to promote that. But the Delegate of Saint Vincent wants to keep that para as it is.

I see that Mexico. But the Delegate of India has again raised the floor. Is it in continuation of this, India? So, I can give you the floor, because I wanted to give it to Mexico. But is it in continuation to what Saint Vincent said? Yes, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Mr Chair,

I'll respect the protocol, and I would rather have Mexico take the floor first and then I'll. Of course it is in continuation, but.

The Chairperson:

All right, I will give the floor to Mexico. That is only because of the love that India has for Mexico. Thank you.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair. We also love India.

I think we need to clarify something here. The implementation of the Convention, if I'm not mistaken, was mentioned very clearly by Mr ADG. The Convention is implemented by all of us. It's not something that falls only under the remit of the World Heritage Centre. All States Parties are committed to ensuring the effective implementation of this Convention. The paragraph 10 mentions the challenges faced in terms of the implementation of the Convention, and we are aware that these challenges have an impact not only on the States Parties, but also on the World Heritage Centre. In addition, or however, the World Heritage Centre is not in charge of the implementation of the Convention, it's the States Parties. So, we just wish to clarify this here. The issues are faced by the World Heritage Convention, which involves all of us, and so we have to address these issues. So, I would mention that this is covered by capacity rather than financial matters. And during the Open-ended Working Group, there was a suggestion made that countries with strong institutions in the area of World Heritage conservation could fully cooperate in capacity-building.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I, right now, I am looking specifically at editorial changes and suggestions that specifically deal with the English words or French. I request the editors to put on a next para without a number. The words, Kenya, Japan, delete and thereafter. Without a number. Right.

So, the para that we are looking at is "also notes". Para 10 was: "Notes with concern that the World Heritage Convention faces several significant challenges that impact its effectiveness and ability to fulfil its mandate. Also notes that the World Heritage Centre is facing growing financial and capacity constraints, as well as the increasing technical complexity of conservation related issues".

I think I'll give the floor to India to be followed by Viet Nam.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

I don't want to sort of prolong this discussion, but I still want to reiterate a point, very respectfully. What the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expressed, I think, you know, we are aware of the fact that you've put a hammer on the Point 10, and the 11 is under discussion, but it is only once we read the Point 11 that we realized that the two are so sort of intricately interlinked. I still have a feeling that these paras can be merged rather than be separated. Now that we've seen both the wordings, all we need to do is, in paragraph 10, if we, you know, if we add after "several significant changes", comma, "including financial and capacity constraints", comma, and then we go on, it basically incorporates or subsumes all that we are trying to say in para 11 into para 10. So, it's something, you know, we're just trying to simplify it yet communicate whatever is being, you know, whatever is the intention of this, you know, paragraph.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

It's a good proposal, what you are saying. But you know, when Argentina wanted it a new para, you didn't oppose. And when we, before we hit the hammer, you didn't say anything. So, I leave it to the House. Right now, we are at para 11. If the wisdom of the House feels that you can include it, then I'm in your hands and we can include it.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, would you like before I give to Viet Nam?

Viet Nam, first I'll give to you. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Well, thank you very much, Mr Chair.

I just thought that really, our Indian colleague has read my mind, and we have the same suggestion, like the Indian colleague, that including financial and capacity constraints, so in the paragraph 10, we can incorporate the issues of our concern from paragraph 11. So, it really reflects, I think, the feelings of the group, of the room.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Viet Nam.

It's the. I'll now ask Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Can they live with that? Or? We are in your hands.

SVG.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr Chair, I think it is a good proposal because it covers our concerns when we add here "financial and capacity constraints". We are fine with this.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Please add SVG's name to it. Kenya, would you also be comfortable with that?

The Delegation of Kenya:

Yes. Much obliged.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Qatar, would you also be comfortable with that? Okay.

Mexico, would you be comfortable with that?

Please try. Argentina, would you also be comfortable? Okay.

Please strike out para 11. Right.

And para 10, we are amending it again. How it stands: "Notes with concern that the World Heritage Convention faces several significant challenges, including financial and capacity constraints, that impact its effectiveness and ability to fulfil its mandate". Are there any objections for its adoption?

And Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

I do apologize to take the floor again, Mr Chair, but it's a bit confusing to us that the Convention fulfils its own mandate. So, I think that part of the phrase was also related to the Centre. I don't want to make things more complex, but if you read it, so that "the World Heritage Convention faces several significant challenges, including financial and capacity constraints, that impacts its effectiveness and ability to fulfil its mandate". So, I think it's just a bit strange to adopt this phrase as saying that the Convention is fulfilling its own mandate. In a way of when you addressed earlier the grammar issue. I'm not talking about really the content. I think the spirit is fine with us, but I do think that this is a phrase that is somehow not correct as such.

The Chairperson:

So why don't we discover the Shakespeare in us and help us out. You have the floor Belgium. Please help us out with the wording that would satisfy all the House. Or rather, it's India that is going to help us. Would you like to help? After considering what the Distinguished Delegate of Belgium has suggested.

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I think it's been very aptly put by the Distinguished Delegate of Belgium. It indeed needs a slight more modification and we should say, "notes with concern that the implementation of the" and then the rest of the sentence continues. I hope this is fine with everyone present here.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Is this okay with everyone present here?

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Always count on the Indian wisdom. It's a very good proposal. And we went from the concerns, from the World Heritage Centre, and now we are in the implementation of the Convention. But also, the intervention of Mexico also was very, very interesting because the Convention includes the Secretariat, the States Parties, the Advisory Bodies, everyone. So, we are all mobilized.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

And I thank Belgium for having brought it to our attention that now the para stands as: "Notes with concern that the implementation of the World Heritage Convention faces several significant challenges, including financial and capacity constraints that impact its effectiveness and ability to fulfil its mandate". Are there any objections before we?

Argentina, I see that you have raised your plate. Is there something earth-shattering, or you can live with this? You have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much.

Yes. Just one concern for the future of this meeting. When a paragraph has actually already been adopted, we don't, we're not saying we disagree with your willingness to go back on this, but normally when paragraphs are adopted, we can't go back to them. And this actually might set a precedent which could complicate our discussions going forward. That was the only thing I wanted to mention.

The spirit that we want to maintain is that agreed language that's already been agreed upon is the best way forward. And the question is: how is the Centre going to be able to continue implementing its activities? And I repeat, we have no concern for the future. We just wanted to say that the Centre is at the heart of our concerns. And we've been to thousands of meetings where an adopted paragraph is opened up again for discussion. But we just want to keep that in mind. But, as for the substance we have no problem.

Thank you, sir.

The Chairperson:

We have not adopted the entire para as a whole.

Viet Nam, are you?

Right now, my question is very specific to the, you know, we had asked the question, should we go back to the para? Is it okay for everyone? At that point in time, nobody raised any objections or comments. So that is the reason we went back. And now that we are coming at the finalization, I will not open the floor for that discussion right now. Should I be gone back or not? Because that question was asked.

Now, my question right now is very specific to this point. Is there any, is this text acceptable or would anyone like to make any suggestions to it? That is the only question I want answered right now.

Viet Nam, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Well, thank you very much, Mr Chair.

We highly appreciate the proposal from our Indian colleague, that we have the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. But the problem now is that the latter part "that impact its effectiveness and ability to fulfil its mandate". So what? It's here. So that's why we wish to suggest some amendments, that maybe the second, the latter phrase "that impact is effectiveness and ability to fulfil its mandate" is not necessary to be here. So, we can delete this part. That's our proposal.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

The Rapporteur, would you like to help out?

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I would suggest echoing the proposition of Viet Nam. Deleting "and ability to fulfil its mandate" and putting a comma after "effectiveness" because we're talking about the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention. So, for a question of correctness of the proposition, I would stop the para at "effectiveness".

The Chairperson:

So, the para now stands: "Notes with concern that the implementation of the World Heritage Convention faces several significant challenges, including financial and capacity constraints that impact its effectiveness". Is that okay?

Are there any objections? Before we adopt this? I see none.

Para 10 is adopted.

We go to the next para. The new para 11. The 12 will become 11. 10. And the number 12 will become. Yeah. Okay. "Invites the Director-General to enforce the World Heritage Centre, notably by allocating more UNESCO financial and human resources to the World Heritage Centre and by supporting its fundraising activities from the private sector, civil society, multilateral funds and institutions in line with UNESCO's financial rules and regulations". Are there any objections or comments before we adopt this amended para? I see none. Para 11 is adopted.

Go to para 12. Are there any objections to the adoption of para 12? I see none. Para 12 is adopted.

Para 13. Are there any objections to the adoption of para 13? I see none. Para 13 is adopted.

We have adopted all the paras individually. Is there any objection for the entire decision to be adopted as a whole?

If the editors could scroll slowly, and just delete the suggestions, so that they can read properly? Yeah. Continue scrolling. Scroll down. Scroll. Yeah.

Are there any objections to the adoption of this Decision as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 5A** adopted as amended ^[gave]. Thank you.

I now declare Agenda Item 5A closed.

5B. REPORTS OF THE ADVISORY BODIES // RAPPORT DES ORGANISATIONS CONSULTATIVES

The Chairperson:

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Our next item on the Agenda is a report of the three Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN, on their activities. These comprehensive reports are presented in Document WHC/24/46.COM/5B. We will hear from the three Advisory Bodies first, before moving to the discussion and examination of the draft decision. Without any further delay, I would like to invite the Director-General of ICCROM, Ms Aruna Francesca Maria Gujral, to briefly present its report. You have the floor.

ICCROM:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson, Your Excellency Vishal Sharma.

Allow me to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Government of India for hosting this very important World Heritage Committee session here in Delhi. New Delhi has a special place in our hearts, as ICCROM was actually born exactly in New Delhi in 1956, during the ninth session of UNESCO General Conference. For those of you who don't know me yet, I am Aruna Francesca Maria Gujral, Italo-Indian and I am the Director-General of ICCROM. *Namaste*. Good afternoon to all.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished guests,

ICCROM plays a key role in the conservation, preservation and management of cultural heritage worldwide by providing essential capacity-building within the World Heritage Convention. I thank all the distinguished Committee members and States Parties for their continued support to the conservation, protection and management of World Heritage. As Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee, ICCROM provides technical and policy assistance to the statutory processes of the Convention, and in particular, to the fundamental capacity-building work that directly serves World Heritage properties in States Parties. ICCROM supports the drafting and revision of the state of conservation reports for cultural and mixed sites, participates in the Periodic Reporting cycles, reviews the

International Assistance request, undertakes reactive monitoring and advisory missions, attends statutory policy and technical meetings of the Convention, and coordinates the publication of the resource manuals.

The capacity-building work of ICCROM directly responds to the needs and feedback gained from the statutory processes, ensuring that the content develop and share is in line with the priority areas. ICCROM's work on World Heritage is primarily coordinated through the World Heritage Leadership Programme, jointly delivered with IUCN. I take this opportunity to emphasise that the World Heritage Leadership Programme is a programme entirely funded by voluntary contributions, and that operates outside the scope of the World Heritage Fund, where the funds come directly to the Advisory Bodies for capacity-building. I am therefore sincerely grateful to all the donor countries and partners, especially to the Government of Norway, for their continued support, now counting the eighth year, providing vital voluntary contributions which have allowed the delivery of the programme over the past years. I also wish to thank the Government of the Republic of Korea for continuing funding the World Heritage Management goals and impact assessment courses, and the Government of Switzerland for supporting activities for the Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0. I also wish to thank the Australian Government for providing the funds for the development of a Climate Action Toolkit, jointly developed with UNESCO and the three Advisory Bodies altogether. I am also thankful to those States Parties who have undertaken the translations of the resource manuals to make them available and accessible in more languages.

Distinguished Delegates,

The technical expertise of ICCROM can be better utilized, but it needs to be further enhanced to deliver better and more services. Capacity-building needs to be implemented differently from other statutory procedures, with flexibility, agile delivery mechanism and targeted content that can timely respond to the evolving needs of the recipients, while reporting to and aligning with the decision of the Committee. For this to happen, we need to have more sustained and sustainable financial resources coming directly for capacity-building and technical working processes and mechanisms established in order to be more effective, efficient and responsive, with the ultimate goal to timely provide tailored and boosted capacity-building. As we all know, the demand and needs are clearly growing. Over the past few months, I have followed very closely the discussion of the Open-ended Working Group, and I have noted the strong request and need for capacity-building coming from States Parties. I particularly note the point requesting existing and new capacity-building programmes to be reviewed, and that a mechanism to be established to strengthen their funding and coordination to ensure sustainable results focusing on SIDS, Africa, under and non-represented States Parties in nomination in line with processes and requirements of the Convention.

The results and impacts of the World Heritage Leadership Programme and the ICCROM Youth Heritage Africa Programme, focusing on all types of heritage in the African continent strongly demonstrates the need to have specialized capacity-building delivered through a more strategic programmatic approach with longer term impact and durable solutions on the ground. Those activities need to be expanded and better supported through the World Heritage System. A dedicated capacity-building programme and delivery mechanism has to be built, with practitioners and institutions working on sites, beyond diplomatic relations and meetings. To ensure that the content is in line with the procedures and requirements needed for World Heritage, ICCROM coordinates the production of various manuals and guidelines in collaboration with ICOMOS, IUCN, and the World Heritage Centre, and shares the content of these resources through the design and implementation of learning activities such as courses, forums, workshops and also in collaboration with the Category 2 Centres. The ongoing sixth edition of the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum is indeed a great example, serving as a key milestone activity to connect all sides together.

The Chairperson:

Please conclude.

ICCROM:

ICCROM's capacity-building interventions can be tailored to the specific needs of the context, with different duration and modalities spanning across multiple languages and across continents.

Adopting and contextualizing globally renowned tools, standards and models as tailored and local solutions. We focus, inter alia, on World Heritage management effectiveness assessment, World Heritage impact assessment, disaster risk management, climate action, conservation of built heritage. Other ICCROM innovative and highly in-demand programmes focus on building capacity in the cultural creative economy sector in Africa towards transformative socio-economic growth for local communities, targeting youth and women and for example, in the first aid and resilience-building in times of crisis, poli-crisis, natural hazards such as climate change, and man-made disasters. Our scaling up capacity-building projects in Ukraine and in other parts of the world are a concrete example.

Our comprehensive work enables individual heritage practitioners, institutions and communities to become change agents for management and conservation of World Heritage. I vividly encourage and ask all States Parties to the Convention to provide the necessary means and funding to sustainably enable site managers and the site management institutions to actively participate in capacity-building programmes. Through these activities, indeed, we nurture a new generation of professionals who can contribute to the various working processes of the Convention. Supporting sustained capacity-building is the fastest and most efficient way of ensuring the

sustainability of all our collective actions. In our ongoing work to revise the capacity-building strategy for World Heritage together with UNESCO, we will endeavour to ensure that the needed mechanism and working processes are established for capacity-building.

We in ICCROM strongly advocate for having a dedicated funding mechanism to be established for capacity-building for World Heritage that can serve as a strong backbone, foundational for maintaining and boosting the work and the multiple co-benefits of the World Heritage Convention. I profoundly thank all our partners and donors.

The Chairperson:

Please conclude. We have other Advisory Bodies as well, and the time allocated is only 3 to 5 minutes each, which is 300 or 500 words maximum.

ICCROM:

Thank you, sir, I am about to finish.

The Chairperson:

Conclude.

ICCROM:

Necessary funding to technical in-kind support necessary to keep up our capacity-building work. And I kindly plead others to join to make our capacity-building programmes more sustain more sustainable and more impactful, to get closer and faster to the growing needs of our Member States.

Investing in capacity-building for the conservation of our shared heritage is not only a good thing to do for our present, it is our shared responsibility for the generations to come.

I thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

As per the World Heritage Centre, the time allocated to the Advisory Bodies is specifically only 3 to 5 minutes each. Assuming we read at 100 words a minute, this would mean a text that is 300 to 500 words. That's it. You know, George Bernard Shaw, the great English author, once wrote to a friend of his, "Please forgive me for writing a long letter to you because I did not have time to shorten it". So, we need to develop the art to limit how much we say without affecting the substance of it, and that is the art of writing and reading. Yesterday I was giving given an allocated time, and ten times I practiced my statement before speaking, and I got my seconds also correct. So, this means we all request that. So now it's my pleasure to first thank ICCROM for their detailed reporting.

And now it's my pleasure to invite the President of ICOMOS, Mrs Teresa Patricio, to briefly present her report. ICOMOS has been given a time of 3 to 5 minutes maximum. And WHC has written the word "max" in capitals. So, you have the floor now.

ICOMOS :

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

M. le Président, je vais m'adresser en français, si vous le permettez.

Mesdames les Ambassadrices, Messieurs les Ambassadeurs, chers collègues et amis du patrimoine. *Namaste.*

C'est un honneur de vous présenter le travail mené par l'ICOMOS pour la Convention du patrimoine mondial au cours de la dernière année. Sans entrer dans le détail, puisque le rapport complet des activités de l'ICOMOS figure dans les documents diffusés par le Secrétariat, je voudrais commencer par remercier les États parties avec lesquels nous avons été amenés à travailler en 2023 et 2024 pour leur coopération et souvent pour leur flexibilité, que ce soit pour l'organisation de missions d'évaluation ou l'élaboration de rapports d'états de conservation souhaités, parfois dans des situations difficiles. Il nous a souvent fallu nous adapter ensemble à des circonstances variées, mais cependant cela a été toujours très enrichissant.

Je voudrais également souligner l'importance et les effets bénéfiques des nouveaux espaces d'échange et de dialogue entre les États parties et Organisations consultatives. Dans ce cadre, l'ICOMOS a activement contribué à élargir sa collaboration avec les États parties. Vous aurez certainement constaté, à la lecture du rapport de l'ICOMOS que les activités de conseil, qu'il s'agisse de conseil en amont sur des nominations en cours de préparation, qu'il s'agisse d'ateliers de travail sur les listes indicatives ou de missions consultatives en lien avec des projets de conservation et de développement, se sont significativement développées au cours des dernières années, dans la mesure où il facilite le dialogue entre les experts nationaux et experts internationaux et permettent, le cas échéant, de mieux anticiper les difficultés. Ces échanges sont extrêmement fructueux. Le retour d'expérience en atteste clairement.

La réforme du processus d'évaluation avec la mise en œuvre de l'analyse préliminaire et le soutien aux sites inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril afin de les aider à être retirés de cette liste, ont été aussi deux aspects particulièrement importants de notre travail cette année.

L'ICOMOS reste à la disposition des États parties pour développer et déployer tous les efforts possibles en vue de leur prêter assistance par le biais d'ateliers d'experts et de renforcement des capacités, de conseil en amont et d'assistance consultative, en accordant une attention particulière aux États parties sous-représentés sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. ICOMOS a été particulièrement active pour la promotion et la conservation du patrimoine culturel en Afrique.

Servir la conservation du patrimoine mondial est donc au cœur des missions de l'ICOMOS. L'ensemble de notre réseau d'experts, on a environ 12 000 experts dans 132 pays constitués exclusivement, et permettez-moi de vous le dire, de professionnels du patrimoine engagés sur une base du bénévolat, y est profondément dédiée.

Cependant, il serait impossible de terminer aujourd'hui sans partager avec vous nos craintes concernant l'insuffisance des ressources allouées à la mise en œuvre de la Convention par le biais du Fonds du patrimoine mondial. Pour une organisation comme la nôtre, c'est une inquiétude profonde, car il nous semble que c'est désormais la pérennité de la Convention qui est directement menacée. En vous remerciant, M. le Président, pour ce temps de parole, nous sommes, je reste prête à répondre aux questions éventuelles.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much ICOMOS, for your fruitful presentation.

I will now invite the Representative of IUCN, Mr Tim Badman – actually he's very good – to take the floor on the subject. IUCN, it's written three to five minutes by WHC, and the word "max" is in capitals, so, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

As IUCN, we congratulate you on your appointment, thank India for the organization of this meeting. And I bring the Committee the support of IUCN recently appointed Director-General, Dr. Grethel Aguilar, who took up her position in October 2023.

We have established and re-established a distinct World Heritage Team in IUCN to increase our focus on World Heritage and to extend connections with UNESCO on all of our shared priorities. IUCN continues our direct financial support, as well as our significant in-kind support to the work of this Convention, and I'd like to thank all of IUCN's commission experts who provide additional considerable voluntary support, as well as the work of our partners in the Union for Geological Sciences and other earth-science organizations, UNEP-WCMC. And we welcome the growing role of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum, as we've just heard under the previous item. Thanks also to the collaboration with the World Heritage Centre.

Mr Chair,

IUCN's regional and country offices have a growing role in IUCN's new World Heritage Strategy, which was launched at the Committee last year. I'd like to thank, in this instance, the support of the IUCN Asia region for our Delegation represented by Mr Yashveer Bhatnagar, our country representative for India today. And as a diverse international IUCN Delegation, we look forward to many constructive discussions here at 46 COM.

Our report before you notes the positive overall results, firstly, for which we give thanks for nature from the 45th session, and emphasises the positive experience of returning to in person meetings. We are pleased also that between the last meeting and this, we finally caught up with almost all of the delays to evaluations due to COVID-19. We also note that in line with the goal to strengthen regional engagement this year, the IUCN World Heritage Panel for the first time took place in an IUCN regional office, and this is a tendency that we intend to continue wherever feasible and possible.

We are also acting on the proposals for regional balance and note at present, the largest regional representation on the IUCN panel comes from the Africa region.

Mr Chair,

Regarding monitoring, we continue to provide technical advice on the wide range of threats and challenges facing World Heritage properties, and it's important to note the growing mismatch of workload, demands and capacity that's been referred to. There is, we think, a real need to rethink the approach to technical reviews where the volume of request is unsustainable. And unlike with the nominations, there is a challenging backlog of monitoring missions that resulted from COVID-19 and also a range of other issues, including issues related to security.

Mr Chair,

I will, in the interest of time, echo the comments from ICCROM about the success of the World Heritage Leadership Programme, the support of the different donors and including the work on climate change adaptation. And Mr Chair,

I would like to note that we compiled our report earlier this year before the work of the Open-ended Working Group had really got underway, and we're very pleased that a range of the key concerns that we think face this Convention are under discussion through the Open-ended Working Group.

There will be the opportunity, of course, to talk about those later in the agenda. But let me just note the importance that IUCN attaches, firstly, to increasing the priority for nature in the World Heritage Convention and to link this work to the Global Biodiversity Framework. Secondly, to rebalance the List to be inclusive of the heritage of all types and regions. And thirdly, to hear the voices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities through revised procedures. And lastly, to tackle the chronic financial issues that face this Convention – and have faced it throughout my lifetime here of 17 years now – and impact all of its actors.

We are pleased to note the range of side events that are taking place, which will give an opportunity to unpack a range of these issues, and I'd like to single out in particular, the event that will take place on the 27th of July at lunchtime, hosted in collaboration with Brazil, UNESCO and a cross-section of parties to look at the challenges facing nature conservation and the opportunities to do further.

Mr Chair, we are at your service for further questions and discussion, and we look forward to the further successful days of the 46th session.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Tim and IUCN.

The more we get to know about your work, the more appreciation I have in my heart towards the work being done by ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN. Your three Advisory Bodies are the three guardian angels of the Convention and we really appreciate the good work that you do, the time that you spend and how committed you are to this Convention. So please accept my appreciation.

I thank you and I will ask Member States if they have any comments on this agenda item.

Belgium, you have the floor.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

M. le Président, Messieurs et Mesdames des Organisations consultatives,

Tout d'abord, nous voulons vous remercier pour l'immense travail que vous fournissez au quotidien pour protéger le patrimoine mondial.

J'ai une question qui est plutôt une question précise et donc je vais me limiter à cela, vu le temps limité des interventions. Comme l'a rappelé dans son discours d'ouverture Madame la Directrice générale, Madame Azoulay, un des nouveaux défis de la Convention et de davantage veiller à prendre en compte dans les analyses les communautés, les usages et valeurs liés aux expressions immatérielles qui participent à l'identité et à la vitalité des biens et qui sont aussi en lien généralement avec le développement durable. Ma question est la suivante : lors des évaluations des critères de la Convention et en particulier du Critère (vi), les Organisations consultatives semblent parfois en difficulté lorsqu'il faut prendre ces aspects en compte. Pouvez-vous nous dire si les organisations ont les compétences internes suffisantes pour évaluer ce critère dans le cadre du patrimoine mondial, ou si cela pose vraiment un défi pour vos organisations ?

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We warmly thank ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN for their work and for their reports. We particularly praise the capacity-building activities carried out by all three Advisory Bodies, and we acknowledge the need for more funding devoted to this kind of activities.

We commend once again the change introduced by ICOMOS in 2023, in the evaluation procedure to ensure a more geographically balanced representation of its World Heritage Panel members. We are closely following the reform of the evaluation process with the introduction of the Preliminary Assessment. We look forward to having more information at the end of this first cycle. From our side, we have found the process so far efficient and constructive, and we hope it will produce positive results in terms of the quality of the nomination dossier and in terms of ensuring important inscriptions and supporting a more geographically balanced World Heritage List.

We are well aware of the increasing workload that Advisory Bodies have to face, especially linked to the monitoring of the states of conservation due to the rise of the number of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. An open and engaged reflection is needed at this regard.

We continue to believe in the value of an open, transparent and constructive dialogue between the States Parties and the Advisory Bodies pursuing our common objectives for the preservation of World Heritage.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Rwanda.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci M. le Président.

L'État partie du Rwanda remercie les organes consultatifs des efforts qu'ils déploient dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de la Convention et note avec satisfaction les réalisations telles qu'elles sont reportées dans les rapports des organisations.

Le Rwanda note à cet égard des éléments importants auxquels ils devraient plus concentrer les efforts pour l'exercice suivant.

1. Renforcer davantage les réseaux entre les gestionnaires des sites du patrimoine en vue d'échanger de l'expérience et les bonnes pratiques.

2. Renforcer les capacités de la conservation des sites du patrimoine en s'attellant particulièrement sur l'évaluation d'impact face au changement climatique, en vue de garantir la pérennisation des sites à l'égard du défi mondial qui est le climat.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair. I'll read first.

India would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the three Advisory Bodies on the very important work that they do each year for the Convention and for the Committee. Their efforts collectively demonstrate the remarkable progress in strengthening and implementation of the World Heritage Convention. India appreciates the significant strides made through the World Heritage Leadership Programme, the Youth Africa Programme and the Programme on First Aid and Resilience in Times of Crisis. We also appreciate the efforts in supporting sites on the World Heritage List in Danger through expert workshops and advisory assistance.

We acknowledge the concerns raised by the increasing demands on the Advisory Bodies without adequate funding as it has been eloquently presented, which emphasises the need for enhanced resourcing and perhaps also about practically rethinking about any new cost implications made in the Convention's operations. Despite the challenges, our Advisory Bodies continue to support the conservation and management of the World Heritage properties, and we commend their instrumental role in advancing the goals of the World Heritage Convention.

Mr Chair,

I think, you know, this is one very important aspect wherein we are discussing the roles of the three Advisory Bodies on the implementation of the Convention. When we went through the reports and the brief presentation made, of course, two of the three Advisory Bodies articulated their concern about the financial sustainability. The third one didn't articulate it, but I'm sure they will also echo the same sentiments. We are aware of the fact that evaluations are turning expensive. The World Heritage Fund per property is also dwindling. We are also aware of the fact that one Advisory Body gets one fifth of what other two Advisory Bodies are getting. So, we would like to understand more from them, if the Chair allows to give them slightly more time, in understanding how the financial constraints are impacting their activity or quality of assessments, and are they open to the idea of having more service providers? Because this is one aspect which is also being discussed in the Open-ended Working Group, and what is their opinion in this regard?

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, India.

I will now give the floor to the Advisory Bodies to respond to the questions by the States Parties. Belgium had asked a query on Criterion (vi), if I'm not mistaken, to ICOMOS.

You have the floor, ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

Je voudrais tout d'abord remercier les délégués pour les mots gentils et de soutien que vous nous avez exprimés. Pour répondre à la question de la Délégation de la Belgique. Cette question du critère (vi) évidemment, c'est un élément très important pour nous, comme tous les autres critères, comme l'évaluation et tous les autres critères. ICOMOS est un système implémenté, un système, on fait un screening identique pour tous les dossiers, pour les différents types de critères. Et, notamment pour le critère (vi), on travaille avec notre groupe, un groupe de travail basé sur les droits, sur les droits.

I'm sorry, I'm going to speak to English because I know the name, in French it doesn't come. It's our rights-based approach working group. We prepare a kind of a template to make a complete screening while applying the Criteria (vi). So, we have the capacity to evaluate this criterion and so I hope I answered to the question of the Delegate of Belgium.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

India, can you list your questions again? Question 1. Question 2. Question 3. Specifically. And to whom are these questions directed? Each of your questions, do you want, any of the three can answer, or you want all three of them to answer? So, first list your questions. And who would you like the answer from?

Thank you.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

No, anybody could answer. But I can repeat the questions. Because we are hearing statistics about how evaluations are turning expensive, and there is a financial issue, issue of financial sustainability. We just wanted the Advisory Bodies to throw light on how the financial constraints are impacting their activity or their quality of assessments. And, because we raised a point that there are new mechanisms which are being introduced in the *Operational Guidelines*, which are turning, you know, turning it more expensive as well as time consuming. So that was one point.

And second is that there was this Open-ended Working Group also talking about the additional service providers. So, we wanted to understand or know the view of the Advisory Bodies in this regard. These were the two fundamental questions that I asked.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, any of the three Advisory Bodies can respond to this question? Are you seeing? IUCN or ICOMOS, would you like to respond to this?

You have the floor.

IUCN:

Yes. Thanks. Thank you, Chair.

Perhaps just a couple of comments on other interventions, if you would agree as well.

Firstly, just to pick up on the point from Belgium, I think the question of. Sorry, I hope you can hear me. The question of recognising diverse worldviews applies to some of the other criteria as well. So, I think it is important for Criteria (vi). But as a whole, we think there are discontents on those issues with the way that nature and culture have been separated.

Mr Chair,

Just also in the interest of time, I think, just to support the two points that Rwanda made, specifically about two of the needs, and the network of site managers, is something that we're working on, both in relation to the World Heritage Leadership Programme and also through the work we do as IUCN, with the IUCN World Heritage Outlook, which is our periodic assessment. Next will be prepared for 2025, where we try to engage site managers effectively in that work, and particularly to invite site managers to join the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, which is the major expert network through which we access the voluntary support that I referred to.

If I could just turn to India's two questions. There's a long answer and a short answer. But I think the short answer, in terms of where the greatest gaps are, is not in the evaluation process, but is in the monitoring process, and in particular in the workload that is provided to follow all of the sites. So, I think we can cope normally with the preparation of the reports, but it's to be able to deal with all of the sites that don't get reported. As the numbers of sites increase and the number of state of conservation reports generally stays the same, we will have an exceptional issue next year because we've got a very large backlog of sites coming out of COVID-related delays, so there's a sort of pinch point next year. But the chronic issue in the first place is the workload for monitoring.

And secondly, is the specific range of requests we get for technical reviews of very particular development applications or proposals, review of impact assessments. So, it's not the advice on impact assessment, it's the specific review of those, which I think takes us really outside of anything that we've got the capacity to deal with directly.

And I think to answer the point on service providers. So, also, "service providers" is a word that I don't particularly like as a phrase. But if the point is to find other sources of support and advice on World Heritage, then we spend all of our time doing that ourselves. I've mentioned some of the organisations that we collaborate with. Certainly, more input from the Indigenous Peoples' Forum would be one aspect of voices that we cannot necessarily represent for ourselves. And certainly, more technical support on the review of impact assessments and very specific issues of impact assessments would be something where it seems to me there's a very large gap.

I think it is helpful to the Committee, I think, to evaluate what can be done through the ways the Advisory Bodies can adapt our own advice that we provide you. And as I've said, we also share costs in a range of this work. So, I think analysing what is expected to be funded by the Committee and what is the subject of extrabudgetary fundraising by the Advisory Bodies in partnership with the Centre, is another part of the answer. And now I'm getting into the long answer, so I'll stop, Mr Chair.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

India is your question answered? Because there were two of them and IUCN has answered. You did not express a specific. Which of the Advisory Bodies would answer? So, I guess that would satisfy. Unless, ICOMOS, you want to take the floor? Okay.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I would like only to perhaps, to complement something else to the Distinguished Delegate of India. Our main concern is, well, if you see our budget, you can understand the amount of and the quantity of work that ICOMOS and Advisory Bodies need to do for the process. It is not only with the technical and the capacity-building, but we have for the nominations all the desk reviewers, all the evaluation of the nominations. But we have also now with the Preliminary Assessment, a new phase, but we have also the evaluation and the following of the state of conservation. So, the amount of work is enormous. And I wanted only to guarantee you that we have the capacity to do. So, the quality of the work is there. And I can reassure you that the assessment and the quality of the work, it will maintain. But of course, we need to have funds for that because the amount of work is getting bigger and bigger. So, we need to be conscious of this fact. Thank you very much.

And perhaps, if I may profit to answer to the Delegate of Italy that made a comment on what ICOMOS does to ensure more geographical balance. So, it's something that ICOMOS is very, really very concerned. And we work daily to have an equilibrium among the five regions with our expert team that is working for the World Heritage matters.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. IUCN and ICOMOS.

Mexico, I've seen you have raised your plate. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

We would also like to echo the recognition and appreciation for the excellent work carried out by the Advisory Bodies. As you know, Mexico works hand in hand with all three Advisory Bodies as well as with other relevant bodies when it comes to museums.

We would like to make a request here. We always focus on strengthening cooperation with C2C's. This is a matter of the utmost importance for us, particularly in the face of climate change and new challenges in terms of the conservation of World Heritage, which were not anticipated at the creation of this Convention in 1972. So, there's something that Mexico always takes into account, and we wish to focus on this more within this Committee. We need to work with site managers and authorities involved in protecting World Heritage. There are programmes led by UNESCO to involve youth in this, we've seen this, but we also need to involve more closely communities of everyday people who do not work in World Heritage, but yet are impacted by World Heritage in one way or another. We also need to work with authorities who work in the area of civil protection, firemen, police officers. There isn't a specific project in place to work with all of these agents who are also in some way involved in protecting World Heritage. We need integrated conservation and management protection as well as risk management plans.

We would also like to thank you for this new guidance, which has focused on the impact of climate change on World Heritage.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

But there is no question. Your comments are noted. Thank you for your expert views. Any other Member State would like to comment or seek any questions that need to be answered? Thank you. I see that there are no more questions and comments.

I therefore invite you, dear colleagues, to proceed with the adoption of the draft Decision **46 COM 5B**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président, nous n'avons pas d'amendement concernant le Point 5B.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Rapporteur.

There are no amendments to the draft decision. Are there any objections before we adopt it? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 5B** adopted. *[gave/]*

Thank you very much. I therefore now declare Item 5B closed.

5C. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR WORLD HERITAGE IN AFRICA // RAPPORT D'AVANCEMENT SUR LA STRATÉGIE POUR LE PATRIMOINE MONDIAL EN AFRIQUE

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues and friends,

We will move on to the next item, which concerns the implementation of the strategy of the World Heritage in Africa contained in Document WHC/24/46.COM/5C.

Before we hear from the World Heritage Centre on this matter, I would like to pay tribute to a towering figure in the realm of heritage preservation and a guiding light of cultural stewardship in Africa, who has sadly passed away on 29th of April this year. Serving as a rapporteur of the World Heritage Committee and Chairperson of the General Assembly of State Parties, among many other honorific tasks, Professor Dawson Munjeri from Zimbabwe has left an indelible imprint on World Heritage and the UNESCO community. His immense contribution led to the creation of the African World Heritage Fund, to the recognition of more African sites as World Heritage properties, and following the adoption of the UNESCO strategy for Priority Africa in 2021, Professor Munjeri had accepted to coordinate the development of the strategy of World Heritage in Africa, which we are about to discuss. With your permission, I would like to propose a one-minute silence in his memory.

Thank you very much. Allow me now to give the floor to Mr Muhammad Juma Muhammad, chief of the Africa Unit of the World Heritage Centre, to present to us this document. You have the floor, sir.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Mr Chair, I'm going to present the Item 5C, whose report is available in the 46.COM/5C.

Mr Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee,

I am pleased to present the Distinguished members of the Committee, the progress that has been achieved implementing the strategy of World Heritage in Africa in accordance with the Decision **45 COM [5]C** of the World Heritage Committee. The strategy serves as a crucial tool to advance the UNESCO Global Priority Africa, in particular the Main Objective 1 of Flagship 3. It continues to fulfil the promise made by the Director-General of UNESCO, Madam Audrey Azoulay, during the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee in Fuzhou, China, in 2021, to conduct regular assessment of and to facilitate consultation in situation in Africa and propose concrete measures to mobilize international support for a successful, effective and sustainable implementation of 1972 Convention in Africa. As you recall, Mr Chair, the strategy identified clear priority areas and targets to be achieved by 2025 and 2029, which aligns with the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029. This presentation will focus mainly on the presentation from September 2023 to May 2024.

Chairperson, Distinguished members of the Committee,

States Parties are the most critical actors in the successful implementation of strategy. Next slide please. To that effect, the Centre works very closely with the States Parties to mobilize funds and stakeholders and to monitor implementation at the national level. In February this year, during the mid-cycle assessment of the Regional Action Plan and in close collaboration with the African Cultural Fund, the Centre organized, with the focal point of Africa to the 1972 Convention and explained in detail the priorities, objectives and target of the Strategy. All Focal Points from Africa region agrees to better align and create synergies between Africa Regional Action Plan and the Strategy to enhance our efforts in dealing with nominations site on the List of World Heritage in Danger and capacity development. Our focus will be in particular on the 11 countries with no site inscribed on the World Heritage List, the 20 sites on the List of World Heritage in Danger and the capacity development for national experts, site managers, local community and stakeholders, particularly women and youth. Regarding the site managers, the Centre continues to support the newly formed network of African Site Managers to facilitate capacity-building, exchange of experience and peer learning. Next slide please.

Mr Chair,

In the period from September to May, Somalia submitted its first Tentative List in March 2004, following special training for local experts and authorities in Mombasa, Kenya, on World Heritage Process. This is an important milestone as from now on Somalia will engage in the process of developing nomination this year. In addition, two countries still without sites on the List, namely Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, submitted their nomination dossier in January 2012 for possible inscription on the next session of the World Heritage Committee in 2025.

To ensure our success toward the nomination, in close collaboration with African World Fund and the Arab Region Centre for World Heritage, the Centre and Advisory Board initiated training on Preliminary Assessment to prepare States Parties from Africa and Arab States for the new procedure in nomination process. The training courses, organized in Bahrain in May 2024, gathering 22 participants from 18 countries, including Algeria, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Kenya, Namibia, Senegal, Tanzania, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Next slide please.

For the List of World Heritage in Danger, Mr Chair, currently 20 sites on Africa country or continent are inscribed on the List. The first significant step before Committee removes this site from the List is the development and implementation of corrective measures that are needed to reach desired state of conservation. To date, all concerned States Parties have received training on developing the DSCOR. In April 2024, for example Mr Chair, at last training workshop organized in Nairobi, Kenya, where local experts from East African countries were trying to develop corrective measures and costed action plan. Forty-four participants were involved in this training. We are indeed making progress. After the Committee has adopted its last session the DSCOR developed by Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau for the transboundary property of Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve. The Committee is examining and adopt at this session, present session, the DSCOR for Air and Ténéré Natural Reserves. Next slide please.

Chairperson and Distinguished members of the Committee,

The Secretariat continues its initiative to institutionalize, enhance and develop new capacity development measures in Africa. And in this regard, the Centre launched the third phase of Mentorship Programme in June 2024. As of today, 60 junior local experts have been engaged in this programme with equal number of 30 women and 30 men experts. In addition, in close collaboration with ICOMOS, ICCROM, the Centre organized a training course on Heritage Impact Assessment in Mauritius involving 30 heritage experts and practitioners from United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Eritrea. This workshop provided training on the new guidance and toolkit for impact assessment in World Heritage context, and at improving management of developing projects in hand in around World Heritage sites in urban areas. Next slide please.

One of the strategic primary objectives is to support States Parties in leveraging good conservations for socio-economic development and sustainable livelihoods. For that, the Centre supports initiatives related to entrepreneurship and conservation work to facilitate socio-economic development, particularly for women and

youth. During this period, Mr Chair, two initiatives were supported: one conservation project in "Parc national des oiseaux du Djoudj" of Senegal, where women's association worked to transform Typha into mats, creating economic opportunity. The second one is in Zanzibar, a conservation project of cinema that will be used as a hub for cultural activity, launched in April this year. These initiatives are planned to be expanded to other countries, other sites in Africa to enhance livelihood and socio-economic development with youth, women using new technology.

Mr Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee,

Implementing strategy will cover over the period of seven years between 2022 and 2027, and mobilizing funds will require the joint effort of all partners and international community. I therefore want to take this opportunity to thank members of, numbers of donors for their precious, for their financial support, namely the Government of Australia, China, France, Japan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Korea, Portugal, the Netherlands, Norway, and the Sultan of Oman. UNESCO has successfully started to implement priority targets of the Strategy.

Mr Chairman, Distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for your clear presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments on this agenda item.

Japan, followed by India.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

As we mentioned earlier, under Agenda Item 5A, Japan puts a great importance on Africa when we consider our assistance for both nomination and protection of World Heritage sites globally.

Speaking of nomination, we believe that there must be many heritage sites of world value in Africa that have not yet been fully recognized, and it is easy to imagine that the lack of progress in inscribing such properties on the World Heritage List, despite the efforts of each State Party, is mainly due to issues from a technical perspective. Therefore, Japan intends to support the inscription of specific World Heritage sites through capacity-building, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the very important presentation by the World Heritage Centre.

Now, let me touch upon capacity-building programme for the nomination of World Heritage sites in the African region, which is designed to assist ten countries who are among the 12 countries without any inscription in the World Heritage List at the time of the inception of the programme. This programme is strongly expected to reduce the gap among States Parties on the World Heritage List by enhancing the representation of Africa, one of the global priorities of UNESCO, as we have been having an enthusiastic discussion in Open-ended Working Group. Since its inception, this programme has produced steady progress in line with our initial expectations thanks to the efforts of each partner, Member States, World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies. We believe it is still fresh in our memory that Nyungwe National Park, Rwanda, was inscribed on the World Heritage List last year in Riyadh as one of the first sites on it. Following this successful precedent, two nomination files were submitted this year, namely Gola-Tiwai Complex from Sierra Leone and Écosystèmes côtiers et marins de l'Archipel des Bijagós - Omatí Minhô from Guinea-Bissau. We are quite satisfied with that. The programmes are going on in other Member States as well, and would like to see further achievements in relation to preparing for their nominations.

When it comes to conservation, we have a project in Cabo Verde which is planned to protect the World Heritage sites by promotion of tourism and regional revitalisation in the time of post COVID-19.

Finally, we have the honour to announce that Japan has decided to initiate its support to the proposed programme titled Approach to the Concept and Practice of Heritage Authenticity in Africa through Japanese Funds-in-Trust, JFIT. We believe that this programme will contribute to the further promotion of the inscription of World Heritage sites in the African region, and addressing the issue of the representation of the List. Japan intends to continue its multi-layered contribution to the representation, protection and promotion of the World Heritage in the African region.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to India, followed by Zambia.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chairperson.

It is with pleasure that we note the remarkable progress made in the implementation of the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa. The World Heritage Centre has demonstrated exceptional commitment to preserving the rich and diverse heritage of the African continent. We congratulate Somalia on submitting its first Tentative List and

Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone for submitting their first nomination dossiers for possible inscription in 2025. It is through the Centre's targeted training and technical support that we are able to see an increased representation of African heritage on the World Heritage List.

We commend the support extended by some Member States in launching the third phase of the Mentorship Programme. This initiative significantly contributes to building a pool of skilled professionals in Africa with a focus on gender equality. The training workshops offered to women in Senegal is yet another effort towards gender equality, helping women develop entrepreneurship and contributing to sustainable development.

As we reflect on these achievements, we must also recognise the challenges that remain. Effective communication and mobilisation of stakeholders, including local communities, indigenous people and civil society are essential for the successful implementation of the Strategy. As the Honourable Prime Minister mentioned yesterday in his speech, India stands committed to reduce the regional imbalance with respect to Africa, and initiate programmes for capacity-building in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre. We congratulate the World Heritage Centre, its partners and all stakeholders for their tireless efforts in successfully implementing the strategy for World Heritage in Africa.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Zambia, followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Honourable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to extend our deepest condolences to our Zimbabwean counterparts and the African fraternity and moreover, the Heritage global family, on the great loss of our dear Professor Dawson Munjeri, who was not just a mentor for me, that is an expert now, but also for the rest of Africa. And as we take this floor for the first time as the State Party of Zambia, our appreciation goes to the host Government of India for their warm hospitality. And also, I would also want to specifically state that even when we saw that we were likely to have problems in terms of movement from our country, the Embassy of India was very swift in dealing with our issues, so I would want to specifically acknowledge that aspect. It was unprecedented. Hence, we have most of our delegates here. And most of all, I would also want to appreciate, you know, the green environment that we are able to, I mean, to see within the city of New Delhi.

Honourable Chairperson,

Having listened to the presentation, on the report on Priority Africa, I would like to state that, you know, as State Party of Zambia, we would like to join the rest of the members who are who have already, that is, taken the floor in trying to appreciate the role that is being taken by the Secretariat, undertaken by the Secretariat in trying to make sure that the issues to do with Africa are taken on the platform and on the global stage. We would like to also appreciate the governments that have already, that is pledged to work with the African, that is, fraternity in trying to make sure that, you know, the conservation and management programmes are undertaken.

To this end, I would like to thank you, Mr Chairman. I submit.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, my brother from Zambia for your kind words.

I now give the floor to the Republic of Korea, followed by Viet Nam.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Republic of Korea welcomes the progress report and notes that the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa has been bolstered by collaborating through relevant partnerships and initiatives. This year, the Republic of Korea hosted the 2024 Korea-Africa Summit, the first multilateral summit which brought together 48 African countries. This milestone event demonstrates our commitment to promoting shared growth, sustainability and solidarity.

In line with this commitment and drawing on our experience and lessons learned from cooperation projects supporting Africa, such as biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management for integrated community development in the protected areas of Madagascar, the Republic of Korea will continue to support African countries through capacity-building projects for heritage. We also anticipate the second workshop on World Heritage Interpretation and Presentation in Africa, scheduled to be held next month by WHIPIC, a Category 2 Centre in Korea. The Republic of Korea will continue to collaborate with African States Parties to better implement the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Viet Nam, and after which the list of States Parties will be exhausted, and I will give to the Observer State Party of the People's Republic of China. Viet Nam, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Viet Nam / La Délégation du Viet Nam :

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Personally, taking the floor for the first time, I would like to take this opportunity to say how much I'm impressed by the rich culture and heritage each civilization, along with modern developments of an incredible India.

M. le Président, nous aimerions remercier le Secrétariat pour le rapport exhaustif sur la mise en œuvre de cette stratégie importante. Étant membre du Groupe des amis de la priorité l'Afrique, le Viet Nam se félicite des efforts continus des États membres de l'UNESCO, des Organisations consultatives ainsi que d'autres partenaires visant à soutenir la conservation et la gestion efficace et durable du patrimoine culturel de l'Afrique, qui est connu de sa richesse, et l'importance que les 11 États parties africains non encore représentés sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial à élaborer une proposition d'inscription à leur demande pour améliorer la représentativité et la balance de la Liste du patrimoine mondial ainsi que de renforcer le rôle des experts du patrimoine africain et leur implication dans le processus du patrimoine mondial en Afrique et dans d'autres régions.

Le rapport a également mentionné un autre défi vis à vis de la mise en œuvre de cette stratégie, qui est la communication pour mobiliser et atteindre les bénéficiaires, ce qui restreint l'impact des activités. C'est pourquoi le Viet Nam appuie les initiatives qui permettent d'augmenter l'utilisation des nouvelles technologies, la création de base de données, ainsi que l'élaboration et la diffusion des outils de communication sur le patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the People's Republic of China, followed by Colombia.

The Observer Delegation of China:

Mr Chairperson,

Please allow me to congratulate you for the successful convening of this session. We would also like to thank the Host Country of India for their hospitality. We have seen doves flying in this meeting hall. With these beautiful creatures around us, and with your capable leadership and wisdom, I am confident that the agenda items will go smoothly in a professional way and the session will be a great success.

As regarding this agenda item, I wish to commend the Secretariat for their efficient work and well-prepared report.

Dear colleagues,

The Africa region contains a remarkable variety of nature and cultural heritage. To date, the region has 103 properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. However, dear colleagues, this is not an adequate number compared to the huge potential of the continent. The Operational Strategy for Priority Africa adopted by UNESCO's General Conference at the 41st session, not only stresses the imperative need to protect and preserve Africa's magnificent and diverse cultural and natural heritage, but also emphasises the need to reinforce capability development. In this context, Mr Chairperson, China continuously provides support to World Heritage capacity-building in Africa. Recently, China and the World Heritage Centre are working closely on the establishment of Funds-in-Trust of US\$ 2 million for World Heritage capacity-building in Africa. We hope that with this programme launched, we could witness more heritage sites inscribed and better preserved in Africa, and we hope to work with other partners to support the implementation of Priority Africa in the field of World Heritage conservation.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Xièxiè. And those are the doves of peace and prosperity, specially brought in.

So, with that, I'll give the floor to Colombia, followed by Azerbaijan.

The Observer Delegation of Colombia:

[Interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

From Colombia, we wanted to underscore the importance of the work done under the Strategy for World Heritage in Africa, because we recognize their unique specificities, experiences and needs. And we can learn a lot from this, particularly when it comes to learning from the digital economy, challenges and conflict situations, and the work being done on integration.

Indeed, our national development plan includes a racial justice component which underscores the importance of ethnic communities and the need to defend their heritage and ensure connection between peoples, as is the case in Africa, and which we could learn from.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Azerbaijan, followed by Botswana.

The Observer Delegation of Azerbaijan:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I also would like to echo my colleagues in thanking you for your excellent stewardship and, with regard to the report, also, I would like to thank the Secretariat for the report.

As a strong supporter of Africa, Azerbaijan has always supported the initiatives of the UNESCO regarding the priority of Africa. This has been our priority issue during Azerbaijan's chairmanship at the Non-Aligned Movement, where we have announced two global calls to support the post-pandemic recovery of Africa and SIDS, allocating US\$ 1 million to each calls, as well as through Azerbaijan-UNESCO Fund-in-Trust, where important projects in the field of safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage in Africa have been implemented successfully, and we are keen to continue assisting the countries in need with capacity-building activities, and ready to share our expertise for the effective conservation of heritage sites.

The work of the World Heritage Centre with stakeholders in Africa, both with relevant organisations and States Parties, is very important in the framework of the capacity-building strategy. The main objectives, capacity-building programmes and illicit trafficking of cultural property outlined in the Flagship Programme 3 of the Operational Strategy of Priority Africa, which Azerbaijan fully supported, are relevant not only in Africa but in the other regions as well, and need to be addressed effectively. We believe that the capacity-building activities are the cornerstone for the effective preservation of cultural heritage.

Considering the importance to safeguard the rich heritage of Africa, Azerbaijan financially contributed to the African World Heritage Fund, and we are planning to continue our support to Africa World Heritage Fund. Azerbaijan is ready to assist African states and organise workshops and trainings for African experts. I would like to remind that the last two years, National Commission of Azerbaijan for UNESCO organised capacity-building activities for 24 secretaries generals of the National Commissions of African Countries and we are planning to continue this initiative.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Botswana.

Before that, the three Advisory Bodies, I will only be able to give the floor to you for one minute, but I may not be able to give to all three because we need ten minutes to adopt the decision.

So, Botswana followed by Mauritius. Is that Mauritius? I can't read it. Okay, Botswana, you have the floor, quickly.

The Observer Delegation of Botswana:

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving us the floor.

Since this is our first time to make a contribution at this prestigious heritage gathering, we would like to appreciate the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to our Delegation by your beautiful country, and also congratulate India for a well-organized meeting.

Mr Chairperson,

In order to support the Southern African Member States in increasing the number of inscriptions on the World Heritage List as per the results framework which intends to identify, protect and manage the cultural and natural heritage for sustainable development in the region, Botswana intends to complete the reviewing of or updating of our Tentative List.

Mr Chairperson,

Botswana is in the process of reviewing its Tentative World Heritage List. An initial assessment of the potential eight sites was conducted in 2023, last year. During the period, eight out of ten sites were visited by members of the National World Heritage Committee. The exercise is planned to be completed during the current financial year. Mr Chairperson, we are currently working on developing the state of the conservation report for the Okavango Delta World Heritage sites, to be submitted to the World Heritage Committee by December 2024.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Mauritius, to be followed by Serbia.

The Observer Delegation of Mauritius:

Thank you, Chair.

Permit me, at the outset, to congratulate you on your nomination as Chairperson and India for hosting this World Heritage Committee and its commitment at the highest level, demonstrated by the presence of the Honourable Prime Minister of India at the opening ceremony.

We had the opportunity to host an HIA-VIA capacity-building workshop this year and would like to thank UNESCO and Advisory Bodies, as well as the participating States Parties for this. Mauritius wishes to thank UNESCO Secretariat and Advisory Bodies for their continuous support and advice with respect to our two World Heritage sites. We also thank different countries for supporting the Strategic Priority Africa.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Serbia to be followed by ICOMOS.

La Délégation de la Serbie (Observateur) :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je voudrais d'abord, au nom de la Serbie, remercier à notre aimable hôte et vous féliciter, M. le Président, pour la présidence de cet événement exceptionnel.

Nous tenons beaucoup à dire que le Fonds africain pour le Patrimoine mondial est très important, dont nous soutenons le fonctionnement matériellement tous les ans, et nous en sommes très fiers. Ainsi, avec notre engagement auprès du Groupe des amis de l'Afrique à l'UNESCO. Et nous voulons féliciter tous ceux qui ont reconnu et qui ont pris la parole aujourd'hui pour l'Afrique et pour notre commun, nos actions communes en Afrique.

Merci et félicitations.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

ICOMOS, you have the floor for one minute.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chairperson.

ICOMOS has been very active in the promotion of the conservation of cultural heritage in Africa. Capacity-building and awareness lie at the core of our actions. ICOMOS Africa Group consists of experts from 26 countries, and we are spearheading the instituting of more committees in the region.

The African World Heritage Fund is also an important partner for ICOMOS. Activities relating to World Heritage on the continent is providing funding for African experts to attend the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel and to participate as Observers in the ICOMOS technical evaluation missions of new nominations. We continue to partner on capacity-building of African experts on World Heritage. The first capacity-building workshop on Preliminary Assessment process presented to African and Arab experts in last May, was made possible through the collaboration with African World Heritage Fund and Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

IUCN, you have the floor for one minute to be followed by ICCROM.

UICN :

Merci, M. le Président.

L'IUCN travaille étroitement en collaboration avec le Centre et les Organisations consultatives et le Fond pour le Patrimoine mondial africain pour contribuer à la mise en œuvre de la Priorité Afrique à travers quatre actions majeures. La première, réaliser des études thématiques pour contribuer au renforcement du nombre de sites africains sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, avec une priorité donnée aux pays qui n'ont pas encore de sites inscrits ; accompagner des biens inscrits dans l'élaboration de la mise en œuvre de l'état de conservation souhaité en vue du retrait de la Liste en péril ; mettre en place un mécanisme de financement durable et la valorisation du patrimoine mondial africain ; et enfin, M. le Président, renforcer les capacités des jeunes professionnels africains dans la mise en œuvre de la Convention de patrimoine mondial, notamment à travers le Programme de mentorat et le World Heritage Leadership Programme.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

ICCROM, you have the floor for one minute.

ICCROM:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

ICCROM is fully committed and supportive to the various efforts mobilized for the Priority Africa agenda through our Youth Heritage Africa Programme. We welcome the ongoing discussions of the Open-ended Working Group that suggested to establish an Africa 2035 programme that continues the achievements of the Africa 2009 programme, which was implemented by ICCROM and other partners as capacity-building institutions. The programme directly collaborated with key heritage stakeholders in all of the African States Parties and the Steering Committee, as the decision-making body, had a majority of directors of cultural heritage from the region, elected on a rotating basis. They decided on the programme of work so that the African countries had full ownership to the capacity-building programmes. As ICCROM, the capacity-building Advisory Body, the technical expertise of ICCROM can be better utilized to deliver better integrated results for Priority Africa that can enable heritage to contribute to socio-economic growth of local communities.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see that there are no more questions and comments.

I therefore invite you, dear colleagues, to proceed with the adoption of draft Decision **46 COM 5C**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous avons effectivement reçu un amendement, soumis par la Zambie, coécrit par le Kenya et le Rwanda, amendement qui propose l'insertion d'un paragraphe 7 : « Remercie également le Gouvernement du Kenya d'avoir accueilli l'atelier sur la Liste indicative de la Somalie et celui de l'Afrique du Sud pour avoir accueilli l'atelier sur l'examen à mi-cycle du troisième cycle de l'exercice des rapports périodiques pour l'Afrique ».

Paragraphe suivant. Propose d'insérer : « et le Fonds du patrimoine mondial africain » aux côtés des « États parties africains », de même que le Programme phare 3 de la Stratégie opérationnelle pour la priorité Afrique 2022-2029.

Enfin, le sous-point C du même paragraphe, propose la suppression de la mention « mentoré via le Programme de mentorat ».

Et enfin, dernier paragraphe, « Demande au Centre du patrimoine mondial, en coopération avec le Fonds du patrimoine mondial africain, de suivre la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie ».

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We'll now go paragraph par paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 6. They have not been amended. Can you just scroll down? Are there any objections to adoptions of paras 1 to 6? I see none. Paras 1 to 6 have been adopted.

Para 7. "Also thanks the Government of Kenya for hosting". Are there any objections to the adoption of para 7?

Republic of Korea, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Just that a minor point. There is a repetition of "for hosting". I think the second one can be deleted. For the review of, I think "hosting" can be deleted.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Korea. "Thanks the Government of Kenya for hosting the Tentative Listing Workshop for Somalia and South Africa, for the review of the Mid-Cycle Review Workshop of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting for Africa".

Yes. Are there any views regarding this para, before it's adopted? I see none, but I'm keeping this para open till we go down. Yes. I have not hit the hammer.

Rapporteur, you have the floor.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you.

I think what Korea meant was deleting "the review". So, "thanking the South African Government for hosting the Mid-Cycle Review Workshop", and not: "hosting the review of the review workshop", so we should delete "the review" instead of "hosting", if I'm not mistaken.

The Chairperson:

Mr Rapporteur, are you okay? If you can read the sentence, is it grammatically correct?

And I request Member States to please, when you fill up the blue form, please give a cogent grammatical sentence.

Mr Rapporteur, you have the floor.

The Rapporteur:

"Thanks the Government of Kenya for hosting the Tentative Listing Workshop for Somalia". And maybe we should add "the Government of South Africa for hosting the Mid-Cycle Review Workshop of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting for Africa". And then delete the 's' at "governments" before "Kenya".

"Also thanks the Government of Kenya for hosting the Tentative Listing Workshop for Somalia, and the Government of South Africa for hosting the Mid-Cycle Review Workshop of the Third Cycle".

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Kenya, are you okay with that? Is that? Is your intention covered by these corrections?

The Delegation of Kenya:

Much obliged. Yes, it's true, Chairman. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Viet Nam, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

First of all, we support the proposal by Kenya to add this paragraph.

Secondly, we still have some duplication of both "governments" and "for hosting". So just to improve the language, can we just say: "also thanks the Governments of Kenya and South Africa for respectively hosting". And then "the Tentative Listing Workshop for Somalia and the Mid-Cycle Review Workshop". Yes.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any objections to para 7 as it appears now before adopting?

I see none, but I will not hit the hammer.

But go down to the next para 8. "Calls upon". Is there any objection to para 8, as amended?

Viet Nam, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

I don't have any objection. Let's just support those amendments.

I just want to add a little amendment to 8A. So, at the end, at 8A, "to assist in developing a nomination at their request". I think that we should respect the sovereignty of those countries.

The Chairperson:

So noted Viet Nam.

Are there any objections to this para, before it is adopted? I see none. Can we go down to the next amendment? Are there any objections to adoption of para 8C? I see no objections.

Can we go down to the next amendment, if at all there are any further? Yes. Request the Heritage Centre in partnership with the World Heritage Fund. Okay. No problem. All right. Are there any objections to this? I see none. Okay.

Can we just scroll down to all the paras? Are there any objections to adopting the paras as a whole? The Decision as a whole. I see none. This Decision is adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Thank you. I therefore declare Item 5C now closed.

Dear colleagues,

We have now reached the end of our afternoon session. We will resume at 10:00 am tomorrow morning with the examination of the following items:

- 6A: World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy.
- 6B: Progress Report – Category 2 Centres.
- 7: State of conservation – General Item.
- 7A: State of conservation of Properties on the List in Danger.

I also remind all Bureau members of our second meeting at 9:20 am tomorrow in the Summit Room on level 2.

But before we close for the day, I will give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre.

You have the floor, sir.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I just want to remind all the delegates that we have two side events this evening. The first one will start at 6:00 pm at the Advisory Body space. And the title of the side event is a Contribution of the IUCN Green List to the Effective Management and Equitable Governance of World Heritage sites. So, this will start at 6:00 pm, that is just now. And then we have the other side event, which will start at 6:30, not before the Advisory Body space is at the room MR17, which is level 1. And now the side event to start at 6:30 is on Boosting Local Conservation Action to Meet Global Targets for People and Planet – Experiences from African World Heritage sites. And this is organized by UNESCO and Norway. So, and it will be in room MR6, also in level 1. Thank you very much. And the side events starting at 6:00 is organized by IUCN with its regional offices and UNESCO.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you and have a nice evening.

The meeting rose at 6:06 pm. // La séance a été levée à 18h06.

SECOND DAY
Tuesday, 23 July 2024
THIRD PLENARY MEETING
10:02 am – 1:02 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

DEUXIÈME JOUR
Mardi 23 juillet 2024
TROISIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h02 – 13h02
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

Please take your seat. It is 10:00 am.

Please. May I request you to please take your seats. It's already past 10:00 am, and this is the second announcement I'm making. Excellencies and dear colleagues, welcome back. I hope you all had a good rest yesterday. I wish you all a very good morning.

Dear colleagues,

Before we move with the adoption of our agenda. I would like to inform you of the outcomes of the second meeting of the Bureau. First of all, I would like to inform the members of the Committee that during this morning's Bureau meeting, the Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mr. Ernesto Ottone, announced that a solution could be found on a matter of concern for some States Parties regarding the presence of certain location maps in three nomination dossiers for consideration by the Committee at the present session. Following this positive development, the Bureau recommends that the Secretariat publish on the WHC website a modified version of the three nomination dossiers concerned without the contentious maps. I should point out that the Advisory Bodies have confirmed that this modification does not affect their evaluation of the corresponding nominations. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Ottone for his able mediation, as well as the interested States Parties, for their spirit of compromise and consensus. Thank you very much.

6A. WORLD HERITAGE-RELATED CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD HERITAGE CAPACITY-BUILDING STRATEGY // ACTIVITÉS DE RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITÉS ASSOCIÉES AU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL ET SUIVI DE LA STRATÉGIE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL POUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITÉS

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We are now moving to discuss a very important matter: capacity-building. Indeed, capacity-building is of paramount importance for the effective implementation of the World Heritage Convention, especially in the SIDS, Small Island Developing States, and African countries, as evidenced throughout our Open-ended Working Group's recent discussions. Through capacity-building, States Parties can develop the necessary skills, knowledge and institutional frameworks to identify, nominate and preserve their cultural and natural heritage. Effectively enhance capacity ensures that local stakeholders are equipped to address conservation issues, engage in sustainable practices, and promote community involvement in heritage protection. Ultimately, this fosters a more resilient and sustainable approach to heritage management.

As per Decision **45 COM 6** adopted at the last session of the World Heritage Committee in 2023 in Riyadh, it was decided that capacity-building activities be reported to the Committee under two separate sub-items this year. A first item, 6A, related to World Heritage related capacity-building activities and follow-up to the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy. And a second item, 6B, on the activities concerning the implementation of the World Heritage Convention by the World Heritage related Category 2 Centres.

Dear colleagues,

For the Item 6A concerning World Heritage related capacity-building activities and follow up to the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy, the presentation will be made by both the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr Eloundou Assomo and ICCROM.

Allow me to give the floor to Mr Eloundou Assomo. Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, and good morning to everyone.

Distinguished members of the World Heritage Committee, dear Delegates,

You will recall that 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 for examination at this present session. The substantive progress report that you received with the first dispatch of documents, which is Document 46.COM/6A, covers progress from July 2023 to June 2024, and highlights key achievements and areas for improvement in capacity-building efforts for World Heritage Conservation. Next.

As you know, the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy was established in 2011 and provides a framework for collaborative efforts between the World Heritage Centre, ICCROM, IUCN, ICOMOS, the Category 2 Centres and institutes under the auspices of UNESCO, and all World Heritage stakeholders at all levels. Its goal is to enhance the capacity of States Parties to preserve and manage their heritage properties, while maintaining a balanced World Heritage List. Next.

Since July 2023, a variety of initiatives have been conducted in the framework of the Strategy. While we do not have the time in this plenary session to go through all these initiatives, I just want to encourage you to visit the World Heritage Centre's dedicated web page, which offers detailed descriptions of our capacity-building efforts, useful resources, and best practices for capacity-building. You can see also the web page displayed on the screen here, but you could also visit the web pages of our partners and from the Advisory Bodies. Next.

A substantive part of the report submitted to the Committee discusses regional and thematic capacity-building initiatives. In Asia and the Pacific, efforts included workshops on disaster risk reduction, impact assessment and partnership to stimulate innovation and cooperation for World Heritage properties. In Latin America and the Caribbean, activities encompassed sustainable tourism management and conservation, including the development of an updated management plan for the Maya Sites of Copan in Honduras. In Europe and North America, initiatives addressed the renewable energy transition, disaster risk reduction, and emergency preparedness and enhancing GIS skills. Aligned with Priority Africa, many capacity-building efforts have enabled continuous enhancements of capacities for heritage management, conservation and development. Activities in the Arab States focused on developing desired state of conservation for removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger, plans heritage impact assessment and the sustainable development policies. The World Heritage Centre enhanced capacities for resilience and climate adaptation while addressing the avian influenza epidemic affecting natural World Heritage sites. Next.

The Small Island Developing States programme, which we call the SIDS Programme, participated in strengthening capacities in the Pacific, providing guidance for the development and submission of Tentative Lists and credibility of nomination dossiers. The World Heritage Cities Programme promoted the Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation by notably publishing the Historic Urban Heritage Atlas, while the World Heritage Marine Programme provided capacity-building for marine heritage management, including organising the fifth World Heritage Marine Managers Conference. Finally, the World Heritage Education Programme continued its support towards heritage education by engaging in the update of the World Heritage in Young Hands Kit and adapting it for interactive digital technology.

The report concludes with a summary of progress made towards the revision of the Strategy. The evaluation of the first decade of implementation of the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy, which was made possible thanks to the financial support from Saudi Arabia, was examined by the Committee last year in Riyadh, as you remember. As you also remember, the evaluation highlighted the need for a more coordinated approach, enhanced targeting of specific groups and a dedicated budget for capacity-building activities. The full evaluation and the summary video by the evaluators are available on the World Heritage Centre's website, should you wish to go through it. Next.

Following this evaluation, the Committee requested that an updated World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy be developed for 2025-2035 by the World Heritage Centre and ICCROM, in cooperation with IUCN and the ICOMOS. The World Heritage Centre and ICCROM have initiated a work plan towards a revised World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy for the ten years decade 2025-2035. This plan includes reviewing evaluation outcomes, incorporating results from regional framework action plan and developing data collection systems for future monitoring and evaluation. And this work is now ongoing, and it is hoped that the new strategy be presented for review at the 47th session, if funding allows. Allow me to highlight that, to date, no dedicated resources have been made available for this exercise, Mr Chairperson, which is currently supported by the limited amount of funding made available for all capacity-building opportunities under the World Heritage Fund. So, I take this opportunity again to call to all Committee members and all States Parties to support the development of this Strategy, which I think you consider very important. But we don't have the resource at this stage, and I wanted to bring it to your attention.

To conclude, Mr Chairperson, the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy has made significant strides in strengthening the capacity of World Heritage practitioners and stakeholders. However, there is still much to do, especially in securing, as I said, sustainable funding and enhancing coordination effort, knowing that capacity-building is your priority. We look forward to ongoing collaboration and support from all States Parties and partners to achieve our shared goals in heritage conservation and sustainable development. And all what I have said is, of course, reflected in the draft decision, which can be found, of course, in the corresponding document in English and French.

Thank you for your attention, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Dear colleagues, I will now give the floor to the representative of ICCROM. You have the floor.

ICCROM:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

I would like to carry on with briefing the Committee about the results of the World Heritage Leadership Programme that brings nature and culture together as a capacity-building programme jointly delivered by ICCROM and IUCN in collaboration with ICOMOS and UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The programme works on producing resource manuals that is jointly developed by the four institutions that forms the curriculum content for course workshops, fora, activities and the structure for any technical assistance requested. The foundation course, called World Heritage Management: People, Nature, Culture is provided to individual practitioners and site managers both in online and in person modalities. Case studies on nature, culture and management practices are collected directly from site managers that are uploaded and shared through the Panorama platform. The Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0 is a flexible toolkit that can be used by site management institutions and teams so that they can conduct an evaluation of their current management status. Facilitation and technical assistance can be provided from the Advisory Bodies to go through the assessment process that can lead to the preparation or revisions of World Heritage management plans. There are regular courses on World Heritage Impact Assessment, not just for heritage practitioners, but for urban planners and developers as well. These courses can be tailor-made with both national and international scopes. Disaster risk management courses are also highly requested, and technical assistance can be designed for sites to prepare adequate disaster risk management plans. In collaboration with UNESCO, ICOMOS, USA and the European Commission, ICCROM is also providing capacity-building for Ukraine.

The programme facilitates the formulation of learning networks on different thematic issues, such as participatory approaches and linking research with practice through the Heritage Place Lab. The ongoing World Heritage site Managers' Forum has become an important mechanism to foster the exchange between World Heritage Site managers and their site management institutions. Selected participants from these activities are invited to go through training of trainers' courses so that they, in turn, can become resource people for the Advisory Bodies and the overall system, performing diverse functions such as going on missions and teaching on courses.

We are very grateful for the generous contribution of the Government of Norway that enables the day-to-day operation of the programme for the past eight years, and the Government of Australia for supporting the Climate Action Toolkit development. We also thank the Republic of Korea for the continued provision of management and impact assessment courses so that they can be provided to site managers on a regular basis. A scholarship fund has recently been provided by the Government of Ireland to support African and SIDS professionals to participate in capacity-building activities, and the Italian government has also committed to support capacity-building to World Heritage professionals in Africa to nurture impact assessment professionals. Translations of resource manuals are fully dependent on the initiatives of partner organisations such as C2C's and States Parties.

The programme is in full collaboration with the UNESCO Category 2 Centres across the different regions, which enables us to reach the wider networks of sites and people. Being also, being able to provide the courses in different languages.

In the calendar year of 2023, the programme has implemented a total of 25 activities, where 618 participants from 113 countries took part. This only accommodates half of the applications or requests received due to the limited resources coming into capacity-building.

Geographic and thematic representation of resource people and case studies are also carefully considered when courses are being delivered. As capacity-building is delivered by many actors involved in the Convention, ICCROM works to provide the structured content and adaptable modalities, to be able to maintain the quality of such activities.

For the capacity-building strategy revision, as the Director has already informed, we have utilized the limited budget available under the World Heritage Fund to begin the implementation of a work plan.

We are currently compiling the data of the most frequently reported factors identified through the state of conservation reports process over the last decade, and triangulating that data set from the third Periodic Reporting cycle, with the needs reported by the national focal points against those needs that have also been prioritized by site managers on the ground, so that we can establish a clear, needs-based strategy coming from different perspectives. The data collected will facilitate in drafting a theory of change structured around priority issues, target audiences, programme actions, outline the deliverables, impacts, and possible monitoring indicators for the revised capacity-building strategy.

ICCROM also emphasizes the need for States Parties to support this important work, and for continued delivery of activities that will directly strengthen our common responsibility to protect our shared heritage.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Dear Committee members, I would like to know if there, if you have any comments or observations on the subject? Any other Member State would like to raise their plate? I see.

So, I'll give the floor to Belgium, followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair, good morning.

We would like to commend the Advisory Bodies and the Centre for their investment in capacity-building and congratulate and thank States Parties and other stakeholders who also support this crucial activity.

But in relation to capacity-building, Belgium would also like to raise two additional points that we feel constitute the very basis of capacity-building and where a lot of improvement, we feel, is still possible.

The first is dialogue. Dialogue between the State Party or World Heritage property on the one hand, and the Advisory Bodies and the Centre on the other. This dialogue in practice is still far too limited, probably for different reasons – a lack of capacity, fear that it will impact procedures. But, as we feel, this is so crucial, it constitutes the very beginning of capacity-building through dialogue, the availability to talk to each other, we think improving this, working on a real dialogue could make a huge difference.

The second point we would like to raise is that, is the one dealing with sharing experiences. Yesterday we discussed the reports of the Centre and the Advisory Bodies, and we all heard and read that an enormous amount of activities take place on a daily basis, but the impact of these is generally quite limited. It's a training session for a sub-region. It's a workshop for a specific property. But when I was reading the reports under Item 5, I thought to myself, quite a lot of times, this seems so interesting. I would have liked to know the results of this thing, or I need to find out more about this. So, Chair, I would like to call upon the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to think about ways to share the outcomes of these training sessions, these workshops, more widely and more efficiently. So not just putting them on the website as a news item. I don't, I must admit, I don't go to the websites daily, I don't look at the news items every day. So not just making them available, but also thinking about ways to inform the target audience, focal points, site managers, academics, in the right way of the results that are being made available.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Republic of Korea, followed by India.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair, and good morning.

The Government of the Republic of Korea appreciates the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies and other partners for their unwavering commitment to enhancing the World Heritage capacities of the States Parties to the Convention over the past decades. Through its support for the World Heritage Leadership Programme and diverse capacity-building programmes across the Asia-Pacific region, the Republic of Korea has contributed to the implementation of the 2011 World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy. The Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting for the Asia-Pacific region was presented at the 45th World Heritage Committee in Riyadh. Forty-four States Parties actively participated throughout the project, setting an exemplary precedent for capacity-building initiatives.

It is with great pleasure that the Republic of Korea once again has the opportunity to contribute to the Appropriation Workshop of the Regional Framework Action Plan, which has been developed based on the outcomes of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reports. The Government of the Republic of Korea hopes that this workshop, conducted in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional offices, will facilitate the effective implementation of the Framework Action Plan in the region. Going forward, we will continue to actively engage in World Heritage related capacity-building projects, extending the scope to encompass more African and SIDS countries.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

India, you have the floor, followed by Zambia.

The Delegation of India:

Good morning to everyone and thank you, Mr Chair, for giving India the floor.

At the outset, we would like to thank the Director of World Heritage Centre and ICCROM for their exhaustive presentation and congratulate them for the excellent work that they are doing for the capacity-building. India commends the progress made by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and everyone in ensuring the implementation of the capacity-building strategy. We also welcome the new strategy 2025-2035 that focuses on reviewing the evaluation outcomes, and incorporating results from the Regional Framework Action Plan and the data collection system for future monitoring. We believe that this is a vital aspect for strengthening the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and also plays a critical role in supporting the 5C's objectives. The efforts have significantly strengthened the regional thematic and thematic capacity-building initiatives, enhancing heritage conservation worldwide. The proposed revision of the strategy may further strengthen these efforts in the decade to come, ensuring that the strategy remains robust and relevant.

We appreciate the financial contributions offered by several States Parties, their support has been integral in advancing the work of the capacity-building strategy. It is through such collective commitment and contributions that we are able to ensure the continued success and stability of all the initiatives related to the implementation of the Convention. However, as the presentation also indicated that the sustainability of funds is crucial for the continuation and the success of this programme, which is sort of ongoing and continuing, this calls for a collective action, as it is the collective responsibility. This was articulated yesterday as well during discussion, Mr Chair, as you can, you may recall, so we hope that the Secretariat works closely with the World Heritage Committee and all other States Parties and Advisory Bodies in finding innovative solutions to get more funds.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Zambia, you have the floor, followed by Viet Nam.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman, for giving the State Party of Zambia an opportunity.

Chairperson and Distinguished Delegates,

We believe it's cardinal that the Category 2 Centres, whose main mission is to contribute to the achievement of UNESCO objectives through the development of relevant capacity-building programmes for the benefit of professionals and communities of States Parties, should benefit from a structured and permanent commitment on the part of States Parties benefiting from Category 2 Centres, activities and programmes, which, I should add, are activities and programmes often designed with the participation of the directorates and institutions of these States Parties. As the Committee is already aware, the Category 2 Centres receive support of varying levels from the host States Parties. This support is highly commendable and deserves acknowledgment. In addition to the States Parties that host C2C centres, there are others such as Norway, who voluntarily provide a lot of support to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. These States Parties contribute to the work of C2C centres, even though they themselves do not host C2 centres. We commend them for the support they are providing and encourage them to continue.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Zambia.

Viet Nam, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Viet Nam :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous aimerions tout d'abord remercier le Secrétariat pour le rapport très riche en information. Nous nous félicitons du progrès réalisé dans la mise en œuvre des stratégies et initiatives régionales et thématiques de renforcement des capacités de la période en examen, surtout en Afrique, pour assurer la représentativité, la crédibilité et la balance de la Liste du patrimoine mondial, et pour pouvoir faire face à de nombreux défis de nos temps, dont le changement climatique, la perte de la biodiversité.

Le renforcement des capacités est important, est plus important que jamais. Nous souhaitons saisir cette occasion pour remercier des différents pays pour leur soutien aux activités de renforcement des capacités en matière de patrimoine mondial dans le monde entier, y compris dans la région Asie-Pacifique, plus concrètement au Viet Nam, en Chine, au Pakistan, au Sri Lanka, au Népal, en Thaïlande et d'autres pays. À cet égard, nous apprécions le rôle important joué par les bureaux de l'UNESCO dans la région, dont celui à Hanoi, dans la mise en œuvre de ce plan d'action. Nous proposons que les actions de renforcement des capacités soient renforcées en Asie-Pacifique, surtout les actions d'innovation, d'évaluation des impacts, du renforcement de la synergie entre le patrimoine matériel, immatériel, et les industries créatives, ainsi que les actions relatives aux changement climatique et les

risques liés aux catastrophes, étant donné que de nombreux pays de la région sont extrêmement vulnérables au changement climatique.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Viet Nam.

Now that the Committee members have spoken, I'll ask the Director to read the list of the Observer States Parties.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

The following Observers have been allowed to take the floor in this order. First, Switzerland, followed by Armenia, and then Egypt, and then Colombia.

And I don't know if there is a State Party we didn't see, please.

The Chairperson:

Is it Oman? *Habibi*, I can recognize you even from that distance.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

And then Oman.

The Chairperson:

I give the floor to Switzerland, to be followed by Armenia.

La Délégation de la Suisse (Observateur) :

M. le Président,

La Suisse aimerait vous remercier, vous et votre pays, de l'organisation de ce Comité, ainsi que de l'accueil très professionnel et chaleureux. Les rapports du Secrétariat et des Organisations consultatives témoignent d'un engagement et d'une compétence élevés. Nos remerciements vont donc aussi au Secrétariat et aux Organisations consultatives. Sans eux, la Convention ne pourrait pas être mise en œuvre par les États parties.

J'aimerais tout d'abord vous annoncer ici que la Suisse est candidate au Comité du patrimoine mondial pour 2025. Mon pays souhaite pouvoir contribuer encore mieux au bon fonctionnement de la Convention. Dans ce sens, nous vous remercions pour votre soutien.

Il y a trois points sur lesquels j'aimerais maintenant revenir : l'importance de l'expertise scientifique indépendante, le renforcement des capacités, le financement.

La Suisse a souvent souligné que les prises de décision du Comité doivent être guidées par des analyses objectives et scientifiques. Les défis actuels et futurs que rencontrent la conservation nécessitent une expertise encore plus pointue, plus transversale et multisectorielle. Son rôle et son poids doivent être renforcés. Nous en avons besoin pour bien guider le système du Patrimoine mondial.

Le renforcement des capacités et le développement de pratiques innovantes restent dès lors une priorité absolue. La Suisse se félicite de la qualité des activités réalisées durant cette dernière année et des progrès ainsi accomplis. Je suis aussi heureuse de pouvoir annoncer que la Suisse va continuer à soutenir le renforcement des capacités avec une nouvelle contribution de 300 000 euros afin de contribuer au nécessaire développement de ces activités dans toutes les régions.

La Convention a toutefois un problème financier structurel. Le manque de moyens menace les activités et prestations indispensables à la bonne conservation des biens inscrits, et ce problème s'aggrave. Il ne pourra pas être résolu seulement par des contributions volontaires.

The Chairperson:

Please conclude.

La Délégation de la Suisse (Observateur) :

Pour y remédier, nous devons mettre la priorité sur la conservation et sur le suivi et sur la gestion efficace des biens d'une valeur exceptionnelle et universelle.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I request member States Parties to please keep their intervention limited to the time allocated. Thank you.

I now give the floor to Armenia, followed by Egypt.

The Observer Delegation of Armenia:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

We would like to thank the Director of the World Heritage Centre and ICCROM for the presentation of World Heritage related capacity-building activities. We commend the progress made in implementing the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy.

Mr Chairman, we welcome the implementation of regional capacity-building initiatives. In particular, we would like to mention the regional workshop on World Heritage in Pacific Island countries, strengthening capacities of Pacific Member States, with a focus to provide guidance on the development and submission of Tentative Lists, and the international course for site managers and experts for Caribbean SIDS. As co-chair of the Group of friends of SIDS, jointly created with Kuwait, Armenia encourages the redoubling of efforts to support the Secretariat in implementing the Resource Mobilization Plan for SIDS.

As a strong advocate for the Priority Africa, we appreciate trainings and workshops organised in the Africa region focusing on strengthening the capacities of States Parties' effective management and conservation, developing nomination dossiers, removing properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger and addressing disaster risk reduction.

Mr Chair, we believe there is a general consensus as to the need to reduce the gap of representation of States Parties on the World Heritage List and enhancing the balance of the List. If elected member of the Committee. Armenia commits to actively support the global strategy to achieve a representative, balanced and credible World Heritage List.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Egypt, followed by Colombia.

The Observer Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Allow me at the outset to congratulate the Government of India on the successful hosting of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee. Egypt commenced the capacity-building activities organized by the World Heritage Centre and ICCROM in collaboration with other Advisory Bodies, Category 2 Centres and relevant partners. We welcome the progress report covering the regional and thematic capacity-building initiatives and programmes implemented in different regions over the past year, notably the developing countries, which goes in line with the implementation of the Strategy for the World Heritage in Africa, as presented under the previous agenda item. In this regard, we appreciate the training workshop that took place in Egypt last December on strengthening World Heritage site management planning. We commend the units of four Arab States and Africa in the World Heritage Centre for their continuous cooperation and support. Finally, we extend our appreciation to the States Parties that provided financial support and human resources to implement the capacity-building strategy.

And I thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Colombia, followed by Oman.

The Observer Delegation of Colombia:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair, from Colombia.

We'd like to commend the World Heritage Centre and ICCROM for all of the activities undertaken around capacity-building and for addressing the challenges and meeting the needs of institutions and communities involved in protecting and safeguarding World Heritage.

Since 2023, the independent experts have been doing so much to enhance all of our safeguarding mechanism. But it's important that we have feedback concerning the efforts undertaken to safeguard heritage as part of the overall

capacity-building strategy. In many of the sites, and as highlighted in the Site Managers' Forum, we are seeing that there are many difficulties faced with safeguarding sites and it's important to get their feedback, which is why we think this is so important. It's very important so that countries that are currently under-represented on the World Heritage List should be able to benefit from the best practices and capacity-building, by using the mechanism for dialogue when working towards a tabling a nomination for the List. We are in particular grateful for the work done with youth and with the site managers. E-learning has facilitated access to the courses being run locally, regionally and internationally.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

May I request that the Delegates please sit behind the nameplates of the country that you represent? Please do not sit behind the nameplate of a country you do not represent, unless, of course, you want to change your nationality. So please ensure that you are sitting behind the name, and do not remove the nameplate of any Member State, please. That authority is granted to no one, because they are still a Member of the United Nations and UNESCO. So please find a place either behind, or you can sit somewhere, but do not sit behind the nameplate of a country that you do not represent. Thank you.

I give the floor to Colombia.

The Observer Delegation of Colombia:

Colombia just spoke.

The Chairperson:

Sorry, Oman.

The Observer Delegation of Oman:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

And let me start by thanking your country and yourself, for the generosity and hospitality and for the excellent arrangement. I would like also to thank the Secretariat, the World Heritage Centre and their experts for the excellent work. We have seen a lot of developments since Riyadh to New Delhi. I think this should be appreciated, since we have seen also yesterday the report for the activity and the programme, and now we are also listening to the report about the capacity-building. This is very crucial to thank the efforts made by the World Heritage Centre.

Oman encouraged the capacity-building and we have supported the programme and would like also to see the evaluation of these programmes in order also to top up the programme from Oman. I would like also to thank the World Heritage Centre, the Heritage Centre in Bahrain, for the effort made, and we hope also this capacity-building in the Bahrain Centre to take more action.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any other Committee members or States Parties that want to make any comments or observations? I see none. Let us proceed then.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Just I have a question. First of all, I would like to thank the Director of the Centre and ICCROM for their excellent report. And we note here in the report that insufficient funding, we don't have enough funding to revise the World Heritage Capacity-Building Strategy, the new one. And there is a paragraph in the decision. Can we know from the Centre how much it costs, just to have an idea and to define a little bit how much we need and to have maybe a call for the States Parties to contribute?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your comments.

I will ask the Secretariat and ICCROM to answer your questions. Secretariat, Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

And thank you to the Distinguished Delegate of Saint Vincent for the question.

Of course, you know, there is a minimum amount, there is a sufficient amount. And all is also in relation with, not only the preparation of the strategy, but also, you know, testing it. So, it's an integral part. So, I think, for all States Parties who are interested to work with or support us, we will be pleased, you know, to speak directly with you, with some of these details. And I think ICCROM and the World Heritage Centre, we have been working together to have it. I think what we are calling for is not to exhaust too much the current resources that we are having within the World Heritage Fund, and allow us to work sufficiently and to propose a strategy which is really important, including consultations that we will need to do with the different regions. So, we can make a strategy on paper and that will cost very little. But if we want something which is really, you know, realistic, which takes into account your priorities in the different regions, we need to include the consultations. And I don't have to give you a figure, but you understand that I think, since you are considering that this is a serious and important strategy, that's the reason why we call for your contributions. If you have \$1, please give us. If you have \$2, please give us. If you have \$100 or \$100,000, we'll be very happy because that at least can bring together different experts and representatives from the same region to come together. So, I can just give you an indication of what it means. But with the team, we are ready to give you all explanations should you wish.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Would ICCROM like to take the floor?

ICCROM:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

If I may just also add to what the Director has mentioned. The capacity-building strategy, because we strive to work with sites and with States Parties identifying their needs and the existing capacities as well, there can be various different ways of being able to build up a strategy and also test out different data collection monitoring indicators as such, so this would very much depend on how much we want to go deep into developing this strategy.

Mr Chair, if I may, I would just like to also thank the delegates for their comments, but also to Belgium, that we remain available for dialogue for anything about capacity-building. And we would very much welcome having fruitful discussions about it, and that we primarily work with Category 2 Centres, those in Africa and the Arab States, in Asia-Pacific, Latin America and all over the world, where it is through them that we reach the sites, so it's very much integral to it.

And we are very thankful to Switzerland for the contribution that has just been expressed, to be coming into capacity-building.

And we would very much like to emphasize to States Parties, to Committee members that site managers do need to be represented through these Delegations so that the realities of the site management challenges can be reflected appropriately to the development of the capacity-building strategy, and also in their contribution to the state of conservation reports.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I can see that there are no more questions or comments.

I therefore invite you, dear colleagues, to proceed with the adoption of draft Decision **46 COM 6A**, but before we do so I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendment to the draft Decision.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci et bonjour M. le Président. Bonjour à toutes et à tous.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le Point 6A.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Rapporteur.

Do any members of the Committee wish to make any observations or suggestions on the draft Decision being displayed? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 6A** adopted. [gavel]

Thank you very much. I therefore now declare Agenda Item 6A closed.

6B. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION BY THE WORLD HERITAGE-RELATED CATEGORY 2 CENTRES // RAPPORT D'AVANCEMENT SUR LES ACTIVITÉS CONCERNANT LA MISE EN ŒUVRE DE LA CONVENTION DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL PAR LES CENTRES DE CATÉGORIE 2 ASSOCIÉS AU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We are now moving to the second part, the general Item 6, related to capacity-building. As I indicated earlier, this is the first, we have such a standalone item in front of the Committee. Indeed, during our last session in Riyadh, the Committee was of the view that Category 2 Centres, as implementing partners of World Heritage capacity-building activities, be given the opportunity to present to the Committee a progress report of all their activities in implementing the Convention. Allow me to now give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr Eloundou Assomo, who will briefly present this item before moving on to presentations by Category 2 Centre representatives on their activity over the last year. Their presentations will be grouped by regions and delivered in two sets of four presentations. Committee members will have the opportunity to intervene after each set of presentations.

Mr Eloundou Assomo, you have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Chers membres du Comité,

Je suis vraiment très honoré de vous présenter un nouvel élément de l'ordre du jour du Comité consacré aux Centres de catégorie 2 placés sous l'égide de l'UNESCO, comme vous le savez, qui jouent un rôle essentiel dans la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial. Et c'est la première fois que, comme l'a dit M. le Président, que ces centres ont l'occasion de vous présenter leurs activités. Cela reflète bien leur rôle important dans le système du patrimoine mondial, qui a d'ailleurs été clairement souligné par tous nos États parties dans les différents plans d'action régionaux et même déjà dans les premières décisions que vous avez adoptées au cours déjà de cette session, où vous nous demandez de travailler en partenariat étroit avec ces Centres de catégorie 2 et d'ailleurs, les instituts de catégorie 2, qui sont placés sous l'égide de l'UNESCO, forment un réseau mondial d'établissements d'excellence proposés par leurs États membres dans les domaines de compétence de l'organisation. Donc, les Centres de catégorie 2 font partie intégrante de la stratégie globale pour les partenariats de notre Organisation. Et, forts de leurs compétences expertes, ces instituts et centres contribuent à la mise en œuvre de la mission et des programmes de l'UNESCO et aux différentes priorités globales et sectorielles de l'Organisation. Ils apportent ce soutien par le biais d'une coopération scientifique et opérationnelle à l'échelle régionale et globale, contribuant à renforcer les capacités pour le patrimoine mondial, à transmettre les connaissances dans leurs domaines de spécialité. Ces activités de transmission et de renforcement des capacités peuvent aussi aider les États dans le développement de politiques ciblées, notamment pour le patrimoine mondial.

En lien avec la Stratégie globale de 2019, les activités des Centres de catégorie 2 doivent être organisées à l'échelle internationale ou régionale et contribuer aux programmes de développement mondiaux. Donc, tous les Centres de catégorie 2 soumettent, doivent soumettre à l'UNESCO, avant le 31 décembre de chaque année, un rapport annuel sur leurs activités. Et depuis 2013, le Centre du patrimoine mondial a également invité les Centres de catégorie 2 concernés à soumettre un rapport consacré à leurs activités organisées en vue de la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial avant les réunions régulières du Comité, et ces rapports sont ensuite mis en ligne sur le site Internet du Centre du patrimoine mondial.

À ce jour, M. le Président, huit Centres de catégorie 2 liés au patrimoine mondial sont établis et sont opérationnels, et je dirais même activement opérationnels. Et je voudrais les citer : le Fonds pour le patrimoine mondial africain, l'Institut de formation et de recherche sur le patrimoine mondial pour la région Asie-Pacifique, le Centre régional arabe pour le patrimoine mondial, l'Institut régional du patrimoine mondial de Zacatecas, le Centre régional de formation à la gestion du patrimoine mondial Lucio Costa, le Centre international sur les technologies spatiales au service du patrimoine naturel et culturel, le Centre de gestion et de formation sur le patrimoine mondial naturel pour la région Asie-Pacifique, le Centre régional sur l'évolution, l'adaptation et la dispersion humaine en Asie du Sud-Est et le Centre international pour l'interprétation et la mise en œuvre des sites du patrimoine mondial.

Mesdames et Messieurs les membres du Comité,

J'ai également le plaisir de confirmer que le Centre régional sur l'évolution, l'adaptation et la dispersion humaine en Asie du Sud-Est a été récemment, a très récemment procédé à la signature de son accord et rejoignent donc les rangs des centres liés au patrimoine mondial en activité, et ce centre régional est situé en Indonésie.

Par ailleurs, je tiens à souligner que les Centres de catégorie 2 liés au patrimoine mondial organisent régulièrement des réunions de coordination afin d'encourager la coopération internationale et de développer leurs réseaux. La huitième Réunion de coordination a été organisée en juin 2023 à Sejong en République de Corée à l'invitation du Centre WHIPIC. À cette occasion, les Centres de catégorie 2 ont adopté la Déclaration de Sejong sur l'entente et la coopération entre les Centres de catégorie 2 associés au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO, et l'Institut régional du patrimoine mondial de Zacatecas au Mexique, a proposé d'accueillir la neuvième Réunion de coordination en 2025.

Pour conclure, M. le Président, les Centres de catégorie 2 sont vraiment des partenaires clés dans le système du patrimoine mondial et leur rôle dans le renforcement des capacités doit non seulement être encouragé, mais doit surtout être soutenu. Et le projet de décision concernant ce point peut être consulté à la page correspondante des versions française et anglaise du document de travail.

Merci, M. le Président et merci au Comité d'avoir permis que cette présentation vous soit faite directement.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Dear colleagues,

I would now like to give the floor to the representatives of the following Category 2 Centres for a three-minute presentation each. As mentioned before, that they will be grouped by regions and delivered in two sets of four presentations. So, the first set of four presentations will be the Regional Heritage Management Training Centre – Lucio Costa, Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas, African World Heritage Fund and the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage. Committee members will have the opportunity to intervene after each set of presentations.

The first set of presentations is going to be made. I am going to give the floor for a brief three-minute presentation to the Regional Heritage Management Training Centre – Lucio Costa. You have the floor.

Regional Heritage Management Training Centre – Lucio Costa:

Good morning.

My name is Claudia Leal, currently director of Lucio Costa Centre and on behalf of Lucio Costa Centre, I would like to salute authorities and delegates present here, to thank India for the hospitality and to manifest the great honour to take the floor at this session.

Lucio Costa Centre is a Brazil-based regional centre for management training of World Heritage under the auspices of UNESCO, and its competence region encompasses the Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries in South America, Africa and Asia. Currently, we gather together ten States Parties: Argentina, Brazil, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mozambique, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. New States Parties are more than welcome, for the Centre intends to gather and represent countries which share a common colonial past, as well as the understanding of the importance of cultural and natural diversity and of the fundamental role of indigenous people, local and traditional communities for the heritage agenda worldwide, especially when regarding responses to climate change, sustainable development, cultural, environmental and social rights, the struggle against poverty and famine, and the wellbeing and safety of all people. Our activities tend to focus on enhancing capacity for the management of World Heritage sites in the competence region, by means of research and capacity-building activities on core subjects for the States Parties aligned with UNESCO and its Advisory Bodies' recommendations, World Heritage papers and other key documents related to the 1972 Convention.

The Centre has also worked on making such debates available for Spanish and Portuguese speaking site managers and heritage research with translated documents and capacity-building offered in such languages, which is a task reinforced by our dear counterpart in Zacatecas.

With the new agenda and support from the present Brazilian Ministry of Culture, we have established with the new States Parties a biennial action plan that encompasses workshops, courses and seminars on risk management, impact assessment, Tentative Lists update, tourism at World Heritage sites and local government. Such activities are based on the efforts for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in our competence region, the sharing of experiences and best practices for the Global South, the synergy of UNESCO conventions and programmes for the preservation of cultural and natural diversity on the planet, and a wider representativeness of the Global South on the World Heritage List.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor for a brief three-minute presentation to the Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas.

The Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, and good morning.

On behalf of the Regional World Heritage Institute in Zacatecas, which is a C2C under the auspices of UNESCO, I want to thank the World Heritage Centre for its kind invitation to take part in this session, and also to thank India for its excellent organization and the hosting of this meeting.

Our C2C is in Zacatecas City, Mexico. It was created in 2009 to support improved implementation of the Convention mainly through capacity-building in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean region, and it currently comprises 21 States Parties and 70 World Heritage Properties in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, Cuba, Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Mexico, with these 70 World Heritage Properties inscribed on the List.

We have been working on action plans across the region and various countries, which enable quite a lot of detail to be, detailed attention to be given to the various sites. And we've been working with the Advisory Bodies of the Committee, and this enables us to ensure that our capacity-building strategy is respected at the local level. And we've been able to promote and identify priority issues for heritage management through our Toolkit for Enhancing our Heritage 2.0 and in risk management through various capacity-building initiatives connected with emergency scenarios, and currently through heritage impact assessments, through the participation of training of the trainers, initiatives and translation into Spanish. And we've got more than 500 different stakeholders across the region involved in these initiatives. And currently we're working on heritage impact assessments through the interpretation or sorry, translation into Spanish of the guidance and toolkit for impact assessments of the World Heritage context, as well as the training of trainers, both of which are carried out with ICCROM. And we're working on an action plan for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2023-2029.

And all of these results have been possible thanks to the support from our board of directors from various countries around the region, but also thanks to support from the Government of Mexico and this Committee's Advisory Bodies.

I'm also pleased to announce that in 2025, our C2C in Mexico, in Zacatecas, will be hosting the ninth coordination meeting for the C2Cs in which we will no doubt be covering some of the key issues for the implementation of the Convention, that is capacity-building.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the African World Heritage Fund.

The African World Heritage Fund:

Thank you.

And I would like, on behalf of the Africa World Heritage Fund, to sincerely congratulate the Government of India and to congratulate you on your Chairmanship of this session.

As many would know, the Africa World Heritage Fund was created in 2006, has a coordination mechanism to facilitate the implementation of the Convention in Africa. And today, the Africa World Heritage Fund is primarily the entity that supports the implementation of the Convention in Africa through the implementation of the main planning and strategic instruments approved by UNESCO, such as the Action Plan of the Third Cycle Periodic Reporting, but also the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa.

So, in the reporting period I would like to focus on three main areas.

So, the first, in terms of addressing the challenges of better representation in the Africa region, the Fund has supported 18 African nomination dossiers, to which five currently to be considered in this session, and three were submitted in February this year.

To improve the state of conservation and help African States Parties address the challenges identified during the analysis of enough of state of conservation reports, the Fund has also partnered with ICOMOS on capacity-building programmes to strengthen the capacities of African professionals, which then include the opportunity of the African experts to now go with ICOMOS experts on field evaluation missions.

Another area of contribution of the Fund has been on conservation grants, which were awarded to eight countries during the reporting period to address various conservation challenges and also to young professionals undertaking postgraduate studies.

Finally, I would like to also express our gratitude to the governments of South Africa, Norway, Rwanda, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Uganda and Korea for their financial support to the African World Heritage Fund.

Please join us in our side events on World Heritage Capacity-Building in Africa tomorrow for lunch time, World Heritage Interpretation after tomorrow, and on a joint Capacity-Building on Investing in Heritage in the African and Arab Regions to learn more about our activities and our partnership with the other C2C's. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage.

The Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage:

Good morning and thank you, Mr Chairman.

I'd like to congratulate you at the outset for your Chairmanship, and for India for hosting such a wonderful event.

Since July 2023, the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage has undertaken the following activities in line with the objectives of the Regional Action Plan for the Arab region, which are: to contribute to a representative and balanced World Heritage List in the Arab States; to enhance the protection, conservation and management of World Heritage, particularly for sites inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger; and to improve the integration of sustainable development policies in the management of World Heritage sites.

In summary, these activities encompassed five regional, six national and five thematic and one publication.

The regional activities included regional workshops for Arab States on impact assessment in a World Heritage context, in partnership with the World Heritage Leadership Programme: a regional focal point meeting organised in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre; a regional workshop on natural and mixed World Heritage sites in the Arab States, listing implications and synergies with the IUCN's Green List; a regional workshop in interpretation and presentation on World Heritage sites in the Arab region, in partnership with WHIPIC; and incorporating sustainable development into the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the Arab States region, in collaboration with ICOMOS, the Heritage Commission of Saudi Arabia and ICOMOS Saudi Arabia.

National programmes included a capacity-building programme on the preparation of a site management plan and the transnational property of Darb Zubaydah; an online workshop, Bethany Beyond the Jordan, a heritage impact assessment and architectural guidelines; revisions of the Tentative List for cultural and national sites in Palestine; sustainable management of World Heritage sites in Tunisia; and a national workshop on the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, in collaboration with our colleagues at Qatar Museums. Finally, we hosted a conservation training course on Built Heritage in Kuwait.

Our thematic programmes included partnership with the UNESCO Regional Office for the Maghreb on a regional conference on housing, rehabilitation and historic settlements in the Arab region. We are in our second edition of the short film competition MyHeritage. We have an international conference, Opportunities for Heritage, in partnership with the UNESCO chair for World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Management. We've hosted an expert meeting on modern heritage in the Arab region. And as our colleague Muhammad Juma from the Africa Unit mentioned yesterday, we had an Arab African Professionals Preliminary Assessment Process meeting in collaboration with UNESCO, World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, IUCN and our colleagues at the African World Heritage Fund.

Finally, we have published an Arabic translation of the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context, in partnership with UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies.

We look forward to the next 12 months with the same level of eager anticipation and hope to achieve more towards our aims.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Now that we have finished the first set of four presentations, Committee members have the opportunity to intervene if they so choose.

Mexico, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Good morning and greetings to all and many thanks to the organizers of the meeting for organizing such a good meeting and giving us an opportunity to visit this sister country of India. And we'd like to thank the Government of Spain, who has enabled us to enjoy the benefits of interpretation over the course of the meeting.

We must say we enjoyed working together with the Director of the World Heritage Centre. This has given us an opportunity to identify best practices at the Zacatecas Centre. It means that we were able to bring together a dozen

or so countries in our facility, and Mexico is delighted to contribute to the establishment of consistent mechanisms to help implement the Convention, with regional centres contributing to capacity-building.

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the fora, and we are delighted that we can use the toolkit across the region and enjoy the benefits of it. We also wish to make sure we contribute to fighting against trafficking in cultural property and fighting against and mitigating the risks of climate related to climate change.

We are very grateful for what has been done through the World Heritage Centre and through the work of all the partners over the course of the year.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Qatar, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Qatar would like to commend the World Heritage Centre for their supportive step in giving the chance for the first time to the Category 2 Centres to present their programmes and activities.

We wish to take this opportunity to highlight the valuable impactful work carried out by the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage in the Kingdom of Bahrain. This esteemed organisation has been key in promoting the protection, preservation and appreciation of our shared cultural and natural heritage within the Arab region. The initiatives of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage in capacity-building, research and conservation have significantly contributed to enhancing the capability of heritage professionals and institutions across the region. Their programmes and workshops have equipped countless individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively safeguard our heritage sites.

Qatar, with its leading institutions in the field, such as Qatar Museum, has been privileged to collaborate closely with the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, and numerous projects. Our partnership has been marked by mutual respect, shared goals, and tangible outcomes that have strengthened the protection of heritage in our nation and beyond. Together we have worked various conservation and management projects, exchanged expertise, and supported the development of best practice that served the model for the entire region. We firmly believe that the work of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage exemplifies the spirit of international cooperation and solidarity that is essential for the success of the World Heritage Convention.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Now that we, that the Committee members have spoken, I will give the floor to Indonesia, to be followed by Colombia.

The Observer Delegation of Indonesia:

Thank you, Chair. On behalf of the Indonesian Delegation, I would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to you and on your appointments. We also express our sincere gratitude to Indian Government for warm hospitality in hosting this esteemed 46th World Heritage Committee meeting. We would like to extend our special thanks to the Director of the World Heritage Centre for his invaluable collaboration and support in making the process of establishing CHEADSEA agreement a smooth one. We appreciate his dedication to fostering international cooperation in safeguarding our shared heritage.

Indonesia strongly affirms its commitment and collaborating with UNESCO and other Member States in implementing the Centre for Human Evolution, Adaptation and Dispersals. We believe that this initiative holds immense potential for furthering our collective understanding of humanity, shared origins and journey.

I thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We see that Argentina has raised the plate. So, I will request Colombia that, a Committee member has raised the plate, so I will take a pause for the Observer States Parties and give the floor to Argentina now. Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you Mr Chairman.

We had indeed raised our name plate earlier, but we're on the side over there, and I know you can't always see.

The Chairperson:

May I interrupt you, please? I will ask the Director of the World Heritage Committee to clarify on that position, because yesterday also, your good self had mentioned that you had raised your plate, but you were not seen, and this is for the second time that you have mentioned it. So, because I did not see it, I will ask the Director of the World Heritage Centre whether he saw your plate.

Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

You know, the only thing I want to say is that we will be very, very, very careful. And we are trying to look at you and I'll make sure that we continue to look at you when you have your plate, we will immediately react. So, our apologies.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

All right, Argentina, I hope that is okay for you. And please, you can restart your statement, and your three minutes will begin.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Mr Chairman.

We know how large the room is and how difficult it is to see everyone.

Can I thank you, sir, and welcome the fact that this item is on our agenda. Category 2 Centres are amongst the most significant and important links in the chain. Indeed, countries, regions, must take ownership of this heritage, heritage that already belongs to them, but they have to take responsibility for undertaking this work. And our Committee here is only one of the links in this chain, in the whole set of things. So, strengthening capacity-building, making sure our people understand the Convention will be the result of that work. Now, we hope that this can become one of the significant items in the future. Indeed, capacity-building will contribute to no end to improving the implementation of the Convention.

And thank you for adding that on the agenda.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Colombia, followed by Egypt.

The Observer Delegation of Colombia:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, sir.

The Colombian Delegation should like to restate the significance of Category 2 Centres and the relationship with the Lucio Costa Centre to strengthen research and capacity-building. We recognise the positive outcome of what these Category 2 Centres have done and the way they contribute to implementing the Convention. The Lucio Costa Centre is suggesting we hold a conference on financing capacity-building, and we welcome that. Colombia has suggested it organise and host the first meeting, where we would review case studies and see how we can raise funds and hope that this can indeed feed into a better protection of World Heritage capacity.

The Chairperson:

We have seen that one more Committee member has now raised their plate.

So, I will give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, so he will let you know. Thank you, Mr Lazare.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

I would like to know if there is any other Committee member who would like to take the floor, to raise their plate now so that we can have them on the list. As you know, Committee members speak, and then after the Chair gives the floor to the Observers, if he wishes. So, if there is a Committee member, please let us know now. I see only Zambia and then we will move to the Observers.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Please, Oman. All right. I will ask the Director of the World Heritage Centre to read the list of the Committee members and the Observers, and then the list will be closed. So, you still have an opportunity to raise your plate. Once the list is closed, no more further opportunities.

Director of the World Heritage Centre, please read the list.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following Committee members has been noted, Zambia. And after the Committee member, the following States Parties Observers will take the floor in order that I will be reading. I have in my list: Egypt, Oman, Grenada, and that's all.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

And now the list will be closed.

Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Mr Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

As the State Party of Zambia, we wish to commend the C2Cs for the great work being done with regard to the capacity-building. As a State Party in Africa, we particularly thank the African World Heritage Fund, who have been doing tremendous work in supporting African States Parties through various programmes or activities. This support was, of course, made possible through funding from the World Heritage Centre, the Host Country of South Africa and other States Parties, some of which are beneficiaries to the works of the C2Cs, and others which neither hosts a C2C or benefit from them. We therefore wish to thank those States Parties already contributing to the work of C2Cs, and wish to encourage those who are not to do so to ensure success of the work of the C2Cs.

Mr Chairman,

The State Party of Zambia would like to take this opportunity to announce that we have put aside a sum of US\$ 100,000 to support the capacity-building programmes, especially those that are pertaining to sustainable development and in this case, as pronounced in Saudi Arabia last year, when we committed ourselves that as the State Party of Zambia, we are going to champion issues to do with sustainable development on the continent of Africa.

Mr Chairman, I submit.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Egypt, followed by Oman.

The Observer Delegation of Egypt:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

We welcome the progress report on the activities of the World Heritage related Category 2 Centres and institutes under the auspices of UNESCO, on their activities regarding the implementation of the 1972 Convention.

We underscore the important role played by these Category 2 Centres in Arab and African regions, especially the World Africa World Heritage Fund in South Africa and the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, hosted by the Kingdom of Bahrain. We appreciate the efforts and programmes organised by both centres in implementing the Convention and their active engagement with the States Parties in our regions, especially in the activities related to capacity-building, improving sustainable management and conservation and conservation of World Heritage sites, impact assessment of development projects and preparation of nomination dossiers to achieve a better representation on the World Heritage List.

And I thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Oman, you have the floor, followed by Granada.

The Observer Delegation of Oman:

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving me the floor.

I think it is an excellent idea to give the centres a slot of time to present their visions and achievements. We do hope this will continue.

These centres, without doubt, have a great role to play in helping Member States, especially capacity-building is one of the main tasks in addition to other work. Therefore, their budget should be increased, including voluntary contributions.

I would like also to suggest that these centres be consulted and to be part of the evaluation of dossiers for nomination.

Before I conclude, also, Mr Chair, Oman would like to thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for their great support to provide for the Bahrain centres, and also to reiterate our thanks to the centres in Bahrain and its management.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Granada, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Grenada:

Thank you, Mr Chairman, for giving me the floor.

I would like to thank the representative of the Category 2 Centres for their reports. I would like to say that I raised my plate when we were discussing capacity-building, but I was not identified.

But I take this opportunity to say that we should take into consideration the preparation of the new strategy for capacity-building, I think that the Category 2 Centres related to World Heritage can play a very important role in this preparation, because they are in the field and have the possibility to be in contact with the States Parties and to identify with them the specific needs for capacity-building and awareness raising, notably in the preparation of Tentative List, the nomination dossiers, the responses that can give to the challenges of climate change and the tourism, etc. They are, the Category 2 Centres are very close to States Parties, and we look forward to seeing them playing a role in this new strategy.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Now that the first set of four presentations is done. I go to the next set of four presentations to be done by the International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage. There is a video, then the Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific region, the World Heritage Institute for Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific region, the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage sites. So now I give the floor to the International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage, and the video will play.

The International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage:

Dear colleagues, good afternoon.

On behalf of the International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage under the auspices of UNESCO, I'd like to express sincere appreciation to UNESCO World Heritage Centre for inviting HIST to report its activities to the World Heritage Committee. As we know that, HIST is the first Category 2 Centre dedicated to using space technologies for the conservation of UNESCO-designated sites.

During the reporting period, first of all, HIST has reconstituted its Governing Board and convened tenth session of its Governing Board. Moreover, HIST has conducted extensive research with the World Heritage Centre to monitor land cover changes in African natural sites on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Land cover changes of Jiuzhaigou after the earthquake, monitored and evaluated Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor, and made an archaeological survey and discovery on the Great Wall of the Han Dynasty.

It published three books. For example: Introduction to Space Archaeology is devoted to comprehensively introducing different space technology used for archaeology application, and more than ten academic papers.

In addition, HIST partnered with UNESCO and ICCROM to co-host the fourth Huangshan Dialogue on UNESCO's Designated Sites and Sustainable Development and published the Huangshan Vision and Recommendations on Climate Action for Heritage Conservation. Co-hosted with UNESCO and Copernicus programme, the side event Space-Based Technologies for the Preservation of World Heritage sites during extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee. Its activities have been widely reported by China Central Television and other media organizations.

Looking ahead, HIST will draft a new mid-term strategic plan to guide its third-phase operation. Meanwhile, HIST will conduct project archaeological discovery along Surkhandarya River, collaborate with World Heritage Centre and other partners to monitor and evaluate African World Heritage sites.

To conclude, I'd like to thank all of you for your long-term support to HIST and we will collaborate closely with you to enhance conservation, management and sustainable development of heritage sites.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia and Pacific Region, WII-C2C.

The Centre on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Good morning to everyone.

It's an honour to be present here today. I am Suresh Kumar and presently I head the Wildlife Institute of India Category 2 Centre, which we call WII-C2C for World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific region under the auspices of UNESCO.

The Centre, with the support of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, was established in 2015. As you may all know, India has been at the forefront of nature conservation, and we have been working towards capacity-building of natural heritage site managers and other stakeholders in the area of management, policy, interpretation, nature-culture linkages and heritage stories through customized courses and training programmes. The Centre has trained over 2,500 natural heritage stakeholders through more than 100 capacity-building courses. As the only C2C with a focused natural heritage mandate, WII-C2C addresses the needs of not only the Asia-Pacific region but beyond as well.

In the past year, WII-C2C conducted a Natural Heritage course for India's Ministry of External Affairs under their Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme, with participants from four continents. The Centre has also been providing technical support to UNESCO on Periodic Reporting, state of conservation report evaluation, and reactive monitoring. Additionally, the Centre has been involved in 25 research and monitoring engagements, including preparation of nomination dossiers. In order for better information dissemination of natural heritage properties across the Asia-Pacific, the WII-C2C will soon launch a web portal providing a key platform. Further, as part of our Operational Strategy, a skills gap analysis for natural heritage site management is being undertaken and this is expected to provide important pointers to improve our understanding and strengthen the management of natural heritage properties. The Centre has also been proactive in nurturing the nature-culture linkages paradigm by advancing the conservation of at both ICOMOS General Assembly and IUCN World Conservation Congress.

We at the Centre would like to emphasise the need for synergies with other biodiversity conservation, conventions for better nature heritage conservation.

India being the Host Country of this Committee meeting, it is indeed an exciting prospect for us to meet practitioners from across the world working for heritage conservation and I, along with my team, reiterate the importance of collaboration and partnerships among the C2Cs. I thank the World Heritage Committee for the opportunity to speak here.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and Pacific region, WHITRAP.

The World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and Pacific Region:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr Chair.

I wish to thank the Host Country and the Secretariat for providing C2C the opportunity for taking the floor, and Professor Shao Yong, the new Secretary General of WHITRAP and the director of WHITRAP Shanghai.

WHITRAP was created in 2007 and has Shanghai, Beijing and Suzhou sub-centres. Since last year, WHITRAP has actively provided support to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in Asia and the Pacific region in various ways.

Firstly, WHITRAP continued to strengthen its regional role in the conservation and management of World Heritage, focusing on SDGs with WHC, ICCROM and C2Cs. WHITRAP organised last year's annual meeting of HeritAP, which is a network of heritage practitioners of WHITRAP focusing on World Heritage contribution to SDGs and to call for good practice were primarily presented in HeritAP Chat, as well as implementing the action plan of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in Asia and the Pacific. WHITRAP are developing activities with local communities and local government who are key players.

Secondly, WHITRAP continues to enhance the research on the new challenges of the World Heritage sites in the region. WHITRAP have hosted the second World Cultural and Natural Heritage Forum on defining the contemporary human-nature relationship last year. With UNESCO, WHITRAP have implemented the second cycle of UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme and a lot of joint heritage nominations of China and Egypt and MOU with Mali has been researched to respond to the Africa Priority Strategy.

Thirdly, WHITRAP continued to enhance the capacity-building activities with partners at different levels. With Malaysia, WHITRAP co-organised a subregional workshop on HIA, and with ICCROM, WHITRAP organised a symposium on capacity-building, Capacity Development on Climate Action for World Heritage. Recently with UNESCO Regional Office for East Asia and Suzhou Municipal Government, WHITRAP co-organized the Youth and Traditional Building Skills Symposium in Suzhou, and the many activities related to World Heritage awareness raising were organized.

Lastly, WHITRAP has recently endeavoured to focus on heritage and education as competency building is a key challenge. We developed two major projects. One is the International Network for Urban Heritage Conservation in Higher Education Institution, established last year, and the other one is Global Award for World Heritage Education Innovative Cases. This noon, from 1:00 pm in MR10, it will be the third World Heritage Committee side event of the award. I'm very happy to invite all of you to attend and to see how we are reshaping new concepts.

The Chairperson:

Please conclude.

The World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and Pacific Region:

Of education and capacity-building of World Heritage for sustainable development.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I request you to keep your presentation limited to the time allocated.

I now give the floor to the International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage sites, WHIPIC.

The International Centre for the Interpretation and Presentation of World Heritage sites:

Thank you, Chair.

I would like to extend our deepest thanks to the Host Country India for their efforts and hospitality in organising this Committee.

While detailed information can be found in Document 6B, I will share a brief overview of our work. WHIPIC was established with the aim of contributing to sustainable development through the conservation and promotion of World Heritage by research, capacity-building and spreading information on World Heritage interpretation and presentation. As the only Category 2 Centre for heritage for interpretation and presentation, WHIPIC commenced various initiatives to achieve our aims.

Firstly, WHIPIC has organised global and local level of capacity-building programmes in collaboration with the other Category 2 Centres, UNESCO field offices and other partners. In Year 2, we have the honour of organising workshops in Africa, the Arab States and Asia for over 100 site managers. We also aim to provide five workshops this year for over 200 people in different regions, including a workshop in Rwanda this September.

Second, WHIPIC promotes awareness raising of World Heritage interpretation and presentation through annual international forums and diverse events like the side event last year in Riyadh.

This Thursday, July 25th, we will host another side event together with our dear Category 2 Centres, AWHF and ARC-WH. We hope to see all of you there.

Lastly, WHIPIC is also dedicating significant effort into publishing research reports and creating digital content which are available on the WHIPIC website and social media. Our third issue of Interpreting World Heritage magazine,

was released last week, featuring contributions from site managers across nine countries, including our esteemed host India. We kindly hope you take a look. WHIPIC will continue to implement and develop various initiatives for heritage.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Dear Committee members, now that we have heard all the presentations, I would like to know if you have any comments or observations. You may raise your plates.

This is the second time I'm asking. Dear Committee members, if you have any comments or observations, you may raise your plates now.

Observer States Parties, any of the Observer States Parties, if you'd like to make any observations or comments, you may raise your plates.

So okay, this is the second time I'm asking. Any Observer States Parties would like to make any observations and comments? You may raise your plates.

Okay, I will ask the director of the WHC to read the names and then we will close the list.

Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr President.

As of now, among the Committee members, India has requested the floor. And among the States Parties, I don't see any State Party Observer who has requested the floor, but I noted that the Advisory Body IUCN has requested the floor.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, with your permission, we will close the list of speakers now. The list is closed.

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chairperson for giving India the floor again.

In fact, we were waiting for all the presentations by all the Category 2 Centres to be over, to be heard first, and then we would make our remarks and observations. Again, we would like to thank the Director of World Heritage Centre, for his report on the functioning of the Category 2 Centres, and thereafter, we had the opportunity of hearing the presentations from all the World Heritage related Category 2 Centres and noted the excellent work that they are doing. And it is for the first time that we note that they are presenting it to the World Heritage Committee and to the, you know, everyone who is present here. Their effort is pivotal, has been pivotal in advancing the strategic objectives of the World Heritage Convention and the UNESCO global priorities.

It was encouraging to note that how some of the Category 2 Centres are nodes of network within their regions, are partnering with the Advisory Bodies and are instrumental in the preparation and submission of the nomination dossiers. The wide range of activities, from workshops to even organising competitions, is encouraging and impressive. One Category 2 Centre also stressed the need of networking amongst the Category 2 Centres, and such an approach is encouraging as it allows sharing of expertise, technical and documentary resources as well as knowledge. So, we commend the Category 2 Centres for their continued organisation of international and regional activities. These activities initiatives are not only contributing to the global development agendas, but also aligned with the framework action plans developed for each region.

Mr Chair,

We agree with the Director of World Heritage Centre that these Category 2 Centres are key partners in the World Heritage system for they are the regional footprint for capacity-building. They can be excellent service providers, if I may use this expression, in terms of undertaking field missions, evaluations and capacity-building, and their service and expertise can be used for such activities more and more. This will perhaps help offset the pressure to some extent on the three Advisory Bodies and the financial constraints that they are constantly facing.

Once again, our sincere appreciation goes to all Category 2 Centres the respective host governments and participating States Parties, as their dedication and collaborative spirit are vital in preserving and promoting our shared cultural heritage.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor The Advisory Body IUCN.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Like India, we just wanted to.

The Chairperson:

Just one second, please. Sorry to interrupt you. Thank you.

The timer should be two minutes and not three minutes, because three minutes is only for Committee members.

IUCN, you have the floor again. Thank you.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Like India, we wished to wait for all of the presentations to be heard, and just to make just a few brief points.

Firstly, the first thing is to really welcome this agenda item being included because it illuminates so much important work that is being done to support the Convention.

The second, as was also emphasised by ICCROM in the presentation of 6A, to emphasise the many collaborations that we already have with the Category 2 Centres and the great potential there is to extend that further.

And Mr Chair, I just wanted to make remarks on two particular collaborations we have, although we could talk about all of the Category 2 Centres. The first is to confirm IUCN's particular commitment to enhancing and developing our collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India's Centre that is focused on nature, but, as you also heard, is focused very much on the connection of nature and culture. And the second is to note that we also have a developing collaboration with a further Category 2 Centre not reporting this year, but that will be launched on the Island of Jeju with the leadership of the Republic of Korea, which is to support work across all of the internationally designated areas, not only World Heritage sites, but other designated areas in that family of sites.

So, Mr Chair, with that, we have no further comments, but very much welcome this item.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your comments.

I will now ask the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr. Eloundou Assomo, to take the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I know there has not been any particular question, but I just want to thank all the Committee members and all the States Parties Observers who have taken the floor already to appreciate this opportunity given to the Category 2 Centres, but also to commit their support, to continue providing the necessary facilitation for the Category 2 Centres to implement their mandate and to work in cooperation with us. So, this is a really a reason that I want to say and express our gratitude for them. And as you have seen, we need the Category 2 Centres to implement the World Heritage Convention, and we will continue to use this opportunity to inform you on the excellent work that they are doing at the different, in the different regions and even in the respective countries.

So, thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you I see no more questions and comments.

I therefore invite you, dear colleagues, to proceed with the adoption of the draft Decision **46 COM 6B**, but before we do so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous avons effectivement reçu un amendement soumis par la Zambie, co-écrit par le Kenya et le Rwanda. Amendement qui propose l'insertion d'un paragraphe 5 dans la décision. Je cite : « Remercie les États parties qui contribuent à la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial, et encourage en outre les États parties à soutenir les Centres de catégorie 2 dans leurs régions pour la mise en œuvre des activités liées au patrimoine mondial ».

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Do any members of the Committee wish to make observations and suggestions? I see none, we will proceed paragraph by paragraph.

Para 1 to 4 is not amended. So, if it is okay, then we will adopt it. But I will not hit the hammer till we reach the end. Okay. I see no objections.

We now go to the amendment proposed. "Thanks States Parties that are contributing to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and further encourages States Parties to support the C2Cs in their regions for the implementation of World Heritage related activities". Are there any objections to this amendment? I see none.

This amendment.

India, you have the floor.

Please continue speaking.

The Delegation of India:

For the mic. Yes, it is working now.

No no no no, there is no objection to this amendment. I think it is, it should be there. All we are saying is just to kind of word it slightly more pertinent. "Thanks to the States Parties that are contributing to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention" in between, if we could add "through the Category 2 Centres". So, we are saying that, because this item pertains to the Category 2 Centres. So, it basically, you know, focuses on that. And then we can continue "and further encourages States Parties to support these Category 2 Centres". And that's it.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any objections or observations to these comments before we adopt them? I see none. Okay. It's adopted.

We go next to the remaining paras that are not amended. Are there any objections before we adopt them? I see none. It's adopted.

Is there any objection to adopt the entire decision as a whole? I see none.

The decision is so adopted as amended. [gave] Thank you very much.

I therefore now declare Agenda Item 6B closed.

Before the examination of our next item, I would like to give the floor to the Host Country for some technical announcements. The Host Country, India. You have the floor.

Technical Assistant:

A very good morning to the Distinguished Dignitaries on the dais and our Esteemed Delegates of the dais.

I have an important announcement to make regarding the Wi-Fi. Yesterday, a few of our delegates faced some issues regarding the same. To ensure the best possible experience for everyone, we kindly ask that you turn off the Wi-Fi and Bluetooth on any device that you are using. Our IT team has been hard at work and addressing network issues. They have added more Wi-Fi access points and implemented advanced filtering to improve network performance. However, having many devices connected to the Wi-Fi can still saturate the access points, leading to slower internet speeds and reduced network performance for everyone. Additionally, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth operate

on the same 2.4GHz frequency band, which can cause signal interference. By disabling unused Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connections, we can minimize this interference and ensure a smoother event experience.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

7. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES [opening of the item] // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL [ouverture du point]

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We are now moving to the examination of Item 7 on the state of conservation of World Heritage Properties. This item was scheduled to be tabled today morning, 10:00 am, but as you know, we are running two hours behind schedule. This is one of our major agenda items. This year, there will be one comprehensive decision proposed for adoption within the related Document WHC/24/46.COM/7.

I would like to inform you that as for the past years, this item will remain open to possibly take into account the debates held under Agenda Items 7A and 7B. The draft Decision 7 will therefore only be adopted on 29th July, once we have completed the examination of Items 7A and 7B.

Dear Committee members,

I would now like to give the floor at the request of the Director, World Heritage Centre, Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo, to the Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre, Ms Jyoti Hosagrahar, to introduce this item. Ms Hosagrahar.

I am sorry. I missed reading. Ms Hosagrahar, please hold. I was supposed to read some more. That page went underneath. I was supposed to. We are supposed to make a presentation by the ADG Culture. So, we'll take a pause, and I will make the announcement.

Dear colleagues,

We will now start the examination of Item 7 related to the state of conservation of World Heritage Properties. But before we hear the presentation of Document 46.COM/7 by the Secretariat, I would like to inform you that as usual practice, we will immediately start with the adoption of the draft Decision of three reports related to 7A.

I would like to give the floor to the UNESCO Assistant Director for Culture, Mr Ottone, in this regard. Mr Ottone, you have the floor.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

Thank you, Mr Chair. Indeed, these reports are:

- **46.COM/7A.18:** Old city of Jerusalem and its Walls (Site proposed by Jordan);
- **46.COM/7A.25:** Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town, Palestine; and
- **46.COM/7A.26:** Palestine: the land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, also proposed by the State of Palestine

Please note that these draft decisions were the subject, as in past years, of intense negotiation, and have been agreed upon by all the Parties concerned. Furthermore, I would also like to inform that the consensus implies no statement or declaration be made after the adoption of this draft Decision. Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Ottone.

I see no objections. Therefore, draft Decisions **46 COM 7A.18** and **46 COM 7A.25** and **46 COM 7A.26** are therefore adopted. ^[gavel] Thank you.

We shall now proceed with examination of Item 7.

As informed earlier, I would like to give the floor to the Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre, Ms Jyoti Hosagrahar, to introduce the item WHC/24/46.COM/7 and say that, as per the practice over the past years, this Item will remain open to possibly take into account the debates held under Agenda Item 7A and 7B. The draft Decision 7 will therefore only be adopted on 29th July, once we have completed the examination of the Items 7A and 7B.

Ms Hosagrahar, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

The World Heritage Convention is one of the most successful international instruments for the conservation of natural and cultural sites. This session, you will examine the reports on the state of conservation of 124 World Heritage properties, including the 56 properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The Convention's unique reactive monitoring process contributes greatly to the efficient monitoring and mitigation of threats affecting the properties. This document also identifies some global World Heritage conservation issues emerging from the state of conservation reports.

I am pleased to say that this year we have a very high. Can we go back to the previous one, please? We have a high rate of response, with 85% of all reports requested by the Committee to States Parties submitted. This number is a little less than the 96% that we received last year. Nevertheless, many thanks to all the States Parties and responsible authorities who have worked hard to prepare these reports. In response. Next, please. Yes. In response to the Committee's concern regarding improving the perception of the List of World Heritage in Danger, a study was carried out in line with Decision **40 COM 7**. The World Heritage Centre, with the generous support of the State Party of Norway prepared a publication entitled *Implementing New Visions: A Guidebook for Action on the List of World Heritage in Danger*, published in 2024. This guidebook presents the recommendations of the 2022 study to sensitize and to be utilized by all stakeholders of the Convention. The guidebook will make the study's recommendations more accessible to a broad range of audiences and provide more concrete ideas on how to turn the recommendations into practice.

I will now address some global conservation issues that seem most significant this year.

First, emergency situations resulting from conflicts for World Heritage properties, including armed conflict and civil unrest, continue to present a major threat to many World Heritage properties. This also underscores the tragic loss of human life as well as the destruction and damage to cultural and natural heritage. Approximately half of the 56 properties currently listed on the World Heritage in Danger were inscribed for reasons related to the potential or uncertain impacts of conflicts. UNESCO's actions to mobilize the international community for the protection of endangered cultural and natural heritage sites, including in Gaza, in the Gaza Strip, in African countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and in Asia and the Pacific region, such as in Afghanistan, and in the Europe and North America region as in Ukraine.

Moreover, in terms of the vulnerability of properties to the potential of looting and illicit trafficking of cultural objects, UNESCO, through the 1972 Convention and the 1970 Convention, as well as the 1954 Convention and its two protocols, continues to pursue a follow up to the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions related to the cultural heritage protection, humanitarian and security considerations, particularly the Resolutions 2199 and 2253, and 2347. In its actions, UNESCO has engaged with a variety of partners. UNESCO is working with UNITAR and UNOSAT to verify damage to 50 sites in the Gaza Strip. In Mali, UNESCO has partnered with the International Alliance for Heritage Protection in Conflict Zones (ALIPH) to strengthen the protection of the mixed property also and also with regard to the cliff of Bandiagara, and as well as in Afghanistan. UNESCO works very closely with ALIPH. UNESCO continues its efforts to support the Ministry of Culture and Information of Ukraine in coordinating international initiatives within the framework of UNESCO's Actions and Emergency Assistance Programme for Ukraine. The World Heritage Centre, in cooperation with ICOMOS and ICCROM, is strengthening Ukraine's capacity to undertake urgent protection and recovery of cultural heritage. Next, please.

With regard to recovery and reconstruction, the World Heritage Committee recalling that reconstruction is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances, requested States Parties to ensure the integrity of the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties and that all recovery proposals, including plans and drawings integrated and aligned with the needs of local communities and be subject to rigorous impact assessments. For example, UNESCO has supported the recovery and reconstruction of historic urban areas in the Yemeni properties, balancing it with social needs. And in Libya, has supported progress towards the implementing of corrective measures at the old town of Ghadames towards removing property from the Danger List. Following the launch of the flagship initiative *Revive the Spirit of Mosul* in 2018, UNESCO has pursued its actions towards the rehabilitation and recovery of the old city of Mosul. Rebuilding of its historic landmarks, the Al-Nouri Mosque and the Al-Hadba Minaret have been completed this year. In Ukraine, UNESCO is supporting preliminary reconstruction in the World Heritage property of Odesa. A progress also continues in recovery and reconstruction. Processes in a number of other contexts, including in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan and Japan, in the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal, and the Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro in Pakistan.

With regard to development pressures and the need for management effectiveness, the state of conservation reports examined in the current Committee sessions are evidence that development pressures continue to be a critical factor threatening World Heritage properties. A wide range of development pressures adversely affect World Heritage properties, from small scale housing projects to larger scale infrastructure development including roads, dams, urban development and expansion, mining, extraction and the building of borders, barriers to the development of tourism infrastructure within World Heritage properties or in the wider setting. Response to such development pressures needs strong governance and legislation to ensure respect for the OUV. The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies have developed tools to support robust management, including to ensure that new development in and around World Heritage properties protect, continue to protect the OUV of the property, including the UNESCO Urban Heritage Atlas for Urban Contexts, a digital tool based on the implementation of the 2011

UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, or HUL, as well as the Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0, jointly published by UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN that offers a self-assessment methodology for World Heritage properties to evaluate how well a property is being managed.

The UNESCO World Heritage Canopy platform, with a number of diverse cases, case studies, promotes integrating heritage conservation with sustainable development in line with the World Heritage Sustainable Development Policy and also the nature-culture community of Panorama Solutions for a Healthy Planet coordinated by IUCN, ICCROM and ICOMOS.

Finally, I would also mention the guidance for the no-go commitment to encourage companies to implement principles of sustainable development.

With regard to local communities, Indigenous Peoples and human rights, within the framework of the World Heritage Convention, States Parties hold the primary responsibility to ensure respect for the rights and welfare of communities, of communities in their actions to protect World Heritage properties on their territories. Rights-based approaches to conservation and management of World Heritage provide an important foundation for implementation of these responsibilities, consistent with the 2015 policy on integrating a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention, as well as UNESCO's policies on engaging with Indigenous Peoples and the applicable international human rights norms and standards. UNESCO, as a specialized agency of the United Nations System promotes respect and full implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. With the support of the World Heritage Centre and financial support from the Government of Australia, the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage organized an expert workshop in Geneva this year on recognizing and respecting indigenous Peoples heritage values in World Heritage sites, together with the Advisory Bodies ICCROM, IUCN and ICOMOS. This is also something you heard about from Chrissy Grant when she spoke on the first day. Moreover, UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN continue to collaborate to develop more integrated approaches and practices to natural and cultural heritage, recognizing the Indigenous Peoples' values and interconnections between nature and culture, how these might relate to the OUV of the World Heritage properties.

With regard to climate change, it continues to be one of the most serious threats to World Heritage sites, affecting their OUV as well as the economic and social development and quality of life of communities connected with these sites. These threats are part of the expanding impact of climate change on cultural and natural heritage, exemplified by the recent confirmation of the fourth global coral bleaching event. This indicates that the impacts on World Heritage sites are part of a broader global issue, and that it is likely that more sites than currently recognised by the Committee are facing threats that may need to be addressed through the Convention. Extreme weather events and strong climatic effects such as frequent cyclones impact a number of sites that are also laboratories to understand these impacts. These impacts highlight the need for disaster risk management and mitigation measures. In response, the General Assembly of the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention adopted the Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage. This document outlines for climate risk assessment, adaptation mitigation, knowledge sharing, capacity-building and awareness to support the policies' implementation. The World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies are developing a toolkit on climate action for World Heritage. Thanks to the support of Australia and the Netherlands, the World Heritage Centre stands ready to lead the development of the guidance document to facilitate effective implementation, as you have requested, and invite financial contributions to enable the Centre to carry out this work together with the Advisory Bodies.

Finally, with regard to World Heritage contribution to biodiversity conservation, the planet's most outstanding places are critical for conserving ecosystem integrity and biodiversity. High cultural diversity often coincides with high biological diversity, as seen with around 20% of the cultural World Heritage properties located in key biodiversity areas. The state of conservation reports show the ongoing global biodiversity crisis continues, with pressures brought by a range of threats, from infrastructure development to extractive activities and unsustainable use, requiring strong measures to halt biodiversity loss and protect and conserve biodiversity towards, also towards achieving the global biodiversity conservation targets. In May of 2024, experts discussed increased collaboration, focusing on synergies between World Heritage and other biodiversity related conventions. Following the Committee's decision urging States Parties to leverage the World Heritage Convention to support the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework calls, an expert meeting is also planned for late 2024...

The Chairperson:

Please conclude.

The Secretariat:

... thanks to the support of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Germany.

Following a report on avian flu, influenza impacting World Heritage properties, the World Heritage Centre also organized a series of webinars with IUCN, CMS, FAO and Ramsar to increase awareness of site management responses to this.

And with that, I conclude my report, summary of this report and presentation.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I request please keep interventions limited to the time mentioned. Many thanks.

I would like to give the floor now to the Advisory Bodies for additional statements on this item, IUCN, ICCROM and ICOMOS. IUCN would speak for five minutes, ICCROM for two minutes, and ICOMOS for five minutes. So first, I give the floor to IUCN. My humble request is, we are really running two hours behind, and it's not, you know, a rocket science to just limit the number of words you have to say, just go on Microsoft Word, do a word count, 100 words per minute and five minutes is 500 words. So simple. So please keep it limited. Thank you.

You have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

World Heritage properties represent critical habitats of some of the world's most outstanding beauty and biodiversity. They make a crucial direct contribution to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, both through the direct conservation that they deliver and as exemplars of high standards that we look to inspire wider practice. It is in this context that the Working Document recommends a continued strengthening of this Convention's focus on nature and the synergies that can help deliver other multilateral environmental agreements, including the seven biodiversity related conventions. This is why both site-specific and strategic action is needed to strengthen the results that this Convention delivers. The success of World Heritage has to be assured.

In 2024, whilst we can celebrate many conservation successes being achieved, it is of concern that we continue to see multiple threats and pressures on natural World Heritage around the world. From the broader impacts of climate change to regional armed conflict and localised impacts of inappropriate infrastructure development, we continue to see extractive activities such as mining, oil and gas threatening the Outstanding Universal Value of properties, as well as large-scale infrastructure development such as unsustainable tourism expansion, large dams, roads or barriers blocking ecological connectivity, amongst others.

It remains vital that national planning and decision-making frameworks include early and appropriate impact assessments that consider the World Heritage values of a property in order to inform strategic planning and decision making, which ensures the protection of OUV into the future.

Beyond assessing impacts of individual projects, the cumulative impacts of multiple projects must also be considered at a more strategic level. We highlight again the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage context, published in 2022, and additionally management tools such as the recently published EOH Toolkit 2.0 and the IUCN Green List Standard, which further support decision makers to implement effective management for World Heritage, and we invite you to join the EOH toolkit 2.0 side event tomorrow evening.

Whilst positive progress continues in various World Heritage properties, including through the implementation of corrective measures to address threats impacting properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger, it is also highlighted that several natural properties have been identified as facing potential or ascertained danger in future, if rapid management actions are not implemented. We also continue to see important concerns being raised regarding human rights issues in relation to World Heritage, and reiterate the clear positions and policies of both IUCN and the World Heritage Convention that World Heritage governance processes must ensure a clear and fundamental human rights based approach in line with international norms and standards, and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in planning and decision making.

The interconnectedness of nature and culture remains central to this Convention and to our continued priorities into the future. As climate change continues to represent one of the most significant threats to natural World Heritage, a further strengthening and scaling up of global action on climate change remains critical, including through effective implementation of the newly adopted Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage. The joint development of the new Climate Action Toolkit for World Heritage is also underway, and we invite you to also join us at the lunchtime event on this later today. The Advisory Bodies are actively addressing the climate crisis, including through IUCN's Climate Crisis Commission, which is currently recruiting members.

Mr Chair, IUCN is highly committed to supporting States Parties, site managers and decision makers in both the work of monitoring natural World Heritage and supporting the effective and active conservation needed to deliver positive results for nature, culture and people through our shared work together.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to ICOMOS for five minutes, to be followed by ICCROM. ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The state of conservation reports before the Committee at this 46th session highlight a range of achievements, issues and challenges for mixed and cultural properties on the World Heritage List. Conflict and civil unrest continue to present a major threat to many World Heritage properties, and the vulnerability of these properties to inadequate safeguarding measures became even more concerning and evident through the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. In post-conflict circumstances, where a mission is not yet possible, ICOMOS has been pleased to work closely with the World Heritage Centre and States Parties, especially in the Arab region, using innovative digital approaches to identification and implementation of the corrective measures required to achieve the desired state of conservation for removal of the properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

ICOMOS recognizes that a number of States Parties have acted promptly to deploy resources to address World Heritage properties that have been impacted by extreme weather events, other national natural disasters and conflict.

The joint ICOMOS-ICCROM publication, *Guidance on Post-Disaster and Post-Conflict Recovery and Reconstruction for Heritage Places of Cultural Significance and World Heritage Cultural Properties*, provides a welcome and useful framework through which the recovery of heritage places can support and be harnessed in coming to terms with, and overcoming, the trauma associated with destruction and loss.

Development pressures continue to affect World Heritage properties, ranging from small scale projects to larger scale infrastructure and tourism projects, and these pressures apply both within World Heritage properties and their buffer zones and within their wider setting. Responses to such development pressures not only require strong governance and support, as the Deputy Director has highlighted, but also rigorous assessment of heritage impacts, and the *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context* has proven an effective tool to assist States Parties in fulfilling obligations under paragraph 118bis of the *Operational Guidelines* and supporting good decision making in a development context.

World Heritage governance processes need to employ a human rights-based approach which respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. For some World Heritage properties, Outstanding Universal Value has been defined without the adequate participation by concerned Indigenous Peoples, and therefore may not have taken into account their perspectives, including their relationship with the land and the interconnectedness of nature and culture. This is an important emerging challenge for inclusive implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and ICOMOS is pleased to have addressed this matter at its General Assembly in 2023 and, together with the other Advisory Bodies, will continue to support rights-based approaches.

ICOMOS continued to work in collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and other Advisory Bodies to support States Parties manage the process arising from inscription on the list of World Heritage in Danger and to galvanize more effective conservation efforts and international support. We emphasise that the inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger provides a framework for the State Party to work closely with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to establish a set of corrective measures as a roadmap to recovery. Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to ICCROM for two minutes.

ICCROM:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

In the face of the different threats previously mentioned by IUCN and ICOMOS, ICCROM is trying to generate systematic change for World Heritage that may be sustainable over time. In this sense, ICCROM has been actively working in providing capacity-building to improve conservation and management in different regions of the world through the World Heritage Leadership Programme, as well as ICCROM's regional programmes for Africa, the Arab region, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, and also through its thematic programmes focusing on specific materials' conservation or on disaster risk management, all of which are delivered in different languages. Each of these programmes generates content and new research, tools and guidance documents, some of which have already been mentioned by the Deputy Director, IUCN and ICOMOS, and as well as in Item 6. All of these provide solutions for people on the ground and are disseminated as widely as possible through publication and dissemination webinars, and as mentioned earlier, we strongly encourage translations so that local managers, government officers, local communities can access these documents in the best possible way.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Many thanks.

I would like to know whether there are any comments on the entire document, 46.COM/7 on the general state of conservation issues.

Committee members, if you would like to make any comments, please raise your name plates. Don't wait for other countries to speak before you want to raise your name plates. Please raise your name plates so the Secretariat can note your name plates. This is the second time I'm requesting Member States, Committee members. If you would like to make any comments, please raise your name plates.

Okay. I will give the floor to the Director to read the names.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Bonjour M. le Président. Merci, M. le Président.

Alors, pour l'instant j'ai sur ma liste, par ordre d'intervention, donc, le Liban et la Belgique.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Any Observer States Parties would like to raise their name plates to make any comments? Any Observer States Parties that would like to raise their name plates to make any comments. So, before I close the list of speakers, I will give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to read to names of the Observer States Parties.

Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I think here, I have, as the State Party Observer, I have Norway.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Okay, now the list will be closed. Okay.

I give the floor to Lebanon, followed by Belgium.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Lebanon has been involved in this Committee since the 90's, and personally, I have been involved in this Committee since 2001 – 23 years.

Mr President, conservation is at the heart of the Convention. Twenty years ago, the Committee used to discuss every state of conservation one by one. Then, due to the increase in the number of SOC reports, we decided that the Centre and the Advisory Bodies will select a number of SOCs they consider the Committee should examine, while opening the possibility to any Committee member to propose other SOCs to discussion. Later on, the number of SOCs proposed for discussion by the Centre and Advisory Bodies was reduced to only properties proposed to be inscribed on the Endangered List or to be removed from this List, and an unwritten rule seems to prevail whereby Committee members only open to discussion properties either in their own state or the same region, and after getting the consent of the State Party concerned.

We are sorry, but this is contrary to the text and the spirit of our Convention. The Convention states clearly that it is the responsibility of the international community as a whole to ensure the protection and conservation of World Heritage properties, wherever these properties are located. We think that this situation is not healthy, whereby SOCs become a place of direct confrontation between the State Party concerned and the Advisory Bodies, and the Committee intervenes only when it is too late. We believe that it is the responsibility of all of us, Committee members, to intervene wherever, whenever an issue may constitute a threat to the integrity of a property, and open up discussion on any SOC in order to try to find solution before it is too late.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor now to Belgium, followed by the Observer State Party Norway. Belgium, you have the floor.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

M. le Président, avant d'entamer l'examen des différents états de conservation inscrits à notre Ordre du jour, la Belgique voudrait soumettre à la réflexion du Comité quelques considérations.

Il est dans nos pratiques de féliciter le Centre, les Organisations consultatives, voire les États parties pour leur investissement au profit de la Convention et des sites du Patrimoine mondial. Ces remerciements sont largement mérités. Il y a cependant toute une série d'acteurs que nous oublions régulièrement d'associer à ces encouragements. Ce sont les autorités locales, les communautés locales ou autochtones, la société civile pour qui le patrimoine mondial constitue un cadre de vie et qui, par leur action au quotidien, assurent la conservation des biens du patrimoine mondial. Notre Ordre du jour est bien rempli, nous le savons, mais nous devrions sans doute prendre parfois un peu de temps pour nous réjouir des succès du patrimoine mondial et mettre davantage en lumière l'importance d'une approche inclusive pour une gestion efficace de nos sites.

Nous souhaiterions, M. le Président, faire écho aux propos de Madame la Directrice générale concernant la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril, qui est trop souvent et injustement considérée par les États parties comme la liste de la honte. Revenons, M. le Président, à l'approche que les pères fondateurs de notre Convention avaient de cette Liste : ne pas condamner ou sanctionner, mais au contraire identifier des sites qui doivent retenir l'attention de la communauté internationale du patrimoine et mobiliser les énergies, les connaissances, les ressources. Loin d'un opprobre, l'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril doit être un appel à la solidarité internationale au bénéfice de la conservation de sites confrontés à des menaces qui dépassent souvent les capacités d'action d'un seul État partie.

Nous voudrions également faire part de nos préoccupations sur le choix des dossiers qui sont soumis à discussion ou plutôt qui ne sont pas soumis à notre examen. Nous constatons que des sites, parfois inscrits sur la Liste en péril, restent plusieurs années sans être présentés au Comité. Cela ne nous semble pas acceptable et nous souhaiterions que soient établies des règles claires prévoyant des rythmes de présentation réguliers en fonction de la nature et de la gravité des menaces qui pèsent sur les biens.

Je vous remercie de votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Norway.

The Observer Delegation of Norway:

Thank you.

And allow me first to congratulate you, Mr Chair, and secondly, to express our deep gratitude for the exceptionally warm welcome to magnificent India.

Norway considers the state of conservation matters to be at the very core of this Convention. We face unprecedented challenges in the ongoing climate and environmental crisis, adding to other challenges related to management, development pressures, conflict and post-conflict, to mention just a few. These challenges are increasingly complex, and their resolution depends on independent and transparent expert advice and collaboration between Advisory Bodies, the WHC and the States Parties.

We wish to commend States Parties not requesting the opening of their SOC reports for discussion. As we have noticed over several years that a number of decisions are weakened by compromising Outstanding Universal Value and challenging of scientific advice and crucial policies such as the no-go policy.

We are deeply committed to support protection of threatened World Heritage properties. The Government of Norway contributes significantly to the World Heritage Fund towards threatened World Heritage in Africa, in particular natural sites and those inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Mobilising international support and collaboration to safeguard threatened heritage is the very intention behind the danger listing mechanism. The *raison d'être* for Norway's ability to rally support is the fact that we do just that: we support endangered heritage to meet the requirements established by the Committee in the DSOCR for successful removal from the danger List in due time. In this sense, weakening of the danger listing mechanism, as well as premature removal of properties may be very unfortunate. We encourage the Committee to be certain that challenges are indeed mitigated, requirements of the *Operational Guidelines* are met and OUVs safeguarded before making its decisions.

Norway encourages us all to think beyond the individual World Heritage property, and always keep in mind this Convention's unique significance to protecting our shared natural and cultural heritage and its contributions towards fulfilling the SDGs and achieving the coming Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you all for your comments.

I will ask the World Heritage Secretariat to answer your questions or if they would like to make any comments. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I just want at this stage to maybe clarify and explain to everyone, the way we've been working, following the intervention by the Distinguished Delegate of Lebanon who wanted some clarifications or understanding of the way we were working. I just want to explain, the selection of World Heritage properties to be discussed, to be proposed for discussions, as we have done in the past. Just to recall that it is in 2003 that the World Heritage Committee started requesting that the report should be presented to the Committee according to the two following categories: that report with recommended decision, which in the judgment of the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, require discussion by the World Heritage Committee; and also reports which, in the judgment of the World Heritage Centre, in consultation with the Advisory Bodies, can be noted without discussion. And this is just to recall that, of course, at that time, if my memory is correct, it is a discussion also where Lebanon was part of the World Heritage Committee at that time. And that is the reason why in 2019, at the World Heritage Committee in Baku, that was the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee, the Committee then supported the proposal by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to only propose for discussion the following report of SOC, as well as the current practice, allowing the Committee to add to the list the reports they wish to discuss. And what you requested the World Heritage Centre, in this decision, which is Decision **43 COM 7.1** is to put for discussion only state of conservation report where removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger is proposed, and if inscription of the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger is proposed, and the third condition was if deletion of the property from the World Heritage List is proposed. And that's the reason why, in our communication, I think it was the first communication was on 24th of June, we only sent you the first and therefore we have been receiving your proposal and, for the state of conservation to be open for discussion, and we have been currently, I mean, constantly and regularly updating the list for discussion, which you have received. And again, we received this morning some additional proposals, and we will update the Document INF.7.Rev, which is going to be made available to you in the afternoon. Of course, as we always said, the Committee is, if you wish to change this process, it is your prerogative, and we will continue to work based on your decision to allow you to continue your deliberation in the way you wish. I just wanted to clarify it.

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see that there are no more questions and comments. I remind you that this item remains open, and the draft Decision **46 COM 7** will be examined on 29th July, once we have concluded the examination of Items 7A and 7B.

MESSAGE FROM THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE MANAGERS' FORUM 2024 // MESSAGE DU FORUM DES GESTIONNAIRES DE SITES DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL 2024

The Chairperson:

Dear Committee members,

Before we start examining our Item 7A, as you all know, the sixth edition of the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum is currently taking place in New Delhi. The event started on 18th July and will continue until the end of the state of conservation items on 25th July.

This capacity-building event has gathered nearly 100 site managers from all over the world under the universal theme Heritage and Communities – inclusive and effective approaches for the sustainable management of world heritage properties. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Archaeological Survey of India, attached office of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, to the ICCROM-IUCN World Heritage Leadership Programme and all the partners involved for organizing this forum with such a great enthusiasm and success.

I am particularly pleased that this year, again, both the participants of the Young Professionals Forum, whom we heard from yesterday, and of the Site Managers' Forum, were able to meet and exchange during a full working session dedicated to youth and local communities' engagement in the management of World Heritage.

I will now give the floor to Ms Paballo Mohafa, South Africa; Ms Hanan Najajreh, State of Palestine; Ms Reshma Sawant, India; Bertrand Gauvrit, France; Ms Victoria Sosa, Argentina, to deliver a message on behalf of all the site managers present. You have the floor.

World Heritage Site Managers' Forum 2024 / Forum des gestionnaires de sites du patrimoine mondial 2024 :

[first speaker] Chair, before we deliver our message, with your permission, we would like to present for the Committee a short video of the first days of the Forum.

[video plays]

The sixth edition of the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum was organized by the Ministry of Culture, represented by the Archaeological Survey of India, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICCROM and IUCN in partnership with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and ICOMOS. The Forum brought together 82 professionals responsible for the management of 82 World Heritage properties located in 34 countries. The participants extend their gratitude to the Government of India for graciously hosting and facilitating this Forum in collaboration with UNESCO and their Advisory Bodies, as well as for the financial support provided to support the participation of 24 World Heritage site managers. Participants also thank the Aga Khan Trust for Culture for hosting the first three days of the Forum at the World Heritage property of the Humayun's Tomb, Delhi.

Site managers recall the World Heritage Committee of the previous statements and declarations of the World Heritage Site Managers' Forums that were presented at 41 COM (Krakow, Poland), 42 COM (Manama, Bahrain), 43 COM (Baku, Azerbaijan), 44 COM (Fuzhou, China/online), and last year at the 45 COM (Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia). These statements highlight key challenges and issues that need to be tackled to ensure that site managers can effectively manage and conserve World Heritage.

[second speaker] The inclusive governance and effective management of World Heritage requires holistic, people-centred and rights-based approaches. Site managers advocate for the recognition of the role played by Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the protection and conservation of World Heritage properties and their buffer zones. World Heritage properties are recognised for their Outstanding Universal Value and hold a wide range of other heritage values, including spiritual values important to indigenous and local communities. Indigenous, traditional and local knowledge are essential to find transformative solutions to existing challenges and to overcome the nature-culture divide that often hinders the effectiveness of management efforts.

An effective approach to responsible site development would also entail facilitating equity, behavioural change, sustainable livelihoods, local and indigenous knowledge-based innovative solutions, and fostering entrepreneurship and economic opportunities in and around World Heritage properties to benefit local communities. Therefore, it is imperative that States Parties adopt and promote participatory approaches founded on constructive interaction between a wide range of actors.

[third speaker] [interpretation from Spanish] The Forum requests the commitment of States Parties to recognize the role of site managers and site coordinators in their national World Heritage system, with a definition of clear mandates that are fully recognized and institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks, and equipped with the provision of adequate financial support and resources to ensure the long-term protection of World Heritage properties. States Parties should support the work of site managers by establishing and strengthening communication between on the one hand international and national levels, and site managers, including by duly informing site managers of the changes in processes, be they procedures, resources or other processes connected to the World Heritage system. Our concerns should have a central place in the discussions being held at the international World Heritage arena. Accessible communication channels between site managers and various other stakeholders, including World Heritage Committee, the Secretariat, Advisory Bodies, and States Parties, should be established to facilitate decision making and effective problem solving.

[quatrième orateur] Les conflits armés constituent des menaces importantes pour les biens du patrimoine mondial, entraînant des pertes de vies humaines, des dommages et des destructions du patrimoine naturel et culturel. Il est nécessaire de renforcer les capacités des gestionnaires de site et des communautés locales à planifier et à mettre en œuvre des mesures de préparation et de réponse aux urgences appropriées pour faire face à ces défis. Les effets du changement climatique, les pressions urbaines et le manque de préparation aux catastrophes aggravent ces défis et entravent les efforts des gestionnaires de sites pour protéger les biens du patrimoine mondial pour les générations présentes et futures. L'assistance internationale, la coopération multilatérale et la promotion de la paix et de la réconciliation sont plus importantes que jamais. Le rôle et les responsabilités des gestionnaires de sites sont devenus de plus en plus complexes, nécessitant un renforcement continu des capacités, pour renforcer les compétences existantes et acquérir de nouvelles compétences. Des actions de renforcement des capacités, des orientations et des outils supplémentaires sont nécessaires pour soutenir activement les gestionnaires de sites dans leurs efforts. Pour répondre à la large gamme de défis auxquels sont confrontés les biens du patrimoine mondial. Les membres du Comité du patrimoine mondial et les États parties sont priés de fournir les moyens nécessaires pour investir en priorité dans le renforcement des capacités.

[fifth speaker] Over the years, the Forum has become the established space for site managers to meet and exchange, strengthening international and regional networks, as can be seen through the We are Site Managers International Symposium that led to the adoption of Georgetown Declaration. Site managers request that the Forum continues to be organized in conjunction with the World Heritage Committee. Furthermore, site managers advocate for the establishment of international, regional and thematic site managers' networks, where a site manager led process of improvement by sharing experiences, continuous knowledge exchange can be developed with diverse mechanisms of collaboration through online and in-person modalities, supported by the Convention through adequate means. The concerns raised by the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum should be included and reflected in the relevant agenda items and decisions adopted at the annual World Heritage Committee meetings. State Parties should fully adopt and integrate the protection and management requirements for World Heritage stipulated in the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention into national, legal

and planning frameworks to enable and empower site managers to be able to effectively manage World Heritage properties. ^[applause]

The Chairperson:

Many thanks for this very inspiring feedback from the Site Managers' Forum, and I'm sure you're hearing the wonderful claps. I'm very proud of this unique capacity-building and exchange initiative could be pursued again this year in India.

Are there any comments? I see none. Let's proceed then. We can proceed with our next agenda item. Now, considering the time limit, we will adjourn our meeting now for lunch and will resume at 3:00 pm with the Item 7A. But I will now give the floor to the Secretariat to make some announcements. Thank you.

India, you are the host. But we are running short of time. If they had all adhered to the time limits given, then we would have those three minutes extra. But now we don't have. And I'm informed that the translators will close at a one particular amount of time. So, can you just make your statement in one minute, if possible? I will give you the floor.

The Delegation of India:

I certainly don't want to come between us and the lunch. So, I'll be very, very brief. But I just wanted to say that, you know, hearing all the five participants of the Site Managers' Forum was very encouraging. You know, they provided us with this precise information from the ground. They are the actual persons on the ground who are managing these World Heritage properties. Their roles are fundamental, most critical. They are handling some of the most complex situations, which go far beyond conservation, far beyond mere management of sites, and therefore listening from them was very interesting and also useful from the point of view that, when we are talking about policies here, I think these reflections do give us that understanding. So that is something that we must commend and salute.

And the second point, which I would want to compliment the Secretariat for, that we used this opportunity wherein the international site managers who were present from all over the world, had an opportunity to interact with site managers of India's World Heritage properties. And we have learned that how this interaction has been very useful. So, it's been a very successful experiment and a model, and we hope in times to come this is emulated, you know, in other States Parties who are hosting this Committee meeting.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

And I now give the floor to the Secretariat.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you.

This is just an announcement about the five side events that will take place during lunch time.

There will be the one side event entitled Dive into Heritage – An Innovative Digital platform for World Heritage Preservation and Exploration. It will take place in a room MR6 in level 1 from 1:30 to 2:45 and is organized by UNESCO.

And then the second side event is entitled Art That Reinstates Friendship – Agenda Revisited in Armenia, and it will take place in room MR13 from 1:15 pm and it's organized by Armenia.

And the third side event, it's an exhibition on the results of recent excavations in Muarajambi village and temple compound, and it will take place in the exhibition hall. It is a separate building accessed by level 1 and it is organized by Indonesia. And there will be the opening of the exhibition.

And then the fourth side event is on Climate Action Toolkit for World Heritage. It will take place in room MR19 in level 1 and is organized by ICCROM, Australia and the Netherlands, IUCN, ICOMOS and UNESCO.

And the fifth side event is entitled Science, Creativity and Empowerment – World Heritage Education Towards the Future, and it will take place in room MR10 in level 1, starting at 1:00 pm and it is organized by the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research Asia and Pacific.

And lastly, Mr Chairperson, I didn't hear the round of applause. I really would like the Delegates to give a last round of applause to all the site managers who are looking after World Heritage sites. Thank you. ^[applause]

The Chairperson:

You know, as I had said in my opening statement to the site managers at their Forum, that there are hundreds of thousands of companies in the world, and each of those companies could have many managers. But there are only 1,199 sites on the World Heritage List as of now, which means the club of site managers is a very exclusive global club. Thank you so much and you deserve all our applause.

And with that, this meeting is adjourned. *[applause]*

And with that, this meeting is adjourned until 3:00 pm.

The meeting rose at 1:02 pm. // La séance a été levée à 13h02.

SECOND DAY
Tuesday, 23 July 2024
FOURTH PLENARY MEETING
3:03 pm – 6:17 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

DEUXIÈME JOUR
Mardi 23 juillet 2024
QUATRIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h03 – 18h17
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

7A. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL EN PÉRIL

The Chairperson:

I request you all to please take your seats. It's past 3:00 pm. I hope you all had a wonderful lunch. Dear colleagues, I request you all to please take your seats. We are about to commence.

Dear Committee members, dear colleagues,

We are now going to open Agenda Item 7A on the state of conservation reports of the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. In this regard, I wish to inform you that, as announced during our first meeting of the Bureau on Sunday, requests coming from Committee members during the session would be accepted until the opening of general Item 7 this morning, and that any such last minute request be only discussed the next day, to let sufficient time for all Committee members and experts to be prepared and ensure a well-informed decision-making process. Therefore, the properties open for discussion this morning will not be examined today, but tomorrow.

A few States Parties had asked me some questions concerning the right of Committee members presenting amendments to their own property, the process of circulation of amendments submitted. I will therefore give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr Eloundou Assomo, to respond to these two questions.

Mr Director, you have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Juste pour répondre aux deux questions qui vous ont été posées par les États parties ou quelques États parties. Sur la première question concernant la soumission d'amendements par un membre du Comité, il n'y a pas de règle particulière qui empêche un membre du Comité de présenter un amendement concernant un site sur son territoire. Par contre, l'État concerné ne peut pas prendre la parole, sauf à la demande d'un membre du Comité pour répondre à une question précise.

Et, sur la procédure pour la mise à disposition des amendements qui sont envoyés à l'adresse email wh-rapporteur, je voudrais expliquer un peu comment nous travaillons pour essayer de vous mettre le plus possible. Ces amendements, nous les recevons dans cette adresse et en suite, nous devons les mettre en forme. Nous devons les traduire, nous devons ajuster le langage parce qu'il y a quelquefois plusieurs amendements qui arrivent pour dire à peu près la même chose, mais avec des différents mots, etc. Une fois que nous avons trouvé une mise en forme régulière et que nous avons transmis, nous passons l'amendement au Rapporteur. Et nous l'envoyons aussi à l'État partie, et nous faisons notre mieux pour le faire effectivement, en respect des règles et procédures du travail du Comité. Voilà.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Director, for answering the questions that were posed by a few States Parties concerning the right of Committee members presenting amendments to their own property and the process of circulation of amendments so submitted. Thank you very much for these clarifications.

Dear friends and colleagues,

According to para 190 of the *Operational Guidelines*, the Committee shall review annually the state of conservation of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger. We have now reached this crucial part of our Agenda, which is at the heart of the Convention. Before we start with the examination of individual state of conservation reports, I would like to give the floor to Mr Eloundou Assomo, director of the WHC, to introduce this item.

Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Documents 7A, 7A/Add, 7A/Add.2, 7A/Add.3 and 7A/Add.4 present detailed report on the state of conservation of the 56 properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. In addition to the individual reports, there is one general decision on the World Heritage properties in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In line with our rotation practice this year, we will start the presentation of the report with Cultural Properties in the following order of regions. We will start with Europe and North America, to be followed by Latin America and the Caribbean. And we will continue with Africa, then Arab States, and will finish with Asia-Pacific. The presentations will be made jointly by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies. After the examination of cultural properties, we will proceed with the examination of natural properties in the same regional order. Please note that there are no mixed properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Once we reach the relevant agenda items and before the floor is given to the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies, it is the practice, Mr Chairperson, that the Committee member who has requested a specific state of conservation report to be opened for discussion, be asked to briefly present the reason why it felt important to discuss this report in order to keep the debate focused on this issue.

I also would like to remind the Distinguished Committee members that for all the state of conservation reports not open for discussion, as it is the practice, the list of these properties will only be read out by the Secretariat, after which you may, Mr Chairperson, then declare, if all agree, the relevant decisions adopted.

As the Distinguished members of the Committee have seen, we have proposed a tentative timetable specific to the examination of the state of conservation report. I would therefore encourage you all to refer to this document, which will be updated daily on the World Heritage Centre's web page according to our progress, but also according to the new information that we have received.

Before concluding, I would also like to recall some of the Committee's rules of procedure, which you may want to apply on this agenda item to facilitate the conduct of the debate. I want to recall Rule 22.5, which says that the Chairperson shall put Committee members' questions to a State Party once, at the end of the Committee's debate on the property. And then Rule 22.6: States Parties shall not speak to World Heritage properties in their own territories, except at the explicit invitation of the Chairperson, within the allowed time for their speech and in response to specific questions posed.

Lastly, Mr Chairperson, I would like to remind the Distinguished Committee members about the very important decision that **35 COM 12E**, which the Committee adopted at its 35th session in 2011, requesting States Parties to refrain from providing additional information regarding conservation issues after the deadlines indicated in the *Operational Guidelines*, as this information cannot be given the necessary attention for review by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies at such short notice.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for this useful introduction.

If there is no question, we shall now proceed with the examination of the first report. I see a State Party has raised, an Observer State Party has raised its plate. But before that, any Committee members would like to raise their plates, you may do so now.

I will give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to read out the names before, and after which I will be closing the list. Mr Director, kindly read out the names.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I have on my list as Committee member, Argentina. And then I think as a State Party Observer, Russian Federation.

Thank you, Chairperson. I don't see any other State Party, State Party Observer who has requested for the floor.

The Chairperson:

Okay, I will give the floor to Argentina and close the list.

The list of speakers is now closed. Argentina, you have the floor, to be followed by the Observer State Party, the Russian Federation.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

I just wanted to ask a question about procedure. We know that this item of the agenda will remain open, and we'd like to know at what point we will be treating the suggestion of not opening certain items without discussion, with discussion. We'd like to make some suggestions for texts which won't be opened for discussion, according to the suggestion that was made previously.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Russian Federation, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the Russian Federation:

[interpretation from Russian] Thank you very much Mr Chairman.

I am an Observer, indeed, but last year, we came, it was the last of our four-year mandate as a member of the Committee, and we relied on the help of the Secretariat in these, in that position. Thank you to the Secretariat for your help. We have been told, haven't we, that a Member State cannot bring, or that's what we were told, that a Member State cannot bring amendments relating to a property in their own country. And indeed, no one has done this. When someone, or one country, did try and do that, then the Secretariat was clearly stating that it should be introduced by another Member State. But from what we just heard from the explanations, a country, a Member State to the Convention, seems to be able to introduce such amendments. So would the Director of the Centre, could tell us what changed in the, over the last year, what new decisions have been taken that now allow a country where the property is located to introduce amendments, and under what working principles we have changed.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I'll now give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr Director, would you like to answer the question, or should the Legal Advisor, or you would like to ask someone else to respond to this question? You have the floor, sir.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, Monsieur le Président.

Je pense que j'avais déjà répondu à cette question tout à l'heure, puisque vous m'avez, vous avez dans votre introduction, redit exactement la même question et vous m'avez demandé de répondre. Donc j'ai déjà répondu à cette question, à laquelle la Distinguée déléguée de la Russie a posé.

J'ai déjà répondu à cette question très clairement, Monsieur le Président, je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Argentina, you had asked some questions as well. Apparently, it's not noted, so can you quickly pose your questions again, we'll be very grateful to you.

Thank you.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] I wanted to know at which point on the agenda, given that this item on decisions will remain open for several days, at which point will we be dealing with the issues which are not suggested to be open for discussion? Because in one specific case, we would like to ask for the opening of a discussion, and we'd like to know when that will happen.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor back to the Director WHC.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci M. le Président.

Effectivement, les membres du Comité peuvent, effectivement, demander l'ouverture à la discussion avant, jusqu'avant l'ouverture, l'examen du point. Ce que la pratique du travail que le Comité a l'habitude de faire c'est, pour que le Secrétariat se prépare suffisamment pour les dossiers, les sites en question ou les rapports en question, le Comité a convenu qu'il serait préférable de le faire suffisamment à l'avance. Bien sûr, rien n'interdit un membre du Comité d'ouvrir le point mais, pour permettre le travail du Secrétariat de préparer tous les documents et les rapports, il est effectivement encouragé et très recommandé que cela se fasse avant.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr Director.

I will now give the floor to the ADG Culture. You have the floor, sir.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

[interpretation from Spanish] I just wanted to answer to the esteemed Delegate from Argentina.

I understand that what you're asking is not specifically to open something on the state of conservation, but rather asking at which point you can make a comment on a specific state of conservation of a site in particular, and you're asking the Secretariat to answer: at which time you can make that statement, before or after? I think that's what he's asking, whether he can do it before or whether he has to wait until a specific time, given that the Secretariat will have a specific list of sites, whether it will then be closed. So, he'd like to know whether he has to make that statement before afterwards or later on.

The Chairperson:

Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

I'm just clarifying something that is already a practice in several other meetings. The list of speakers is usually closed after the third intervention of a member. In the meeting of this morning, it seems that we adopted another decision, which is that the list of speakers is closed before we actually begin speaking, and this means that we are prevented from reacting to the statements of other States. And in this particular case, there is an issue here, because we put forward a note to ask for the opening of a discussion. But now the text that is in front of all of the Delegations here states that there are some matters which would be approved without discussion. On the other hand, the final approval will happen on the 29th. So that leaves a long time to understand at which time we will actually be able to operationalize that request to open a specific item. We want to know when we need to do it, whether we have to wait or whether we have to do it on the 29th, or whether we can actually request that now. So, it's very much related to the rule we adopted this morning, which was to close the list of speakers before we begin the discussion.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We will be asking if anybody wants to take the floor. Apparently, you had mentioned two times that you were overlooked, so, and the response from the Secretariat, was which was informed to me, was that, when I had asked Member States to put their names plates, your name plate was not put up at that point in time, but was done afterwards. So, we thought that no Member State should be overlooked. And that's why we are being particular attention to all the corners, and we are reminding the Member States not once but even twice that if you wish to take the floor, please raise your name plates, in order to give opportunity to everyone to take the floor. Now if that is okay, with regards to your specific question as to when should you have a question about a particular item,

Mr Lazare, would you like to respond to him? You have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

C'est juste pour dire qu'effectivement, bon, les débats que vous avez eus ce matin, vous les avez eus sur les rapports, les différents rapports. Et donc sur ces rapports-là, effectivement, vous posez des questions, vous rebondissez sur des... Je pense que c'est ce que le Délégué de l'Argentine veut particulièrement dire, c'est que des débats apportent aussi d'autres questions qui sont nécessaires et qui peuvent permettre à des membres du Comité de rebondir sur ces questions. Donc, effectivement, je pense que c'était ça le message. Sur les états de conservation, vous aurez des, vous aurez un examen, des points qui sont, des sites qui sont ouverts à discussion, sur lesquels vous aurez un débat. Si, comme je l'ai dit, si vous avez des commentaires aussi sur des sites qui ne sont pas ouverts à débat, je pense que vous avez la possibilité de faire des commentaires, une fois que l'adoption de ces points est terminée. Et vous pouvez toujours faire des commentaires. Et puis, vous êtes les membres du Comité de toute façon. Donc, en tant que membres du Comité, je pense que vous avez la possibilité de prendre la parole pour faire vos commentaires additionnels pour ces sites qui ne sont pas ouverts à la discussion que vous aurez adoptés en bloc parce que vous souhaitez peut-être passer des messages particuliers en plus ou encourageants, et cetera. Voilà.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Argentina, this is the third time you are taking the floor. You have it, sir.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

Yes. Unfortunately, we are having to take the floor for the third time because it's not clear to me yet. Our country submitted a proposal for amendment to a decision which was going to be adopted without debate. It has already been presented. What we wanted to ask is, for a specific item to open the discussion and analyse or look at that amendment proposal, but we're still not sure about which time we need to request that opening. So, I'd like to do so now. We would like to request the opening of a discussion on an item of Decision **46 COM 7A.3**.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci Monsieur le Président.

La Décision dont le Distingué Délégué parle, est bien incluse dans les la liste des sites qui seront discutés cet après-midi, et vous aurez cette possibilité. Et cette liste a été communiquée à tous les États parties et je vous rassure.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for this useful introduction.

If there is no question, we shall now proceed with the examination of the first report.

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

7A.1 Historic Centre of Vienna (Austria) // Centre historique de Vienne (Autriche)

The Chairperson:

I would now give the floor to the Delegation of Lebanon to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the Historic Centre of Vienna, Austria. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Mr President.

Just a moment, let me. Okay.

The Historic Centre of Vienna is a very complex urban property with multiple layers of heritage values, overlapping attributes, stakeholders and rights holders with sometimes conflicting interests. The property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in 2001. One year after this inscription, the Committee expressed concern over a complex of high-rise buildings in the Wien-Mitte project being built on the immediate periphery of the property. After several missions and discussions, the project was amended and the World Heritage Committee decided to call for an international conference on the subject of World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture, which was held in May 2005 in Vienna under the patronage of UNESCO and attended by more than 600 experts and professionals from 55 countries. This Conference issued a document called the Vienna Memorandum, which contained the main principles that will lead to the development of the historic urban landscape approach adopted by UNESCO General Conference in 2011. Since its inscription on the List, the issue of the effective control of high-rise building projects within the property, within its buffer zone and wider setting, seems to have represented a major challenge for the conservation of the properties of OUV.

It was also the case everywhere in the world, and we started having high-rise buildings in and around historic centres inscribed on the List. Unfortunately, that is still the case now.

In 2017, the Committee decided to inscribe Vienna on the List in Danger because the city's master plan permits the construction of buildings of a scale that would have an adverse impact on the urban form.

Now, what we can read in the report of the March 2024 joint mission and the present draft decision, is that progress made in implementing the adaptive corrective measures required to achieve the desired state of conservation has been achieved. There have been a lot of progress, not final, but a lot of progress. We hope that the progress made will allow to remove the property from the List in Danger in the near future, but we hope also that this issue of high-rise building everywhere that we are meeting in diverse cities, in a lot of cities inscribed on the List be again raised and discussed, and that the experience of Vienna be a good experience for other cities.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now invite Ms Berta de Sancristobal, Chief of the Europe and North America unit of the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, to provide their comments. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The World Heritage Centre concurs that the circumstances of the Historic Centre of Vienna warrant close attention from the World Heritage Committee, as the State Party makes progress with the agreed corrective measures and the trajectory towards the desired state of conservation for removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

In response to the comments on high-rise projects, the World Heritage Centre notes that the Viennese Building Code has been amended. The State Party is in the process of amending the Federal Monuments Protection Act and developing a new urban development strategy for Vienna, known as Step 2035, which will include provisions for the protection of World Heritage. As the Distinguished Delegate of Lebanon recalled, in the course of the years since the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List in 2001, the Committee has, in its previous decisions, reviewed, proposed and implemented high-risk building projects. The Heumarkt Neu project, which is also referred to as Vienna Ice Skating Club or Intercontinental Hotel, was reviewed by the Committee at its 37th session in 2013, and in 2017 became one of the main reasons for the Committee's decision to inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The joint World Heritage Centre ICOMOS-ICCROM advisory mission was requested by the State Party earlier this year to advise, in a spirit of cooperation, on the possibilities of defining acceptable thresholds for the design review options of the Heumarkt project and on the status of implementation of the corrective measures for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The mission report presents the State Party with four different options, and the version of April 2024 could therefore not be informed by the mission report. The advisory mission and the state of conservation report before the Committee consider a number of other existing and planned projects in and around the property. A number of new projects proposed for highly sensitive locations within the property have not yet been notified to the World Heritage Centre, in accordance with paragraph 122 of the *Operational Guidelines*, nor have they yet been subject to a Heritage Impact Assessment in accordance with paragraph 118bis of the *Operational Guidelines*, indicating that the management system is not yet functioning in a manner that guarantees the safeguarding of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

In summary, the concerns expressed by Lebanon about the potential impact of high-rise development on the property are shared by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, and these issues are being addressed by the State Party through the corrective measures process with the benefit of the advice from the joint World Heritage Centre ICOMOS-ICCROM advisory mission earlier this year.

With your permission, Mr Chairperson, my colleague from ICOMOS would like to briefly report on the mission findings. Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

ICOMOS also acknowledges the progress made by the State Party in implementing the corrective measures required for the property to meet the adopted desired state of conservation for removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger. Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the management plan is one of the conditions previously adopted by the Committee as a corrective measure, and it would be helpful to recall in the Committee's decision to guide the State Party towards removal of the property from the List in Danger.

The 2024 advisory mission considered a revised proposal for the Heumarkt Neu project, which consists of three building components, and has advised that benefits of the project should be realized without eroding the OUV of the property, highlighting that its high-rise elements remain problematic. To assist the State Party, the advisory mission provided four different options and identified the relative preference among these options to help the State Party further refine the scheme to respect the authenticity and integrity of the property. The advisory mission also made recommendations regarding the maximum height of the future hotel building and the residential building. These recommendations are consistent with the Committee's decisions since 2013. The April 24 scheme does not yet align with the advisory mission advice. The advisory mission also advised that the chosen design should be subject to the same heritage impact assessment process as previous versions of the scheme, so that the relevant requirement in the DSOCR can actually be achieved. This advice is embodied in the draft decision before the Committee. At the invitation and request of the State Party, the 2024 advisory mission has also assessed progress in the implementation of the corrective measures.

The advisory mission observed that a number of corrective measures are yet to be fully completed. These include a final acceptable design for the Heumarkt Neu new project, revision of the design of a proposed new hotel wing in the Schwarzenberg Garden, strong statutory protection for historic gardens, and ensuring that sound planning, tools

and legal provisions foster the safeguarding of the property. This would include effective processes for determining when heritage impact assessment is warranted. These and other corrective measures need to be fully completed. Only then, having given the State Party sufficient time to address the recommendations of the mission sent only a few months ago, would it be appropriate to request a reactive monitoring mission, which would then assess whether the property has achieved the desired state of conservation for removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would like to know whether there are any comments from any Committee members.

Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

I wish to recall how this site ended up on the List of World Heritage in Danger. It was the State Party who alerted us about the danger, which was faced by such a precious site. Since it was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, the State Party has demonstrated its absolute commitment to the OUV, which was assigned from the very outset to this site. Here we've heard that this is not a punishment, being on the World Heritage List in Danger, but rather it serves to help the State Party to protect that property. We believe that we don't want to be sending the wrong message to Member States. We seem to be saying that if you request your site to be inscribed on the List of Heritage in Danger, you'll be punished forever. Now, the proponent State Party has achieved a great deal of achievements since it has been inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and I think it should serve as an example of how we should be reacting. We don't believe that it is time to tell the State Party to address these issues all alone. They serve as an inspiring example of how to implement efforts. If there are several months left, then they should be used to look at the achievements here. We shouldn't be giving them any lectures about how they should be reacting here. We understand the objections submitted by the Advisory Bodies, but we would ask Austria to take charge of these efforts, and we need to show all Member States that being on the World Heritage in Danger List is not a punishment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I think you have said very well that being on the List of World Heritage in Danger is not a punishment. I thank you for saying that statement.

Any other Member States, Committee member would like to take the floor?

Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Yes, Chairperson. Very briefly, just to say that we follow the logic of the intervention of our colleague from Argentina, and we will develop our position during the discussion and the debate on the draft resolution on which we have already presented an amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Any other Member State would like to take the floor? Yes.

Republic of Korea, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Republic of Korea takes note of the efforts made by the State Party, such as corrective measures and amendments of the Viennese Building Code. We also commend the State Party for its continued effort regarding the Heumarkt Neu Project and welcome the request of the State Party for the reactive monitoring mission, especially in para 8, we can see their commitment to achieving DSOCR on the basis of heritage impact assessment. We encourage the State Party continue its dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies with a view to achieving DSOCR, including further improvement and implementation of the management plan.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

I now give the floor to Mexico, followed by Japan.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

We agree with some of the concerns expressed by the Distinguished Representative of Lebanon, who is greatly respected. He recalled the Memorandum of Vienna. In 2005, the site ended up on the List of World Heritage in Danger, I believe it was due to a train station related matter. Since then, the State Party has always complied with the recommendations of the Committee and ensured the correct implementation of the Convention. And clearly, we can see, as Korea and Argentina have mentioned, that they are working to address the recommendation on the HIA from 2011 as well. The study recommended by ICOMOS is a good idea, but we can see the commitment of Austria when it comes to the correct implementation of the Convention and the measures that have been implemented. We could perhaps support this State Party, seeing as they are complying with all of the recommendations set out by the Advisory Bodies.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would now give the floor to Japan, followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

I'll be very brief. We would like to commend the State Party, Austria, for their tremendous effort to protect the site, as well as to harmonize its conservation in the complex situation of modern city. Needless to say, this is a typical case of conservation and protection of historic urban landscapes. We also thank to the Advisory Bodies for their continuing efforts.

As we all know, I just mentioned, meaning of endangered listing has been discussed repeatedly in every Committee meeting, and we also understand that it should not be a kind of punishment, but rather it should be a tool to help State Party concerned and all stakeholders. Concerning this important city, so many discussions have been carried out and important measures have been taken by relevant authorities. We welcome further efforts for this site, and also welcome to discuss about a way out from the List of World Heritage in Danger. We also think that, along with this direction, a clear framework for dialogue between State Party and the Advisory Bodies is needed. Therefore, we support the proposed amendment by Greece, including suggested reactive monitoring mission.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I'll give the floor to Qatar, followed by Senegal.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The State of Qatar acknowledges the efforts and commendable progress made by the State Party of Austria in preserving the Historic Centre of Vienna. We have carefully listened to the statement by the Advisory Body and also appreciating the significant steps taken by the State Party toward the implementation of the corrective measures required for achieving the desired state of conservation for the removal of property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. And we commend the efforts of Austria in preserving the Heritage Centre of Vienna.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I'll now give the floor to Senegal, followed by SVG.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci.

L'État du Sénégal souhaiterait donc appuyer l'amendement de la Grèce, et nous pensons que le pays a fait énormément d'efforts dans le sens donc de développer son site, de respecter les principes qui sont recommandés par la Convention. De ce point de vue, nous pensons que le pays a suffisamment démontré sa résilience face au contexte. Et que donc les recommandations qui sont données par les pays qui nous ont précédés pourraient donc être suivies, c'est à dire donc de procéder au retrait du centre historique de la Liste en péril et d'encourager le pays

à continuer à poursuivre ses efforts dans le sens donc de remplir donc, toutes les recommandations formulées par les organes consultatifs.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Good afternoon.

Having reviewed the documents associated with this heritage site, the following points need to be made. The State Party implemented in part a series of corrective measures, as were requested in an effort to remove the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. The State Party, in conjunction with the World Heritage Centre and the advisory mission, have examined the management systems for the site and we can expect to receive.

The Chairperson:

May I interrupt you? There is a point of order by Greece. Yeah, but then don't do this. All right. Sorry. Please continue.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Okay. The State Party, in conjunction with the World Heritage Centre and the advisory mission, have examined the management systems for the site, and we can expect to receive the version of the improved plans in short order. Similarly, the State Party is to submit the heritage impact assessment and design plans for the infrastructure development projects proposed for the site.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the State Party, there are additional infrastructure development, namely the underground visitor centre and the extension to the metro system, for which more details are required by the Advisory Bodies for assessment.

Accordingly, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines congratulates the State Party on its efforts and encourages it to continue the implementation of its work and its commitments. We look forward to the report next year. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines therefore supports the amendments submitted by Greece.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Kazakhstan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Thank you so much, Mr Chairperson. Distinguished members of the World Heritage Committee, esteemed colleagues,

Speaking on behalf of the Republic of Kazakhstan, I would like to emphasise that we all understand the importance of preserving the Historic Centre of Vienna and recognise the extensive effort being made to achieve this goal. The issue of preserving the Historic Centre of Vienna has been raised for many years. Since 2013, the Committee has repeatedly returned to this issue, and Austria has been tirelessly working on implementing corrective measures. These measures are both fundamental and practical, including amendments to the Vienna Building Code, the expansion of roof cadastre and upcoming changes to Federal Monument Protection Act. These initiatives demonstrate both Austria's serious commitment to preserving the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and the practical expected effects. Austria voluntarily invited the advisory mission, which in itself reflects their seriousness and willingness to address the existing issues collaboratively.

Kazakhstan also supports the importance of strengthening the role of site managers and establishing a monitoring and evaluation programme. The effectiveness of the management plan should be demonstrated through regular monitoring and evaluation. Austria is one of the three States Parties to the World Heritage Convention that have a national ICOMOS monitoring system of the World Heritage properties, the national ICOMOS commissions, at least two experts for each property, who regularly monitor these sites and report to the managers about their state of conservation. Additionally, they support the managers by providing advice on any issues related to World Heritage. Vienna incorporated this ICOMOS monitoring systematically into its management system at the end of 2021, after new management plan was adopted. All these changes are effective evidence of effective work of preserving the Historic Centre of Vienna.

Thank you so much, Your Excellency.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Greece, I see your name plate. This is the second time you're taking the floor. You have it, sir.

The Delegation of Greece:

Yes, sir. Just a procedural question. As I said in my previous intervention, we are going to present the reasoning of our amendments when the debate on the draft decision will start. Since I see and I welcome many colleagues supporting our amendments, we were wondering, when is the right moment to present our reasoning and our amendments? Because many, many delegates, and who we thank a lot, they have expressed their support for our amendments, without us having the possibility to present them. So, it's a more a procedural question that I'm addressing to the Presidency.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

There are no more questions. You can give your justification now, as advised by the Secretariat.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Chair.

So, as I said, we would like to briefly present before the members of the Committee the reasoning for the proposed amendments to this draft decision, which our Delegation suggests after having examined thoroughly the relevant documents.

Colleagues,

The Historic Centre of Vienna, as it is known, has been included in the List of World Heritage in Danger since 2017. Meanwhile, significant efforts have been made by the State Party in implementing a number of corrective measures. This has already been acknowledged by the World Heritage Committee in its decisions since 2018, and in particular in its previous decision adopted in 2023 in Riyadh. We do believe that all this has to be reflected in the draft decision to enable the Committee to decide accordingly, in particular concerning the management plan. We understand that it has been examined and approved during the last Committee session. Therefore, we propose the amendment on paras 4 and 5, as it will be soon seen in the screen. Para 5 in its current version should be interpreted in the same, in the sense that the completion of the corrective measures is only possible after a time-frame of five years. A perspective that would exclude the possibility of removing the property from the endangered List until 2028. We therefore proposed the slight changes in the wording of para 5.

We have additional wording as far as paras 7 and 8 are concerned. The advisory mission report on 2024 came to the conclusion that significant progress has been made in revising the design of the Heumarkt Neu project, and that the mission assesses that this corrective measure is nearing its achievement. We understand that the project in question has been continuously revised by the State Party in a costly and complex process, as a result of the Committee's decisions and a series of accompanying heritage impact assessment and in close dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. The wording of that decision, however, gives the impression that no progress at all has been made. Therefore, we propose the amendment paras 7 and 8 accordingly.

However, before we take any final decision regarding this very complex and technical issue, it would be advisable to ask the State Party to give us some further clarifications concerning the revised design of the Heumarkt Neu project, especially in the light of the recent, and I would say, the very recent advisory mission.

In conclusion, the proposed amendments aim at highlighting the combined efforts made so far by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body, and of course, by the State Party since 2017, in a very systematic way, and according to the *Operational Guidelines* for the adoption of the necessary corrective measures. In this context, we consider appropriate that the property is given a perspective for removal from the List of the World Heritage in Danger within a reasonable time frame, and on the basis of the outcome of the reactive monitoring mission proposed in a new paragraph 12.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for the rationale, Greece.

You know, as per the scenario made by the Secretariat for the Chair, usually we give the floor to the presenter of the amendment, and it was mentioned here that we gave the floor to the Delegation of Lebanon to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open. So, the one who gives a request to open, they are given the floor first. Then, and they give their rationale, and Lebanon did. Thereafter, we call the experts, and the experts give their view, which was also done. After the expert has given their views, we open the floor and ask for comments by Member States. Now, what comments Member States make, the Chair has no control on it. They are making. If they made comments on the Greek amendments, even before the amendments were presented, it is up to the Member States. But then, because the Committee members started making comments on your amendment,

suddenly you asked a question as to when will I be able to give a justification for my rationale? And you know, the cooperative nature that the Secretariat has, they said, okay, give it to him now, which I did. But I feel that the right thing should be when I ask the Rapporteur, is there an amendment? And then the Rapporteur either says yes and no and we open it, then one can say that, you know, we would like to explain it. So, it's okay, you know, we have given you the floor, you have made beautiful suggestions, it's all noted. So, I will proceed now.

Greece, you have taken the floor. We are already running three hours late. If you do not finish it, I will be forced to call you either early in the morning for one or two hours, at 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock, or make you wait in the evening so that we meet our agenda timing. But you have the floor, sir.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you for your flexibility. And I am sure that you understand that we had to clarify the procedure where we are in. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. And you are blameless. It's not your fault. Perfect. Thank you for your comments.

Member States have made their comments. I will ask Ms Sancristobal and ICOMOS to answer if there are any questions. But in case there are no questions, and you feel we have already covered then you can let it be.

So, ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

ICOMOS will just answer quickly with respect to matters put by the Honourable delegates for Argentina and Japan. In relation to the intervention from Argentina, ICOMOS would simply clarify that the Advisory Bodies have not been given directions, other than when an advisory mission has been requested by the State Party, or a reactive monitoring mission has been requested by the Committee. So, the advice that is being provided is on request.

There have been, in fact, four, sorry, two advisory missions, two reactive monitoring missions, and four technical reviews across the period. So, with respect to the question and request from the Honourable Delegate for Japan about dialogue, there has been extensive dialogue since 2012. There continues to be such dialogue, but there is some confusion amongst some of the interventions between what's happening in the missions and what's happening in the technical reviews. And ICOMOS would simply advise that when the missions take place, that is when the general advice is being provided, and the advice that has been given to the State Party since 2012 has been consistent. And from time to time, particularly with respect to the Heumarkt project, a specific proposal has been submitted by the State Party to the World Heritage Centre, and when that occurs, the Advisory Body provides a technical review which relates to the specific project that has been submitted and that is not in the form of more general advice. I hope that is helpful.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I see no more questions or comments.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7A.1** concerning the property. But before doing so I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendment.

Le Rapporteur :

Eh bien, M. le Président, nous avons reçu un amendement de la Grèce, et je pense que tout sera plus clair suite à l'intervention de la Grèce, après présentation du texte de cet amendement.

Je commence avec le paragraphe 4, où l'amendement propose de remplacer la phrase commençant par « encourage l'État partie » par « demande à l'État partie de considérer ses recommandations comme un outil de travail essentiel pour assurer une amélioration accrue du nouveau système de gestion et pour guider la future révision du plan de gestion adopté par le Comité du patrimoine mondial à sa 45^e session élargie à Riyad en 2023 ».

Paragraphe suivant : « Note également que l'efficacité du plan de gestion doit être démontré dans la pratique par un suivi régulier. »

Paragraphe 7. L'amendement propose également de remplacer « en vue de réduire » par « en réduisant plus avant ». Je pense que, je pense qu'on va remplacer « plus avant » par « davantage ». « En réduisant davantage les impacts négatifs de la proposition de la VUE du bien sur les attributs qui la transmettent ». Je me tourne vers la version anglaise, "further reducing" oui, « réduire davantage ».

Paragraphe 8. « Considère que la proposition de conception à nouveau révisée concernant l'amélioration du développement de Heumarkt Neu devrait s'appuyer sur les quatre options proposées par la Mission de conseil de 2024 afin d'atteindre l'élément du DSOCR pertinent et prie instamment l'État partie de soumettre des plans détaillés et une conception sur la base de l'EIP », à la place du texte initialement proposé dans la décision.

Enfin, l'amendement propose l'insertion d'un 12^e paragraphe : « Demande qu'une mission de suivi réactif ait lieu rapidement après la soumission des plans détaillés et de la conception du projet Heumarkt Neu », excusez-moi si ma traduction, ma prononciation allemande n'est pas la bonne. « Dans sa version d'avril 2024 ».

Je vous remercie, Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Now that the Rapporteur has informed us about the amendment, at this point in time, we would have asked the presenter of the amendment to take the floor and explain the rationale, but they have already explained. But did I hear right, that you wanted to give the floor to the Observer State Party? And a Committee member can request for the floor to be given, and because you had made that request, I will give the floor to the Observer State Party of Austria to make a comment for two minutes maximum.

The Observer Delegation of Austria:

[first speaker] Thank you, Distinguished Chairperson for giving us the floor.

Since this is the first time we are taking it, let me congratulate you on a brilliant Chairmanship and thank India for being such a generous and visionary host. I would pass over to my colleague, our National Heritage Coordinator, to go into the details.

[second speaker] Thank you so much. Concerning the amendment to para 8. You hear me? Okay. Thank you.

Distinguished members of the Committee and dear colleagues of the Advisory Bodies,

We are very grateful for the advice you put forward by this comprehensive mission report that we certainly will consider an important additional working tool to further achieve the completion of our really comprehensive set of corrective measures.

However, there remains a concern about para 8 because we are not sure how are predicted the proposal to choose out of the options put forward by the mission report concerning the Heumarkt Neu project is considered. If this would be mandatory to complete our related corrective measures, I'm very much afraid this will set back the whole process to start, as these proposals are actually, well, I cannot say it more friendly than ignore the process carried out since 2021 that led to a project in 2023 that was considered a progress by the World Heritage Committee. And so, I feel a bit lost with these recommendations by the mission report. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Now we will be going to the draft decision.

Those Committee members that have expressed support for the draft decision, we would requested you to put your name plate up so the Rapporteur could note it down. Those who want to support this draft amendment by Greece, we request you to put your name plate up and let them remain up till the time the Rapporteur.

I'll give the floor to the Rapporteur to take a call and name them. Okay, Mr Rapporteur, will you please note down the, as per your request, note down the names of the countries and then they will put their names plates down.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

J'ai bien noté les soutiens à cet amendement par le Qatar, la République de Corée, Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines, l'Italie, le Japon, le Sénégal, la Zambie, le Kazakhstan, le Mexique, l'Inde, l'Argentine. Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines, j'ai déjà dit. Je pense que c'est bon.

The Chairperson:

Have you noted Zambia and Senegal? Okay, we will go to the draft decisions.

Point 1 to 3, there is no change. Are there any objects to points 1 to 3 being adopted? I see no objections. It is adopted, but I'm not hitting the hammer yet.

We go to Point 4, which is the amendment. Are there any objections to Point 4 as amended, before we adopt it? Okay, I see no objections. We go to the next point. I see Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. You have the floor.

Are there any objections to the para 5? Any comments? I see none.

Go to para 6. Sorry. I see Japan has raised their plate. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Well. Okay. We have a. Yeah. That's it. Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

I see Lebanon had raised their plate. And Kazakhstan. So, Point 6, Lebanon wants to speak to.

So, I now give the floor to Kazakhstan and then Lebanon.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Thank you so much, Your Excellency.

Our country also was not mentioned there, as well as Japan before.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I request the Rapporteur to kindly mention the two countries. Lebanon you want to discuss on Point 6?

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Yes, Mr Chair. Our problem is basically a problem of interpretation. I mean, in English, when we say « design » the design of the project and when in French it becomes « la conception », it doesn't work exactly, always in every place. When you say, « la conception actuelle de la construction de la nouvelle aile », it's so complicated. Maybe « le projet » or « l'actuel projet de construction de la nouvelle aile », replacing « design » by « projet » in this case, in the case of architecture, for us seems much clearer, because it becomes a little bit complicated in French when you have « la conception actuelle de la construction ». Wow, and it's the same, I think, in the 7 and in the others.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Lebanon.

I request the editors to make, the French editors to incorporate those changes in the translation, in the French translation accordingly.

Türkiye, I see you have raised your name plate. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Okay. Oh, it's working now. Thank you, Mr Chair.

Türkiye would like to also support paragraphs 4 and 5, as proposed by Greece.

The Chairperson:

Please add Türkiye's name as well. The spelling of Türkiye is not, doesn't seem right in English. Para 4. Please correct the name of Türkiye.

We go to para 6. Are there any objections to para 6? I see none.

We go to para 7. Are there any objections to para 7? I see none.

We go to para 8. Are there any objections to para 8?

Argentina, I see you have lifted your plate. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

We share the concern of the State of Austria on what is the meaning of this paragraph and what will happen in the future. We want to make it very clear that the site will be removed from the endangered List independently, or regardless of the outcome of this mission, which will be a success. We need to make it clear what the mandate of the Advisory Bodies is, and we want to ensure that the decision will serve to encourage the proponent State Party to end up with its site removed from the List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Lebanon, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Liban :

Oui. Excusez-moi, M. le Président. C'est aussi une question de langue. « Considère que la proposition de conception à nouveau révisé concernant l'amélioration du développement de Heumarkt Neu », c'est pas du tout ça en anglais. "The further revised design proposal for refinement of the Heumarkt Neu development". Ça veut dire quoi ? Ça veut dire que « le projet modifié concernant le développement, le futur développement de Heumarkt Neu

devrait s'appuyer sur ». C'est plutôt ça. C'est pas la proposition de conception à nouveau réalisée concernant l'amélioration du développement. Ça ne veut rien dire en français. Je suis désolé.

The Chairperson:

I request the editor kindly, in the French version, try to capture to the best of your abilities.

Are there any further comments or objections to para 8? I see none.

We go to para 9.

Okay. The Secretariat has requested the floor, so I will give the floor to the Secretariat.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

With your permission, ICOMOS might respond on behalf of the Secretariat and ICOMOS. Just to respond to the intervention from the Honourable Delegate from Argentina and the concerns raised by the State Party of Austria. The critical difference that has occurred in the amendment for paragraph 8 is to change from a requirement of compliance with one of the four options, to being informed by one of the four options. In other words, this does not say you must pick one of them, but you must be informed in revising the design. In fact, the test will be very clear. The test is already set out explicitly in the corrective measures and desired state of conservation already adopted by the Committee. And that requires that when the revised design has been prepared, it undergoes a heritage impact assessment and be found not to have a substantive adverse impact on the OUV of the property, which is indeed exactly what should be the objective in relation to conserving its Outstanding Universal Value. So, I hope that assists both the States Parties of Argentina and Austria.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. We go to para 9. Are there any objections to para 9? I see none.

We go to para 10. I see no comments, no name plates raised.

We go to para 11.

We go to para 12. Are there any objections or views to para 12? I see none.

We go to para 13. I see no objections.

We go to para 14. Are there any objections to the adoption of para 14?

Senegal, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

[inaudible] Le centre.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Senegal.

Are there any further views?

Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you. Chair.

We wish to propose "Remove the Historic Centre of Vienna from the List of World Heritage in Danger".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I will give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr Director, you have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Oui. Merci. M. le Président.

C'est juste pour partager un peu ici un sentiment. L'amendement de la Grèce est un amendement qui demande et qu'on a entendu toutes les interventions des différents États parties et des membres du Comité. C'est un amendement qui demande qu'une mission de suivi réactif aille sur le terrain, retourne à Vienne pour aller travailler avec les autorités de Vienne sur la finalisation de la conception du projet architectural en question, qui est un des éléments qui a conduit à l'inscription sur la Liste en péril. Donc, je voudrais simplement rappeler que, et je

comprends très bien la proposition de l'amendement du Distingué Délégué de l'Argentine. Cela voudrait dire que le Comité ici, sur ce paragraphe, finalement, se contredirait parce qu'il voudrait que ce projet puisse être finalisé de manière à ce que la mission de suivi réactif vous apporte le résultat concret et vous confirme que la question est réglée et que vous pouvez retirer le site de la Liste en péril l'année prochaine. Alors que là, la mission n'est pas allée, et la proposition est de retirer le site sur la Liste en péril. Je voudrais juste signaler, peut-être que là, le Comité risque de se contredire dans la logique des différents paragraphes qu'il est en train de, qu'il a adopté jusqu'à présent.

Merci M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Lazare.

The State Party of Argentina. Would you like to make any comment on para 12? Because it is the para 12 that is contradicting your request to remove. So, would you like to make a comment? You have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

Yes. The only comment we have is that you should use this case as an example. The amendment proposal is just to highlight that we know that the mission is important, but we also know that this State Party has been leading by example for several years now in terms of addressing issues. And so we need to send a clear message to other Member States here. We can withdraw our amendment proposal, however we want to make it clear that we expect that very soon it will be removed from the List of Heritage in Danger, because it's an example for all of us. We know that the mission will be successful. We can already predict its outcome, which will be positive. So here we want to show that Austria is doing things properly and that we should all be following its example.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Your removal has been noted. The Argentinian amendment be removed.

Lebanon, I saw your plate go up again. This is the third time you're taking the floor. You have it, sir.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Chair. No, no, it was just a comment on the previous Argentina proposal. Now that the Argentina proposal is removed, I have no comment.

The Chairperson:

Yes, the Argentina's proposal for removing Austria from the List of, the particular city has been removed by Argentina itself. So, the proposal does not stand as of now.

Is para 14 okay? I see no further objections.

Can we see the entire decision as a whole for adoption? Is there any objection for this decision as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 7A.1** adopted as amended *[gave]*.

Thank you very much. I would now like to ask. I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property.

At the back there. Someone.

Okay. Austria. We gave you the floor before. But you have you have raised your plate for the second time. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Austria:

Thank you, Distinguished Chairperson.

We would like to extend our thanks to the members of the Committee, specifically the Greek Delegation and all supporters. Thank you so much. We also thank ICOMOS for the important clarification regarding paragraph 8 and the meaning of the word "informs". We will carefully study the final decision and consult with our authorities and come back to you with a comprehensive state of conservation report in 2025.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

There is a request by the civil society and NGO World Heritage Watch. You have the floor, sir.

NGO World Heritage Watch (Observer):

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We appreciate your hosting the Committee meeting and would like to express our gratefulness for the organizing staff for the warm welcome we meet everywhere.

I will read a statement on behalf of the Initiative for the Protection of Vienna's Cityscape. I quote, "The initiative for the Protection of Vienna's cityscape doesn't see why we should make a statement on the Historic Centre of Vienna, after the decision about it has been adopted". End of statement.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you for your comments.

We now proceed. We now proceed for cultural properties located in Europe and North America.

7A.3 Medieval Monuments in Kosovo (Serbia) // Monuments médiévaux au Kosovo (Serbie)

The Chairperson:

I now give the floor to the Delegation of Argentina to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the World Heritage Medieval Monuments in Kosovo, Serbia. Excellency, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you. Chair.

We wish to submit an amendment to the draft decision. We wish to clarify a situation which is being negotiated between stakeholders in Brussels, not in UNESCO. We do not wish to politicize the outcomes of these discussions. So we wish to propose an amendment to the draft decision, which is being discussed under this item, because there's currently a discussion between Belgrade and Pristina in Brussels.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I would like to know whether there are any comments. I see none. Let's proceed then.

This agenda item. Okay. This agenda item is therefore adjourned to our next ordinary session. And I will kindly ask our Rapporteur to ensure that this is captured in the report of decisions. Thank you very much. Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you Chair.

Can we submit the amendment, or do we have to wait until the 29th to do that? It has been sent to the Secretariat in writing, the amendment that we'd like to submit. And we'd like to know whether we can propose it now or whether we have to wait until the 29th.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I give the floor to the Director of the WHC to respond to that specific question asked. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I think the decision has just been adopted. And, I mean, if you would like us to. I will give the floor to the Rapporteur to reassure the Distinguished Delegate of Argentina.

The Chairperson:

He has asked a very specific question, and you would like the Rapporteur to respond to that? Mr Rapporteur, you have the floor.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci. Merci, M. le Directeur du Centre.

Effectivement, je vais dans ce cas vous présenter l'amendement que nous avons reçu concernant ce point par l'Argentine, amendement qui propose un projet de décision suivant. « Le Comité du patrimoine mondial décide d'ajourner le débat sur ce point de l'ordre du jour jusqu'à sa prochaine session ordinaire. »

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

As per the scenario presented in front of me by the Secretariat, this agenda item is therefore adjourned, which I have already mentioned, to our next ordinary session. And I will kindly ask our Rapporteur to ensure that it is captured in the report of the decisions. Thank you very much.

May we move? May we proceed? May we proceed? Thank you.

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. Mr Director WHC, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

The following site is proposed for a, not for discussion is Roşia Montană Mining Landscape, Romania.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. If there is no objection from the Committee members on this state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out adopted.

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion. I see none. Let us proceed then.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÏBES

7A.8 Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo (Panama) // Fortifications de la côte caraïbe du Panama : Portobelo, San Lorenzo (Panama)

The Chairperson:

I would now like to give the floor to the Delegation of Lebanon to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo, Panama. Excellency, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I'm sorry, I took the floor for the fifth time today. But maybe it's the nostalgia of good old times when the Committee sessions used to stay till midnight.

Anyway, the property is a serial property comprising two components: the Portobelo Fortification and the Castle of San Lorenzo. And it was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1980 and in List in Danger in 2012.

Based on the SOC presented by State Party in January 2024, it appears that although progress was achieved in order to implement corrective measures, I quote: "The current efforts affecting the property, the current factors affecting the property have not changed significantly since its inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger". End quote. So, the SOC says that there has been progress, but the property have not changed significantly, the factors affecting the property.

When the Committee will discuss later on Item 46 COM 8, we will examine a new nomination, namely the Colonial Transisthmian Route, which is a two-stage serial nomination, including in its first stage the Castle of San Lorenzo and second phase, the Portobelo fortification.

We would like thus to ask both the State Party and ICOMOS: what is the rationale behind including components that are in danger as part of a new nomination? Wouldn't this constitute a risk of threatening from the start the integrity of the new nomination? We would like to have comments from the State Party and ICOMOS.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Lebanon.

I now invite Ms Rochelle Rocha, programme specialist at the Latin America and the Caribbean Unit of the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, to provide their comments. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo World Heritage property, was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in Decision **36 COM 7B.102** in 2012, in view of accelerated degradation of the historic fabric combined with the deficient protection and management system.

The questions raised by the Distinguished Delegate of Lebanon provide the opportunity to recall the history of the Committee's evaluation of the state of conservation of this property. The questions raised are also linked, as was said, to the extended process that precedes the submission of the first phase of the nomination of the Transisthmian Colonial Route, which will be discussed under Item 8B during the session of the Committee. The Committee in Decision **37 COM 7B.100** raised the prospect of deleting the Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and Historic District of Panamá World Heritage property from the World Heritage List at its 39th session in 2013, but did not inscribe it on the List of World Heritage in Danger, pending a reactive monitoring mission to the property. The subsequent 2013 joint World Heritage Centre-ICOMOS high-level reactive monitoring mission recommended three options for a major boundary modification and the State Party of Panama has chosen the third option, which was a phased proposal in which an overall new vision is included regarding components of the property as parts of a broader territorial system related to the inter-oceanic and intercontinental commerce over five centuries. This option would require a renomination for different values and a revised state of Outstanding Universal Value. The first phase of this new nomination now includes the San Lorenzo component of the Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo.

Just one other important point to raise for this property. The construction of a visitor's centre in the setting of the San Lorenzo component of the Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo World Heritage property. The State Party first signalled plans to design this project in its state of conservation report in 2018. In its Decision, **44 COM 7A.36** of 2021, the Committee requested the State Party to consider potential impacts of the project and to ensure that it is in full coherence with the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. In its Decision **45 COM 8C.2** in 2023, the Committee requested that a heritage impact assessment be carried out as soon as possible, and the results submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. To date, the State Party has not responded adequately to these requests for the heritage impact assessment and the visitor centre is now complete.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Ms Rochelle Rocha.

But ICOMOS, would you like to add something to that? You have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Chair.

In response to the question posed by the Distinguished Delegate from Lebanon, ICOMOS can provide the following clarification. Regarding the inclusion of components of this danger-listed property in a new nomination, ICOMOS, including in its panel, has reflected on the interlinkages of this existing property on the List of World Heritage in Danger and the inclusion of the Castle of San Lorenzo component in a nomination of a new property. But because the OUV of the existing serial World Heritage property and that of the proposed nomination are different, there is a limited overlap in key attributes. And because the new nomination, which involves historical trade routes, has a territorial approach, the architectural attributes of, for instance, the Castle of San Lorenzo would make a different contribution to the potential OUV of the proposed new property. If and when inscribed, then they do to the OUV of the Fortifications on the Caribbean side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo World Heritage property.

The state of conservation of the Portobelo component of this danger-listed property is described in the state of conservation report before you. The physical state of conservation of this component, which is included in the first phase nomination to be discussed under Item 8B, has been improved through recent conservation work.

Of course, improving the protection and management system of the entire Portobelo-San Lorenzo World Heritage property and its individual components remains one of the priorities to achieve the desired state of conservation for removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger for this property. An appropriate management system would necessarily include an appropriate management plan and legal requirements for impact assessments, among others.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for this presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments. Lebanon, I had seen you raise your plate, but it's no longer raised. Are there any Member States who would like to make any comments? I see none. Let us proceed then. Thank you. Thank you. I see no more questions or comments.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7A.8** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président. Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendements concernant ce point.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Rapporteur.

Are there any comments by any State Party? I see none. Can we have the decision on the screen? We have it. There are no amendments. Can we scroll the decision? As there are no amendments and no further comments. I see no comments.

I therefore declare the draft Decision **46 COM 7A.8** adopted. *[gavel]*

Thank you very much. I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property.

Panama. Panama, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Panama:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

This is the first time we're taking the floor, and in doing so, we wish to thank India for their hospitality. And we also congratulate the organizers of this session of the World Heritage Committee.

As regards the property, C.135, Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama: Portobelo-San Lorenzo, being on the World Heritage in Danger List since 2012, we are delighted to state that we have funds available now to meet the recommendations of the DSOCR. We have a loan from the IADB for a total of US\$ 40 million, which has been under execution since 2022. We executed or have implemented 22% of these funds, particularly in the Fort of San Lorenzo component.

Up until 2026, there are four projects planned for a total of US\$ 20.4 million in order to address the issues related to the component of Portobelo.

Panama accepts the decision of the Committee and will fulfil the recommendations. We also wish to state that the visitor's centre is not located in a site in close vicinity, in the close vicinity of San Lorenzo. It is outside of the visual area of the site.

We also wish to say that as part of the first phase of the inscription of the Colonial Transisthmian Route of Panama, the San Lorenzo component, well, we have achieved significant progress in its conservation, and we see no contradiction between the new nomination and the presence of this component on the In Danger List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your comments.

7A.10 Coro and its Port (Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of) // Coro et son port (Venezuela, République bolivarienne du)

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

I would now like to give the floor to the Delegation of Lebanon to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of Coro and its Port, Venezuela, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Excellency, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, dear Chair.

The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1993. It was also inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2005, mainly due to the following threats: considerable decay of material and structures; lack of comprehensive conservation and maintenance; flooding; deterioration of architectural and urban coherence; lack of adequate and efficient management, etc. The present draft decision recognizes, quote, I quote, "The implementation of the conservation measures carried out following an inclusive approach, the completion of a comprehensive management plan, as well as regulatory measures for the proposed buffer zone, the development of a strategy and action plan to address building reuse, as well as strategy for the regulation of the vehicle circulation in the historic city centre". End quote. Numerous comprehensive and inclusive restoration, rehabilitation and stabilization measures were also carried out in favour of the traditional buildings damaged by the rains, and important drainage measures were implemented also.

Given the progress accomplished, and as shown in the draft decision, the Committee may ask the State Party to invite a joint mission in order to evaluate the real progress done in view of the possible removal of the property from the List in Danger.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now invite Mr Mauro Rosi, chief of the Latin America and the Caribbean Unit of the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, to provide their comments. You have the floor.

Le Secrétaire :

Merci M. le Président.

Et le Centre du patrimoine mondial remercie le Distingué Représentant du Liban pour ses commentaires et pour la proposition d'amendement qu'il a soumis, dont nous apprécions vraiment la pertinence.

La mission qui est proposée par le Liban permettra en effet d'évaluer la situation sur le terrain et de rendre compte des facteurs qui affectent le bien ainsi que des progrès effectivement réalisés pour remédier à ces facteurs, tels qu'ils figurent dans le Document 46.COM/7 à 10.

Monsieur le Président,

Je crois qu'ICOMOS souhaite également faire des commentaires sur ces points.

Merci M. le Président.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much, Chair.

ICOMOS concurs that the State Party has made progress regarding the implementation of the agreed to corrective measures that need to be implemented to achieve the desired state of conservation for removal of this property from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

The information, as the Centre has noted, at the disposal to us at this point in time is not very complete. What we can assess is that while progress has been made on addressing some factors affecting this property, some important measures still remain to be implemented. The most significant of these are undertaking a special analysis for the property and implementing a functioning and permanent comprehensive drainage system for the property to address vulnerability to flooding. This factor, based on the information before us, is not yet addressed sufficiently. Also, the information provided does not allow for the assessment of whether the legal framework requires further harmonized.

The Chairperson:

Sorry to interrupt you. Lebanon, could you please switch off your microphone. Yes. And your name plate? Thank you.

ICOMOS, please continue.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

I'll be short. As I said, the information does not allow for the assessment of whether the legal framework requires further harmonising, amongst others.

The last reactive monitoring mission to the property took place in 2011. Since then, the State Party has hosted two advisory missions, one in 2015 and one in 2018. In this context, a reactive monitoring mission would be able to gather information, assess the factors affecting the property, and provide guidance on further addressing those that have not yet been addressed.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for the presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments before I go to the Rapporteur.

Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you. Chair.

Just a question to ICOMOS. Are you saying that it is the right moment to have the mission, or that we still need to have the clarification on the two factors, the points that are still open from the State Party.

The Chairperson:

Any other Member State, State Party would like to ask a question to the Rapporteur? Or sorry, to ICOMOS?

Okay ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Chair, thank you very much.

And in response to the Honourable Delegate from Belgium, the purpose of such reactive monitoring mission would be what reactive monitoring missions do. And that is bring information to the Committee to base its decisions on. As the information sources we have at our disposal at this point are not fully complete.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS.

I see no other comments. No requests to take the floor. Let us proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7A.10** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Effectivement nous avons, comme l'a annoncé l'Honorable Délégué du Liban, reçu un amendement du Liban sur le site de Coro et son port. Amendement qui propose l'insertion d'un paragraphe 10 : « Demande en outre à l'État partie d'inviter une mission conjointe de suivi réactif ». Et là, je suggérerais sans doute d'avoir des clarifications sur la suite de cette phrase. « Un suivi réactif, Centre du patrimoine mondial ICOMOS-ICCROM, afin d'évaluer les progrès accomplis pour répondre aux facteurs qui affectent le bien ».

Paragraphe suivant, nous avons une légère modification de texte : « ainsi qu'un calendrier précis en vue du retrait du bien de la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril » au lieu de « pour le retrait du bien, ainsi qu'un calendrier précis ».

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments now that the amendment has been introduced? Are there any comments? Can we go to the paras which have not been amended, and slowly scroll up, scroll down rather.

Are there any objections to paras 1 to 9 being adopted? I see none.

We now go to the para 10, the amendment: "Requests furthermore the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM reactive monitoring mission to assess achievements in addressing the factors affecting the property". Are there any amendments to the Lebanese amendment?

Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you very much.

We simply support this idea to having a monitoring mission. We are not saying the dialogue has not happened, but this decision will kind of, Committee's decision can promote more formal way of dialogue in order to make things happen to go forward. Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Please add Japan's name to the amendment. Are there any further comments before we move on?

The Rapporteur has asked for the floor. You have it.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Pour mettre en conformité les deux versions, je suggérerai que l'on amende légèrement la version française : « de suivi réactif entre le Centre du patrimoine mondial, ICOMOS et ICCROM ».

Because "a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM mission" is correct, but it doesn't have the same translation in French.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any further suggestions for para 10? I see none.

Para 11. Are there any objections to para 11? I see none.

Para 12. Are there any objections to para 12? I see none.

Can we just scroll the entire decision? Scroll down. Are there any objections to this decision being adopted as a whole, as amended? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 7A.10** adopted as amended ^[gavel]. Thank you very much.

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela:

[interpretation from Spanish] Good afternoon.

We wish to thank you, as this is the first time we're taking the floor, for the excellent organization of this event. We thank the Government of India through the Esteemed Chair of the World Heritage Committee and in particular, Ambassador Sharma.

We wish to highlight that the State of Venezuela has continued to take efforts to improve the preservation of Coro and its Port, in order to ensure its future removal from the in Danger List. This is why the National Cooperation Committee for Cooperation with UNESCO, with the Cultural Heritage Committee of Venezuela, carried out an inspection and evaluation mission between the 27th and the 30th of March 2023, in the area, which enabled us to have additional information on the situation of the heritage on the site, in order to request funds from the World Heritage Emergency Fund of UNESCO in order to ensure the recovery of the property.

This has been informally approved via the Cooperation Committee with UNESCO. However, to date, the transfer of the funds has not actually taken place. We understand that they are currently being held in the Havana office to then be redirected towards our country. We also take note that a significant increase in the income or the resources for drainage system, including other activities which we are committed to in Coro and its Port, are taking place in order to ensure its protection and preservation for future generations.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your comments.

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite the director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr Eloundou Assomo, to read out the list of cultural properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, located in the Latin America and the Caribbean region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. You have the floor, sir.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following list of properties for which reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- City of Potosi, Bolivia Plurinational State;
- Chan Chan Archaeological Zone, Peru.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the decision read out adopted. ^[gavel]

I would like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted a decision without discussion. I see none. Let's proceed then.

AFRICA // AFRIQUE

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read out the list of cultural properties inscribed on the list of World Heritage in Danger, located in the Africa region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following list of properties for which reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Old Towns of Djenné, Mali;
- Timbuktu, Mali;
- Tomb of Askia, Mali.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report. I shall declare the decisions read out. Adopted. ^[gavel]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion. I see none. Let's proceed then.

ARAB STATES // ÉTATS ARABES

7A.19 Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli (Lebanon) // Foire internationale Rachid Karameh-Tripoli (Liban)

The Chairperson:

I now would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Lebanon to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of Rachid Karami International Fair-Tripoli, Lebanon. Excellency, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, sir.

The property was inscribed at the same time on the World Heritage List and the List in Danger one year and a half ago, January 2023. The Ministry of Culture, Director-General of Antiquities would like to present to the Committee latest information about the property.

A joint mission, World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS visited Lebanon in June. The mission visited the site and met with Lebanese officials, the Director-General of Antiquities, Tripoli and Mena municipalities, as well as concerned heritage experts and other civil society representatives. The state of conservation of concrete structures and the necessary stabilization measures were discussed, as well as the next steps for the definition of final buffer zone for the property.

A capacity-building workshop on impact assessments in a World Heritage context is planned for November 2024, as well as another workshop on conservation of concrete structures for spring 2025.

The Property Conservation Management Plan has been completed last month, and a public presentation of this conservation management plan was organized on the property on June 24th, with the participation of all concerned authorities and civil society representatives. The CMP will be sent to the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies once it is officially approved.

The Knowledge and Innovation Centre project is abandoned, and any future project will be subject to a heritage impact assessment and sent to the World Heritage Centre for review, as clearly stated in Lebanese Law number 274 concerning the reorganization of Rachid Karami International Fair.

Finally, a side event is being organized on modern heritage in the Arab region with the Rachid Karami International Fair as a case study, on July 25th, between 1:00 and 3:00 pm, you are all invited to attend.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Members States, you would have noticed that Lebanon has presented has its own SOC report to be open. There could be questions raised. One question was raised to me: can a State Party open its own SOC report? There is nothing in the Rules of Procedure, as I have been informed by the Secretariat, that stops a State Party from opening its own SOC report. However, I have been informed by the Secretariat that when the examination is going on, that particular Committee member may not take the floor. Some other Committee member, if they have specific questions, then they can pose to that the Party that is directly impacted by this. And then they may take the floor to respond. And that is rule 22.6 of the Rules of Procedure, which states: "State Parties shall not speak to World Heritage properties in their own territories, except at the explicit invitation of the Chairperson within the allowed time for their speech, and in response to specific questions posed". So, they will not be able to speak when the examination is going on, but the Secretariat informs me that there is no restriction from them, for them, for presenting their own properties, for opening or for amending.

I now invite Ms May Shaer, Chief of the Arab States Unit of the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, to provide their comments. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We would just like to thank the State Party for providing this updated information.

The property was indeed inscribed in 2003 on the List of World Heritage in Danger, following the request of the State Party itself. This prompted its close monitoring and bringing attention to the serious conservation issues it faces. The joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission was undertaken in June this year to assess the overall state of conservation of the property and advise regarding the development of the desired state of conservation for its removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger with the related corrective measures.

UNESCO is very much working closely with the State Party and, as mentioned, an HIA capacity-building workshop on Heritage Impact Assessment, will indeed be organised soon.

The mission report is currently under preparation and recommendations will be provided in due course. All this information provided will feed into the mission report and the related recommendations. I'll now give the floor to ICOMOS for further input.

Thank you so much.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much, World Heritage Centre. Thank you, Chair.

Members of the Committee, ICOMOS would like to confirm the participation in what was a very successful reactive monitoring mission to this in danger listed property in Lebanon. We would like to also confirm that we had an excellent collaboration with the State Party. We look forward to further consultation and exchange, also in the form of submission of HIAs and other material. And the actions undertaken by the State Party to date will contribute to the achieving of a state of conservation for the property, its longer-term protection and management, its beneficial use and eventually the removal from the property of the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for this presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments from Member States before we go to the Rapporteur.

I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7A.19** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendements sur ce point, M. le Président.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none. Can we scroll up the draft decision? Are there any comments or objections for this draft decision to be adopted as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 7A.19** adopted. *[gavel]*

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property.

Brazil, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Brazil:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair, for the floor.

Brazil would like to register its support for the Secretariat's initiatives in relation to the Tripoli International Fair. The close collaboration between Oscar Niemeyer, the project's architect, and Lebanese engineers, has given rise to a remarkable example of exchange between different continents, which is why we are following the development of the consultative mission with interest. We are convinced that the work plan should be presented by the evaluation body will open up a horizon of hard work, but also of hope for the removal of the site from the List of World Heritage in Danger. Brazil will maintain contact with the Lebanese authorities to explore ways of moving forward with regard to the conservation of the Rachid Karami International Fair.

Thank you very much.

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your comments. I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of cultural properties inscribed on the list of World Heritage in Danger, located in the Arab States region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. You have the floor, Mr Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

The following properties for which reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Abu Mena, Egypt;
- Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat), Iraq;
- Hatra, Iraq;
- Samarra Archaeological City, Iraq;
- Archaeological Site of Cyrene, Libya;
- Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna, Libya;
- Archaeological Site of Sabratha, Libya;
- Old Town of Ghadamès, Libya;
- Rock-Art Sites of Tadrart Acacus, Libya;
- Ancient City of Aleppo, Syrian Arab Republic;
- Ancient City of Bosra, Syrian Arab Republic;
- Ancient City of Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic;
- Ancient Villages of Northern Syria, Syrian Arab Republic;
- Crac des Chevaliers and Qal'at Salah El-Din, Syrian Arab Republic;
- Site of Palmyra, Syrian Arab Republic;
- Historic Town of Zabid, Yemen;
- Landmarks of the Ancient Kingdom of Saba, Marib, Yemen;
- Old City of Sana'a, Yemen;
- Old Walled City of Shibam, Yemen.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the decisions, read out, as adopted. ^[gavel]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion. There is no problem. I see none. Let us proceed then.

ASIA-PACIFIC // ASIE-PACIFIQUE

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of Cultural Properties inscribed on the list of World Heritage in Danger, located in the Asia-Pacific region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

The following properties for which reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley, Afghanistan;
- Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam, Afghanistan;
- Nan Madol: Ceremonial Centre of Eastern Micronesia, Micronesia;
- Historic Centre of Shakhrysbabz, Uzbekistan.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out as adopted. ^[gavel]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision, without discussion. I see no State Party.

I will now give the floor to the NGO World Heritage Watch. You have the floor. World Heritage Watch, if you are not going to take the floor, we will proceed. Let us proceed then.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE NATUREL

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the properties of the Europe and North America region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following property for which the report is proposed for adoption without discussion is Everglades National Park, United States of America.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on the state of conservation report, I declare the decision read out as adopted. ^[gavel]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about the property for which we have adopted the decision without discussion. Nobody. I see none. Let's proceed then.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÏBES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the properties of the Latin America and the Caribbean region inscribed on the list of World Heritage in Danger, for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. You have the floor, Mr Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following two properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, Honduras;
- Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California, Mexico.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the decision read out as adopted. ^[gave]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about the property for which we have adopted the decision without discussion. I see none.

I will now give the floor to the NGO Centre for Biological Diversity. You have the floor.

NGO Centre for Biological Diversity (Observer):

My intervention is on behalf of the Animal Welfare Institute, Centre for Biological Diversity, Environmental Investigation Agency and the Natural Resources Defence Council.

We thank the Committee for supporting the draft Decision **46 COM** ^[inaudible] to retain the islands and protected areas of the Gulf of California in Mexico on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The vaquita, the world's most endangered marine mammal, is facing extinction due to illegal gillnet fishing, primarily targeting totoaba fish. Vaquita numbers have plummeted from nearly 600 in 1997 to fewer than 10 in 2024. A recent survey found only 6 to 8 vaquita remaining, a further decline from a previous year.

Despite the Committee's directive of some progress in reducing illegal fishing within the zero-tolerance area, enforcement remains insufficient. Illegal fishing persists both inside and outside the zero-tolerance area, hindering the vaquita's recovery. Mexico's failure to enforce its fishing and wildlife trade laws is a direct threat to the vaquita survival. The vaquita and the totoaba fish, both OUVs of this site, require decisive action. The Committee's adoption of this decision sends a clear message to Mexico about the urgent need to halt illegal fishing and trafficking of totoaba swim bladder to save the vaquita from extinction.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Let's proceed then.

AFRICA // AFRIQUE

7A.51 Lake Turkana National Parks (Kenya) // Parcs nationaux du Lac Turkana (Kenya)

The Chairperson:

I would now like to give the floor to the Delegation of Zambia to present to the Committee. It requested to open the state of conservation of the Lake Turkana National Parks, Kenya. Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Esteemed members of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee,

I'm here to present the efforts and. Oh, sorry, I think I've taken a wrong, wrong presentation. Sorry, sorry. Lake Turkana. Is it possible?

The Chairperson:

We will pause on this decision. Go to the next and then come back, giving you time.

The Delegation of Zambia:

I think so.

The Chairperson:

Yes. For you to go through your laptop. I know the servers are giving a lot of problems these days.

Zambia, the Secretariat informs me that the next agenda item may take a long time, and that's why it is advisable to wait for you. So, we'll wait for one minute. And if you don't have the presentation, you can say something because you're so articulate. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Am I audible? So, on Lake Turkana, Mr Chairman, as the State Party of Zambia... There's no sound. But it's on.

Interpreter:

Interpreters can confirm they can hear you, Sir.

The Chairperson:

I can hear you, but your voice is only available in the interpreters' earphones. It's not available in the room.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman, and sorry for that glitch.

As the State Party of Zambia, after having looked at all the efforts that the State Party of Kenya has put in place in terms of, you know, trying to address a number of issues, we are convinced that the State Party has made a lot of efforts in terms of addressing most of the issues. And when you look at most of the paragraphs that are supposed to be amended, it is very clear that most of them are acceptable. That is amendments which need to be, that is, appreciated by most of the members who are, I mean, seated in here and on the DSOCR. We appreciate the fact that, you know, there has been a lot of, that is, efforts that have been made by the State Party of Kenya in trying to make sure that, you know, those issues are addressed accordingly. And we know that there could have been some, that is, a mishap in terms of, you know, some of the reports not having been considered by the Advisory Body. And we know that at this point, it may not be advisable to just punish the State Party of Kenya on the basis of, you know, technical aspects which are from the side of the Advisory Body. And from this point of view, we plead with the, that is, the Committee to look into the possibility of, you know, appreciating what the State Party of Kenya is, I mean, what we have observed in the amendment that we are trying to put across.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now invite Mr Guy Debonnet, Chief of the Natural Heritage Unit of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, to provide their comments. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We welcome the recent discussions which took place at the workshop organised by the World Heritage Centre in Nairobi in April 2024. At this workshop, progress was made in identifying the way forward in addressing the conservation challenges in this property. In particular, we appreciate the ongoing dialogue between the States Parties of Kenya and Ethiopia to take joint actions in this respect. We further acknowledge that the State Party submitted a new draft of the DSOCR, which was developed in the framework of this workshop. In accordance with the procedures, this draft is currently being reviewed by IUCN and the World Heritage Centre, and could be finalised over the coming year and adopted at the next session.

However, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN point out that an adoption at this session, without review by IUCN and the World Heritage Centre would be premature, as the indicators of the proposed draft would need further refinement.

We further note the States Party's emphasis on the location of the LAPSET Corridor, which is planned to pass south of the lake to avoid the property. However, it is still important to recall that individual projects are still proposed in the wider setting of the property, including a tourism resort on the shores of Lake Turkana. The Centre and IUCN therefore reiterate that the potential impact of any project should be assessed through individual impact assessments carried out in line with the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessment in a World Heritage Context.

The IUCN also has some comments on this property.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

IUCN would like to add a further point, just regarding the DSOCR point. The World Heritage Centre and IUCN have recognised that there has recently been positive progress in revising the DSOCR for this property. As is outlined in the state of conservation report, there have been several exchanges on the draft over the last six months, including through the aforementioned April 2024 workshop. Noting that this process has been ongoing over several years and specifically requires collaboration between the State Party and the State Party of Ethiopia, we recognize that the workshop, which occurred since the submission of the State Party report in March, has reflected positive and constructive transboundary collaboration in this regard.

However, as has been outlined also by the World Heritage Centre just now, the latest draft was submitted in April 2024, following the workshop, and this document needs to be fully considered by the World Heritage Centre and IUCN as per standard processes before its adoption.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would like to know whether there are any comments before we go to the Rapporteur. I see none, let's proceed.

Zambia and Rwanda. Zambia, you have the floor, followed by Rwanda.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

In the interest of, you know, being fair, I would like to ask for, that is, a comment from the State Party of Kenya before maybe Rwanda can come on board.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Can we present your amendment first, and then you can ask for the State Party of Kenya to speak? Or you want them to speak now? We are in your hands. Okay. You can only give the floor to Kenya if you ask them a specific question. So, once we open it for the, once you go to the Rapporteur, you can ask them and yes.

Rwanda you have the floor to be followed by Senegal.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Mr President, for the floor.

Mr President, Rwanda thanks the Advisory Body for the detailed analysis of the state of conservation report for Lake Turkana National Park World Heritage site. From what we understand, the State Party has invested several efforts towards the development of the DSOCR and towards the conservation of wildlife and the other issues concerning the property. We are happy to hear that in a National Wildlife Census conducted in 2021, data collected in the general area of Marsabit County, where the Sibiloi National Park is located and which points to seasonal migrations of wildlife, show an increased presence or movement of the common zebra, the northern topi, the Grévy's zebra, and the lion as the chief species. The same census established the presence of almost 20,000 articulated giraffe individuals throughout the country.

Beyond this being an implementation of the recommendation of the monitoring mission, we believe that it's a sign of the State Party's commitment to preserving the OUV of the property for humanity, and hereby request and hereby therefore support the amendment to adopt the DSOCR to encourage the State Party to implement the corrective measures in line with the indicators stated in the document as designed by the State Party, the World Heritage Centre and the IUCN during the April 2024 meeting in Nairobi.

Mr President, we have one question for the IUCN: how many more reviews and amendments are required after four years of joint work to develop a base desired state of conservation report?

I thank you, Mr President.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for supporting the proposed amendment, before the Rapporteur has even presented it.

I now give the floor to Senegal, to be followed by Japan.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci, Monsieur le Président.

Le Sénégal souhaiterait se joindre aux félicitations adressées à l'Organe consultatif pour son rapport qui nous édifie sur les efforts effectués par l'État partie et qui adresse très clairement les problématiques auxquelles le site est confronté et dont les principales, en tout cas vraiment les principaux aspects, sont relatifs aux changements climatiques, qui sont donc des données difficilement maîtrisables.

Cependant, l'élément constitutif du bien en ce qui concerne donc la diversité de sa faune, la croissance de la population, l'inventaire réalisé par l'État partie renseigne sur une dynamique intéressante. Et tout ceci nous amène en tout cas vraiment à appeler le Comité à aller dans le sens de soutenir les efforts de l'État partie pour tous ces efforts qu'il est en train de réaliser, pour en tout cas vraiment mieux entretenir le site et le développer suivant les principes de la Convention.

Nous souhaiterons à ce propos aussi poser une question à l'IUCN, qui est donc relative aux documents dont il fait référence, que l'État partie a réactualisés, qui concerne donc le projet de développement du site. Nous souhaiterons avoir beaucoup plus d'éclaircissements par rapport à ce document-là et aussi avoir plus d'éclaircissements par rapport donc aux positions qui font que l'IUCN recommande son maintien pour un an avant de le sortir. Parce que nous pensons que ce délai-là aussi est un délai extrêmement étriqué, court, et tout ce qui pourrait être fait dans le sens d'encourager l'État à renforcer ses initiatives, à renforcer son action pour un meilleur maintien du site de l'état de conservation souhaité, que nous puissions en tout cas vraiment aller dans le sens d'une solution qui pérennise les efforts de l'État, qui renforce la motivation des acteurs et que nous puissions en tout cas vraiment encourager l'État de s'engager à davantage prendre en compte les recommandations de l'IUCN et donc des commentaires qui seront issus de cette rencontre, et encourageons en tout cas pour, disons, les partenaires à aller dans le sens en tout cas vraiment de soutenir les efforts de l'État pour une bonne tenue du site afin quand même vraiment que nous puissions avoir une sortie heureuse pour tous.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Japan followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

We have a question about the amendments proposed amendment. Shall I? May I ask now, or should I wait?

The Chairperson:

May I request that, please permit the Rapporteur to first present the amendment, which would then enable Committee members to ask questions on the amendment? But, because we have to say we are open for comments, so Member States raise the plates. But once we open that would be advisable.

I now give the floor to the Republic of Korea followed by Belgium.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea welcome and appreciate much efforts and achievements made by the State Party Kenya, for the implementation of the DSOCR. In particular, the transboundary cooperation between Kenya and neighbouring country Ethiopia is very significant for the conservation of this natural property.

Despite these great achievements under difficult situation, we note that the requests by the Advisory Committee, Advisory Body is very necessary for the removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor. Before I give the floor to Belgium. Senegal, I see your name plate raised. Would you want to make a second intervention or lower your nameplate? Okay, Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We would like to give our sincere thanks and appreciation to the State Party of Kenya for the progress that has been made in the dossier. We really believe that we are moving in a good direction.

However, we are a bit concerned about the DSOCR and the standard procedure that should be followed in the case of adopting the DSOCR by the Committee. So, we would ask the Committee, and that would be our position, that the DSOCR would be revised by the Centre and by the Advisory Body before we are able to adopt it.

Apart from that, we have some other comments, remarks on the amendments, but I suggest that we make those when we are going through the document itself.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

There are no further requests for interventions. Let's proceed then.

I will ask Mr Debonnet, IUCN, to answer your questions. Mr Debonnet and IUCN, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

I think the question was directed to the IUCN, so I will let IUCN respond.

The Chairperson:

But you are not the only Member State that asked questions. There were other Member States also who took the floor. So, if there are certain questions, both of you can take the floor to answer. Decide among yourselves and respond.

IUCN:

Okay. Thank you, Mr Chair.

Yes, thank you very much to each of the delegates who have asked these questions. So, the questions are regarding the DSOCR process and the finalization. So, as I mentioned earlier, we've acknowledged the fact that there have been several exchanges on this DSOCR process. Essentially the DSOCR is needs to be reviewed, the final version. So, the most recent version that has been provided, as was said earlier, was provided after the workshop in April 2024, which revised the document and then needs to be reviewed. So we consider jointly as the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, that it would be important to have a document and a DSOCR that is agreed between all, and that clearly ensures that there is a quantitative and clear approach to ensure that a DSOCR is in place that will enable a clear process for the eventual removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger, and that we all support this process and we remain available after this Committee session, also, to continue this process specifically and to finalize the DSOCR in preparation for its adoption at the next Committee session.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see that there are no further questions or comments.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7A.51** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, Monsieur le président.

Effectivement, nous avons reçu un amendement concernant les Parcs nationaux du Lac Turkana. Amendement soumis par la Zambie, coécrit par le Rwanda et le Sénégal.

Amendement qui propose, à partir du paragraphe 3 de la Décision, de remplacer « établir » par « envisager d'établir un plan opérationnel ».

Au paragraphe 4, « note avec satisfaction la soumission d'un état de conservation actualisé ».

Au paragraphe 5, propose la suppression de la première partie pour arriver à « réitère sa demande à l'État partie de l'Éthiopie ».

Propose la suppression totale du paragraphe 7.

Propose la suppression totale de l'ancien paragraphe 9, ancien paragraphe 10, qui devient le paragraphe 8. Et je pense qu'il y a des erreurs de chiffrage entre les paragraphes entre la version française et anglaise, mais on corrigera après.

Remplace « de toutes les recommandations » par « la mise en œuvre des recommandations de la mission de suivi réactif en 2026 ».

Sous-point a), remplace « afin de rétablir » par « afin de conserver et protéger les populations de faune sauvage dans le bien ». Fin de phrase.

Sous-point b), remplace « un système de cogestion » par « un système de gestion centralisée, Call Management System ».

Sous-point f), le dernier sous-point, remplace « couvrant éventuellement tout le lac » par « prenant en considération d'autres zones aquatiques et terrestres ».

Enfin, nous, la proposition d'amendement suggère l'insertion d'un nouveau paragraphe qui devient le paragraphe 10, il me semble : « Adopte l'état de conservation souhaité en vue du retrait du bien de la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril, DSOCR, dont un projet a été préparé par le biais de la mission de suivi réactif de 2020 ». Puis, « élaborer plus avant ». « Élaborer davantage lors d'une réunion en décembre 2022, et qui, suite à des réunions en ligne avec le Centre du patrimoine mondial, a été soumis en janvier 2024 pour examen et finalisé pendant l'atelier UNESCO d'avril 2024 sur le DSOCR organisé par l'État partie, le Centre du patrimoine mondial et IUCN à Nairobi, au Kenya, pour commencer la mise en œuvre des mesures correctives identifiées en partenariat avec le Centre du patrimoine mondial, IUCN et des partenaires extérieurs ».

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you are there any comments on the amendment?

Japan you had asked that when you ask a question, so I'll give you the floor and I think Belgium had also sought an answer to some questions.

So, Japan, you have the floor, to be followed by Belgium.

The Delegation of Japan:

Our question is regarding the paragraph 7, the whole paragraph was removed. The paragraph is regarding the SEA of the LAPSET programme project. So, we would like to ask the State Party the reason why this paragraph was removed. We noticed that the SEA for LAPSET was conducted in 2017, so we wonder if there is any plan to do it again. Or maybe we wonder if it's too late to conduct another SEA. Okay. So that's the first question.

And the second question to the State Party is regarding to the paragraph. I think it's 9. Something regarding the new paragraph 8. Yes. Inter-ministerial committee. So, we also would like to know why this paragraph was removed. So, if this Committee is still working or not. Those two questions are to the State Party. Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Belgium, you have the floor followed by Italy.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr Chair. We have one question for the State Party as well, regarding Point 9. That is Point 9A which changes the words or the wording, "back to the levels present at the time of inscription of the property" is replaced by "to its original state of conservation at the moment of inscription". So, we would like to have some more background on that proposed change.

And in addition, the most essential thing about this draft decision is Point 4, about the DSOCR. So, we would like to propose to include the words that were erased starting from "and encourage the State Party to finalize". So, to keep that in the decision. And that is also interlinked with the point, the point or paragraph 10, that has been included as well. So that's to start with.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium.

I'm giving time to the editors to incorporate.

I give the floor to Italy, followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Actually, we have the same questions that Japan put. So, if I can join their questions about paragraph 7 and why it was deleted. And is the other paragraph number 9. I guess now. Yes.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you.

The Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We have the same question made by the Japan and Italy about the Paragraph 7 and 9, on the original draft decision file. Why, it would be very appreciated, and the State Party provides the background information or reason why these paragraphs were deleted. And also, regarding paragraph 10, it is said that DSOCR is adapted, but as I heard from IUCN's explanation, it is a little bit different from this amendment, so it will be very appreciated having further information or explanation about these amendments. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I'll give the floor to the State Party of Zambia to respond to the queries raised by Japan, Italy and the Republic of Korea. Why have you cancelled paras 7 and 9? And Belgium's query on 9A. Why are you proposing those changes? So, can you please explain the rationale? You have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Chair.

As regards Paragraph 7, the State Party of Zambia is of the view that this is redundant because it presupposes that the LAPSSET Corridor project has a bearing on the World Heritage site. From the conceptual maps of the LAPSSET, the corridor passes at a distance of over 70 kilometres away from the shores of the lake. The bulk of the property is actually a terrestrial aquatic zone of the site hardly goes beyond two kilometres of the shore of Sibiloi National Park, and the waters surrounding are of the Central and South Islands. Therefore, to require a revision of LAPSSET SEA is not bound to bring any benefits. Rather, the SPS of Kenya and Ethiopia have committed to do a basin wide SEA for Lake Turkana that will propose mitigation measures to the project.

As regards paragraph 9, this Kenya already expressed its position in the 45th decision, that is Committee decision, that the inter-ministerial committee is an internal matter that deals with other issues outside the issue of conservation. The paragraph has been brought up again. This issue had been reported in the previous SOC report just for information purposes, but was not among the documents opened for reporting to the Committee.

As regards paragraph 9A, the second clause that requires an action plan to restore the wildlife populations to the levels present at the time of inscription, 1997, it has been ongoing with a going about natural challenges largely associated with climate change. Climate induced changes, which is a global phenomenon, are challenges often affecting the, I mean, the progress. In a National Wildlife Census of 2021 report, the following data was collected in the general area of Marsabit County, where the Sibiloi National Park is located, and which points to the seasonal migration of wildlife, common zebra 18 within conservancy, the northern topi 22 within the park, the grey zebra migrated south towards Mount Kulal – Man and Biosphere Reserve, lions moved to Huri Hills, northwest towards Kenya. The census also established that there are 19,000 reticulated giraffe individuals distributed throughout the country. This is an indicator that the species are not locally extinct.

And it goes on even in Paragraph 9 c). In our understanding, payment for environmental services are workable where we have extractive industries, other such undertakings. In the World Heritage property, the only revenue generated is conservation support fees received from the tourists. Outside the conservation areas, the communities are free to engage in income generating activities such as fishing.

Paragraph c). The Lake Turkana measures 250 kilometre-wide lengthwise and 40 kilometre-wide. The aquatic section is engulfed by the site's World Heritage boundaries. It is hardly two kilometres from the shore, which is informed by the need to protect spawning grounds square. They are strong legislations that speak to fisheries, done in consideration of the community economic livelihoods. To ask the State Party to consider the entire lake to be a buffer zone brings about notions of protectionism. Yet what is being proposed is not and cannot be ecologically defended, and neither can it be practical. It would be better to consider the contentious aquatic areas of Sibiloi National Park and on both Central and South Islands of National Park. So, those are the reasons, Mr Chairman, which we would like to advance as a State Party of Zambia on behalf of Kenya.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Would IUCN like to take the floor?

The Natural Heritage Unit of the World Heritage Centre:

Perhaps, Chair, this time I would respond to some of the points.

On the point of the LAPSET and the point that the LAPSET corridor is far away from the property. Yes, of course we acknowledge that. But at the same time, we point out to the fact that the whole corridor project also includes some individual projects which are much closer to the lake, including this resort project on the lake shore. So, if perhaps the Committee would like to remove reference to the SEA, it would at least be important to keep the reference to the environmental impact assessments for these immediate individual projects to ensure that these are not impacting on the site.

In terms of the points regarding paragraph 9. In fact, paragraph 9 actually is referring to the recommendation of the 2020 mission. So, if you are changing now points under this paragraph, you're actually changing the recommendations of the mission. So, I think there would then be a need to also reformulate the wording, because the recommendations of the 2020 mission are documented and have been formulated like that.

In terms of 9 a), I think it is important that the objective, the long-term objective for this site is to restore the wildlife populations to the levels at the time of inscription. We are not saying that this is the level that would be required to take the site off the in danger List, but I think at least this has to be the objective, because the OUV of the site is defined based on the time of inscription.

And the point raised that there is impact from climate change which led to migration, and that there is a report, an inventory that was done. I don't think this inventory of the Marsabit County has been submitted to us, so we can't really make comments on that.

My final point is on the DSOCR. I think it is important to reiterate that we have received, indeed, this revised draft. But as I mentioned in my presentation before, it has not been reviewed at this stage by IUCN and the World Heritage Centre. And I think it's important that this review takes place for the Committee to adopt this DSOCR that is consensual between the State Party, the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The questions have been answered and there have been no further requests from any Member States. So, we'll go to the decision para by para.

Is there any objection for para 1? I see none.

Para 2. I see no objection.

Para 3. Is there any objection to para 3 as amended? Okay.

We go to para 4. Belgium wants to keep the bottom part and Zambia wanted it cancelled. Can we have a consensus somewhere? Zambia, will you be able to do with what Belgium has requested?

The Delegation of Zambia:

Chair, maybe at this point, if it is possible, or is it okay that the State Party of Kenya is allowed to elaborate on the same?

The Chairperson:

Why don't you ask them a specific question as suggested by the Secretariat?

The Delegation of Zambia:

So, I will go ahead to ask them a specific question. Thank you, Mr Chairman, for that good guidance.

I ask Kenya, I would like you to explain further the issues to do with the DSOCR, because from our point of view, we don't seem to have a clear, that is, understanding in terms of what we have learnt from your side and what we are getting from the Advisory Body. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Zambia.

The State Party of Kenya, can you please take the floor to respond to that specific question? You have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair.

Regarding this DSOCR, as has been discussed here, we have held several discussions with the Advisory Body IUCN and the World Heritage Centre, and it is our considered view that this document is complete. So that's why we would, we would urge the Committee to adopt the DSOCR so that we can proceed with the work of working towards the removal of this site from the in Danger List. We have, as has been said, we have submitted this document twice to UNESCO, and in April 2024, our understanding was that was a final document that we were submitting. So, we wonder now how long it can be that we discuss these documents since 2021, 22, 23, up to now, and we are still expected again to go back and revise it again.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Zambia, you have heard Kenya speak. Belgium, you have heard. So, we would like to have a consensus on the text 4. Zambia is not willing to undelete its suggestion. Belgium, would you stick to your position, or would you remove your opposition to the deletion of the second part after listening to Kenya?

Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

So, yes, in order to reach a consensus, we can drop our objection, but we would like to have to reflect it in the report that we have concern on this and that it would be in the official record of the meeting.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Mr Rapporteur. Please make note of that and mention it in the report.

The next para 5. Are there any objections to the suggestion by Zambia, Rwanda and Senegal? I see none.

Next, para 6. Are there any objections to para 6? I see none.

Para 7 for which Japan, Italy and the Republic of Korea had asked the rationale behind its deletion, and the State Party of Zambia had taken the floor to explain that the LAPSET Corridor Program is around 70 kilometres away from the property. But as IUCN mentioned that there is a resort coming up on the shores of the lake. So, some private project. Does anyone have any objection to this deletion?

Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, thank you, Chair.

In addition to what was mentioned by the Centre, we would like to propose to keep the second part of the para 7 in the text. So, we are sure that if any individual project takes place, that it has, that the foreseen procedure regarding environmental impact assessment is carried out, like foreseen.

The Chairperson:

Zambia, the State Party of Zambia, would you agree to the suggestion by Belgium?

The Delegation of Zambia:

Mr Chairman, from the State Party of Zambia's perspective, you know that any developmental project will have to be preceded by an EIA. So, in terms of EIA, it's not really an issue. So, if you were to retain that, the end part, for purposes of making sure that projects undergoing an EIA I think we are in support.

The Chairperson:

Okay. So please accept the Belgium suggestion. And I thank Zambia for their cooperative spirit. Undelete the last part.

Yes, I know, the grammar, the grammar spirit in the Rapporteur is feeling uneasy. So, I will definitely give you the floor.

But after I have given the floor to Italy. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

So just to thank you for the floor, first.

And if you can add our country in the list. Belgium, Zambia and Italy. Thank you. We agree.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Your country is always in our heart. Thank you.

I think Republic of Korea, you also want to add your name to it? So please add ROK as well. And now I'll give the floor to the Rapporteur to.

I think Rwanda, you would also like to add your name to it? No? You would not like to add your name to it. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

We really wish to keep as deleted at first for the, for the following reason. Lake Turkana Resort City is outside the national park and hence outside the purview of the OUV. So, this was the reasoning behind the deletion of the para.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Yes, but this is regarding specific individual projects. That is what the Zambian Delegate very intelligently analysed it. It says very specifically, and that's what was the intention of Belgium as well. So, because Zambia is supporting it, otherwise they would not be supporting it. So, would you like to go along with Zambia for consensus?

The Delegation of Rwanda:

For now, I will abstain. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Okay. Thank you for not opposing.

Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes, also Japan. Could you add our name to? Yeah.

The Chairperson:

Please add Japan's name.

Now, Belgium, Zambia, Italy, Republic of Korea and Japan have, you know, number of States have proposed this. And any other State would like to join?

Lebanon, you have the floor. You want your name also added?

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Yes, please.

The Chairperson:

Okay. Please add Lebanon's name. So, there is no opposition to this.

Now I will give the floor to the Rapporteur to make it grammatically correct. Mr Rapporteur, you have the floor.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

La phrase me semble correcte. Je voulais juste m'assurer. L'équipe de rédacteurs a très intelligemment repéré ceci, que nous parlions bien d'une prière instante de l'État partie. Donc, « prie instamment l'État partie de veiller à ce que l'impact potentiel de tout projet individuel qui serait préjudiciable pour la VUE soit évalué au moyen d'EIES » etc. etc. Mais ça me paraît correct.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Alright.

India you would also like your name added to it?

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Yes, we would also like to be added.

The Chairperson:

All right.

Para number 7, which was striked out, you will un-strike the number seven, so the numberings will change now. Okay.

Now we go to para 8. There is no change there. Are there any objections? I see none.

We go to para 9 which has been striked out. Japan, Italy and Republic of Korea had asked a question to which the Delegate of Zambia had responded to it. Is it okay if para 9 remains striked out? I see no opposition to that.

Please go next, to the next para. Is there any objection to 9A?

Yes, Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Excuse me, Mr Chair, to take the floor again.

I would like to propose to keep the sentence as was put initially, and part that says "restore". So to keep it as "restore wildlife population in the property back to the levels present at the time of inscription". Since that should effectively be the aim of the management. Yes.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Kazakhstan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Thank you.

First of all, we would like to commend the hard work being done by the State Party in dialogue and the interaction with the IUCN and the World Heritage Centre to safeguard this important site.

We have a small question and amendment concerning the, not an amendment, but a question concerning 9, but not 9 a), but above it, where we have all of the recommendations. If I can say it now, we believe that maybe having all of the recommendations is a bit redundant because otherwise, it's not recommendation. Recommendations are those that are accepted by, in our case, State Parties on a voluntary basis. And if we have all of them, that means a request, not a recommendation. So, we would like probably to be added to the list of supporters of this small change.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, there is no objection to the beginning of para 9, but there is an issue with 9 a). We only have about three minutes of time left, so I will keep 9 a) pending. So put 9 a) in brackets, put 9 a) and that para in brackets because we'll come back to it tomorrow.

Is there any objection to 9 b)? I see none.

We go to 9 c). Is there any objection to para 9 c)? The strike out called by Zambia. I see no objection.

We go to 9 d) and 9 e). Are there any objections to 9 d) and 9 e)? There is none.

We go to 9 f). "Create a buffer zone to the property taking into consideration other critical". Is there any objection to 9 f)? I see none.

We go to para 10. Are there any objections to para 10? I see none.

We go to paras 11 and 12. Are there any objections to paras 11 and 12? I see none.

Now we go back to para 9 a). So that's the only part where there is no consensus. Belgium wants to keep the original, but Zambia, Rwanda and Senegal. Zambia specifically. Can you live with the Belgium suggestion? "Develop a site-specific biodiversity plan to conserve and protect wild, to restore wildlife populations in the property back to the levels present at the time of inscription of the property".

Zambia, would you accept the Belgium suggestion to keep this as a whole so that we can adopt this decision? You have the floor, Zambia, please. Quick.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Mr Chairman, at this point it's a bit difficult for us to say we go by Belgium's suggestion. Reason being that, as it is now, we don't know whether at the time we have proper, I mean, baseline information in terms of populations in the property at the time of inscription. So, we don't just want to give that as, to support Belgium on the, on a baseless, that is, perspective.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I suggest that, because there is no consensus, so I'm going to adjourn for the day.

And I request Zambia and Belgium to kindly discuss this.

Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes, Mr Chair, so we understand that the feasibility maybe is a bit difficult and so we can proceed as we did before, that we have it reflected also in the report and that we then just.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Rapporteur, please make a note of the Belgium request, and editors please remove the Belgium suggestion.

Now, is there any objection to adopting the whole decision, the draft decision as a whole? Please scroll down. I see none.

This decision is adopted as amended [gave].

Thank you very much. I would like to ask if any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property? I see none. Let's proceed then.

Dear colleagues,

We have now reached the end of our afternoon session. We will resume at 10:00 am tomorrow morning. The examination of Item 7A, state of conservation reports of properties inscribed on the list of World Heritage in Danger. We will start with the reports of the three Cultural World Heritage properties located in the Europe and North American region, opened for discussion this morning by Kazakhstan. The Secretariat has already published the updated list of state of conservation reports open for discussion Document INF.7.Rev.3, and will shortly circulate a revised calendar for their examination. I will also remind all Bureau members of our third meeting at 9:30 am tomorrow in the Summit Room on level 2.

And before I bid you a good evening, I will give the floor to your most favourite person, Director of WHC. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, sir.

I understand also that the Delegation of India would like to quickly take the floor. So just to let you know that for tonight, two side events will take place. The first event is organized by the Host Country, India, more specifically, especially, the Archaeological Survey of India, entitled Archaeology and Epic in the Light of New Researches, from 6:00 pm. That is immediately, now, in room MR6, so I invite you to be present. And the second one is organized by UNESCO on Marine Heritage entitled Monitoring Climate Impact through Citizen Science, Environmental DNA. It's also start at 6:00 pm, now, in room MR19.

Good evening to all and see you tomorrow.

The Chairperson:

Yes, but I have not let you go.

India, you want to make some housekeeping or some announcements? You have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

[first speaker] Thank you. Chair. Yes. There is a small announcement. I would ask, I request my colleague to make these announcements from the podium. Thank you. Chair.

[second speaker] A very good evening to the Esteemed Dignitaries on the dais and our Esteemed Delegates of the dais. I have two special announcements to make.

The first announcement is for those going for the excursion to Qutub Minar. The vehicle will be parked in front of Hall number 14, Incredible India Exhibition Hall at 6:20 pm. That is five minutes from now, so you may proceed for the same, for the pick-up and walk to the Qutub Complex illuminated tour.

And the second announcement, in which we invite you to unwind in our relaxing Ayurveda Pavilion, centrally located in Hall number 14, offering therapeutic treatments, VR tours, AI solutions for Ayurveda. Experience ancient wisdom through modern innovations, from expert consultations and AI-based pulse diagnostics to immersive meditation pods. Indulge in premium therapies and rejuvenating Ayurveda treatments, and don't miss this unique opportunity to explore how tradition meets technology. Please join us.

The meeting rose at 6:17 pm. // La séance a été levée à 18h17

THIRD DAY
Wednesday, 24 July 2024
FIFTH PLENARY MEETING
10:01 am – 11:59 am
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

TROISIÈME JOUR
Mercredi 24 juillet 2024
CINQUIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h01 – 11h59
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

Please take your seats. It's 10:00 am. Excellencies, we are running behind schedule. May I request to you all to please take your seats.

Dear colleagues,

Welcome back. I hope you had a wonderful rest and a good breakfast this morning. Before we move with the adoption of our agenda, I would like to inform you of the outcomes of the third meeting of the Bureau. This morning, we were due to start with the examination of the three cultural properties located in Europe and North America region that were open for discussion yesterday. However, due to some ongoing consultations, the Bureau this morning recommended that we examine these three reports while resuming the plenary this afternoon.

Therefore, we will start now with the continuation of the examination of the state of conservation of the natural properties located in Africa and Asia-Pacific regions. In case we finish these reports in the morning, we will directly move on to Item 7B on the state of conservation of World Heritage Properties in the order indicated in the calendar circulated by the Secretariat yesterday evening. Furthermore, as already informed in the Bureau, following a request by the Distinguished Delegation of Viet Nam, the Bureau recommends that all draft decisions for cultural properties located in the Asia-Pacific region, which are not open for discussion, be adopted as soon as we open Agenda 7B. If you all agree, we will proceed this way.

7A. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER (Ct'd) // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL EN PÉRIL (suite)

NATURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE NATUREL (suite)

AFRICA (Ct'd) // AFRIQUE (suite)

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Dear Committee members, dear colleagues,

I hope you had a pleasant evening. We are now going to resume Agenda Item 7A on the state of conservation reports of the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

I would now like to give the floor to the Delegation of Rwanda to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of Niokolo-Koba National Park, Senegal.

The Distinguished Representative of Rwanda. You have the floor, sir. Rwanda, you have the floor. Can you please start? Senegal, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Senegal:

Yes, Chair. Thank you.

I think there is a misunderstanding because we received an agenda this morning that shows that for Niokolo-Koba, it's for this afternoon. Maybe. I guess for that reason, Rwanda is not in place. So, I think that needs to be.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Senegal, that you have said, the Secretariat shared with you an agenda in which they put Niokolo-Koba in the afternoon.

I will give the floor to the director of the World Heritage Centre to respond to you. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I think, this morning at the Bureau, the Chairperson informed the Bureau that, due to some ongoing consultations, because we were supposed to start this morning with the examination of the three cultural properties located in Europe and North America region. And then the Chair this morning informed the Bureau that due to some ongoing consultations, he proposed to the Bureau to have the examination of those properties when we resume the plenary in the afternoon. And the Bureau, of course, agreed with his proposal. And the Chair also informed the Bureau that we will start this morning with the continuation of the examination of the state of conservation of natural properties located in the Africa and Asia-Pacific regions. And I think, and the Bureau agreed, and that's the reason why the Chairperson just informed the Committee member of the deliberations that was taken during the Bureau this morning.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Distinguished Representative of Senegal, as you know that the Chairperson is informed by the Secretariat of the consultations that's going on. And then we inform the Bureau. So, the Chairperson was informed that there are consultations going on, and the Bureau agreed. It's a Bureau decision. But, because Rwanda is not in a position to present as of now, either we can stall this and go to the next agenda item, and efforts be made by Rwanda to appear as soon as possible. Is that acceptable? All right.

Thank you.

I now invite the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo, to read the list of the natural properties inscribed on the list of World Heritage in Danger, located in the Africa region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. The following properties located in the African regions are proposed for adoption without discussion:

- Manovo Gounda St Floris National Park, Central African Republic;
- Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea;
- The General Decision on the World Heritage Properties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- The Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Kahuzi-Biega National Park, Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Okapi Wildlife Reserve, Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Virunga National Park, Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Rainforests of the Atsinanana, Madagascar;
- Air and Ténéré Natural Reserves, Niger; and
- Selous Game Reserve, United Republic of Tanzania.

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on these state of conservation reports, I declare the decisions read out and adopted. ^[gave]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegations would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision, without discussion. I see none.

Okay now, Observers requesting the floor on Item 7, a belonging to non-State Parties, the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage, you are given the floor. I repeat, the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage, you are given the floor. If you would like to take the floor for two minutes. You have the floor. All right. They are not here. They have not taken the floor as yet, in spite of reminding two times. So, there are no more requests for comments or taking the floor. Let's proceed then.

ASIA-PACIFIC // ASIE-PACIFIQUE

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Director of World Heritage Centre, to read the list of the properties of the Asia-Pacific Region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following two properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra, Indonesia; and
- East Rennell, Solomon Islands.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I will declare. I declare the decision read out adopted. ^[gavel]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about the property for which we have adopted the decision without discussion. I see no Observer State Parties wanting to take the floor. I see none. Let's proceed then.

Rwanda, are you ready to take the floor on Niokolo?

The Delegation of Rwanda:

No, not yet, Mr President.

The Chairperson:

All right.

7A is not to be closed. And we will give Rwanda a chance later. Till that time, to save time and for better time management, we will be opening 7B now.

Dear colleagues,

We are now opening Item 7B of our Agenda.

7B. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL

ASIA-PACIFIC // ASIE-PACIFIQUE

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

As for Item 7A, we will first discuss the reports concerning cultural properties, followed by mixed and natural properties. The regions will be represented in the same regional order as for the Item 7A, subject to the request to move the Asia-Pacific Region report earlier because of a request made by Viet Nam, which we all agreed to. First, we will, we are taking the report of the Asia-Pacific region.

I now invite Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, located in the Asia-Pacific region, for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. Mr Director, you have the floor, sir.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

The following properties, the following cultural properties located in the Asia-Pacific region, for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Angkor, Cambodia;
- Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple, Telangana, India;
- Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu, Japan;
- Vat Phou and Associated Ancient Settlements within the Champasak Cultural Landscape, Lao People's Democratic Republic;
- Kathmandu Valley, Nepal;
- Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro, Pakistan;
- Historical Monuments at Makli, Thatta, Pakistan;
- Royal Tombs of the Joseon Dynasty, Republic of Korea;
- Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications, Sri Lanka;
- Itchan Kala, Uzbekistan;
- Central Sector of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long - Hanoi, Viet Nam.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on the state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out as adopted. ^[gave]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision, without discussion.

Pakistan, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Pakistan:

Thank you, Chair.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Committee and Secretariat for the support and technical assistance in conservation of Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro and Historical Monuments at Makli, Thatta. Conservation of World Heritage properties is an undertaking that Pakistan has assumed earnestly. The adopted decision, therefore, will be implemented effectively in close coordination with our provincial and local authorities.

Apart from the stipulated reporting, we have maintained avenues of continuous engagement with the World Heritage Centre. We will continue with the same spirit to finalize the technical proposal of preservation project of Moenjodaro. As mentioned in the submitted reports, cultural and national heritage sites anywhere are at risk from the devastating impacts of natural disasters and climate change. The 2022 floods dented our conservation efforts at Moenjodaro and Makli, thereby highlighting the urgent need for enhancing monitoring of the impact of climate change on such heritage sites. We must also ensure that culture is fully integrated into climate action strategies and policies to protect our living and non-living heritage.

Lastly, we look forward to continue working closely with the World Heritage Centre, the Committee and the Advisory Bodies.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Any other Observer State Party would like to take the floor? Please raise your name plate. I see none. Let's proceed then.

It's okay. Rwanda. You can have five more minutes. No problem. No need to rush. I'll carry on with some more items and then give you the floor later. Okay.

7B.2 Historic Centres of Berat and Gjirokastra (Albania) // Centres historiques de Berat et de Gjirokastra (Albanie)

The Chairperson:

Okay, now we are going to take in the following order: Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Arab States, and then the natural and mixed properties for the Asia and Pacific regions.

For the first property, Historic Centres of Berat and Gjirokastra, Albania. I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Lebanon to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the Historic Centres of Berat and Gjirokastra in Albania. The Distinguished Representative of Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Chair. Dear Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

The cultural property of the Historic Centre of Berat and Gjirokastra, Albania, have faced several challenges last few years and among them, the bypass road project of Gjirokastra, originally designed to solve underground infrastructure issues.

What has retained our attention is the long and complex journey of this project. Submitted first in 2016, the project has benefited of a first technical review from ICOMOS, recommending a substantial revision. After its cancellation announcement in 2019, a second submittal in 2021 by the State Party could not be evaluated by the World Heritage Centre, since document was not presented in the official languages, and the World Heritage in its last Decision **44 COM 7B.151** requested the SP to halt the project until the findings of the reactive monitoring mission could be shared.

The recommendations of the reactive monitoring mission, conducted in December 2021, were positive for the revised design, despite the large implementation, more than 50% of the construction work. However, the mission pointed on the potential visual and negative impacts on the OUV and recommended the implementation of an HIA to identify possible mitigation measures.

The Committee, in its last Decision **45 COM 7B.51** in Riyadh, requested again for integrated HIA, but after total completion of works, and to include the bypass in the mobility plan.

The question we are raising here is for ICOMOS, since the operation guidelines have integrated the necessity of performing HIA studies, para 110 and 100bis, to prevent and mitigate potential impact on OUV, we notice that the State Party of Albania, and most probably many others, is in urgent need of capacity-building in the field of HIA. How could it have been possible to prevent the implementation of such project in absence of an HIA? Where are the gaps? Language, funding resources, lack of technical expertise? and why to investigate for impact after the total implementation of a project? This could be understood as a precedent to be followed by others.

Our objective is not to look for responsibilities in this dossier, but to raise the voice on such growing practices for many properties on the list, allowing the implementation of major projects within properties and buffer zone boundaries without HIA.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I now invite Ms Berta de Sancristobal, Chief of the Europe and North America Unit of the World Heritage Centre, and ICOMOS, to provide their comments. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Good morning to everyone.

The analysis by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, as included in the report on the state of conservation of this property, emphasizes the importance of a renewed sense of urgency and increased commitment by the State Party and the local authorities to ensure that an adequate system of protection and management of the property is in place. Hence the proposal contained in the draft decision before the Committee to continue with a one-year reporting cycle rather than moving to a two-year cycle.

The Committee has been highlighting the urgent need for an integrated management plan for the serial property since 2017. A request for international assistance from the World Heritage Fund was approved in 2018. This provided funding, as well as technical support from ICOMOS and ICCROM, to assist the national and local authorities together in developing the Integrated Management Plan. A World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, ICCROM reactive monitoring mission visited the property in 2021 and reported that the completion of the integrated management plan was a matter of urgency. Despite the initial commitment and considerable subsequent work put

into the preparation of this plan, the State Party has not finalised it. The World Heritage Centre considered essential that the process of updating the draft integrated management plan is resumed on the basis of the recommendations already made by the Advisory Bodies within the framework of the international assistance from the World Heritage Fund, and with the active participation of the local and regional authorities.

At its last session, so the first following the Reactive Monitoring mission, the Committee requested the State Party to fully implement the recommendations of the mission. With your permission, Mr Chairperson, my colleague from ICOMOS will comment further aspects that relate more specifically to Lebanon's concerns, namely the construction of the Gjirokastra bypass road, which has now been completed without a Heritage Impact Assessment having been submitted to the Centre, the incorporation of Heritage Impact Assessment as a legal requirement for development projects and directly into the provisions of the regulations of both Berat and Gjirokastra, and the conduct of a Heritage Impact Assessment of the cumulative impact of the development framework called Project for Integrated Urban and Tourism Development.

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much, Chair. Members of the Committee,

The issue of HIA is, of course, tied closely to the management plan and development, and ICOMOS has, since 2016, through several technical reviews, provided guidance to the State Party, as has already been noted, specifically on the Gjirokastra bypass road project. As also has been noted, the reactive monitoring mission, which visited the property in 2021, reported that by then, approximately 50% of the groundwork for the road had been completed, and concluded that the project had an impact and a potential impact on the OUV of the property, and that is why it recommended an independent impact assessment – as a matter of urgency, I should add. As stated, the bypass road is now complete and unfortunately such an HIA has not been undertaken. The State Party, in its latest report does indicate its intention to undertake the HIA, however. At this point I would like to stress that retrospective HIA should not be the norm, and this case should not be seen as creating any form of precedent.

But this is tied in with other aspects, because the mission also reported on the aforementioned project for integrated and urban tourism development, and recommended that HIAs should be a legal prerequisite for development projects and directly linked to the provisions of the regulations for both Berat and Gjirokastra.

Importantly, the mission also recommended that an impact assessment of the cumulative impacts of the so-called PUITD project and other development projects and its settings should be conducted. So, our concern is about more than just the road.

The State Party reports that it requested the urgent submission of individual HIAs for the PUITD project. But the cumulative impacts are our concern. When it comes to the interaction, the interface between the PUITD project and the road project, the concern is how the road facilitates, for instance, the gentrification of Gjirokastra and might lead to an abandonment of homes due to overtourism in the property, and therefore, we hope that the mitigation measures coming out of an HIA might address access, vehicular access, tourism, overtourism, etc.

So, with that, I'm just going to state that we believe that with a view to the urgent conservation needs of the property, a broad mobilisation is required to revert, to, sorry, to preserve its OUV.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for the presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments. No, I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.2** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président. Bonjour. Bonjour à toutes et à tous.

Nous n'avons pas d'amendements concernant ce point.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 7B.2** adopted. ^[gave!]

Thank you very much.

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property. I see none. Let's proceed then.

We are going to suspend the meeting for ten minutes for some technical reasons, and we will reconvene after ten minutes to give the technicians the time to resolve this issue. This meeting is adjourned for ten minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 10:34 am and resumed at 11:58 am. // La séance a été suspendue à 10h34 et a repris à 11h58.

The Chairperson:

Excellencies, may I ask you to all take your seats. There is an announcement to be made. Committee members, Observer States Parties, please take your seats.

I will first give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to make an announcement regarding the side events. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you. Chairperson.

This is just to inform the Distinguished Delegates that the side events, although we are facing some logistical problems and technical problems in this room, the side events will take place as planned, in the same room, that is starting from 1:00 pm. So, no change for the side events. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Lazare.

The technical problems need some time to resolve, so I have been advised that we can suspend the meeting till 3:00 pm and give you an extended lunch break. This meeting is suspended till 3:00 pm.

The meeting rose at 11:59 am. // La séance a été levée à 11h59.

THIRD DAY
Wednesday, 24 July 2024
SIXTH PLENARY MEETING
3:18 pm – 7:09 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

TROISIÈME JOUR
Mercredi 24 juillet 2024
SIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h18 – 19h09
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

Dear Committee members, dear colleagues, please take your seats.

I hope you had a pleasant extended lunch break. We are now going to resume the examination of our Agenda Item 7A on the state of conservation reports on the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

However, before that, I will give the floor for a brief period to the person in charge for the technicalities in this room, the Managing Director of RailTel, who will explain to you the difficulties that they faced. You have the floor.

The Managing Director of RailTel:

A very good afternoon, everyone, all the Dignitaries sitting on the dais, and Delegates Committee members come to this event.

I really apologize for the inconvenience caused due to the unavailability of internet connectivity in these premises. And this has happened due to some unfortunate technical glitch, and our team has identified the same. Some temporary solutions have been provided to the technical, to the Committee members. And rest of the things will be taken care of tonight. And I assure you that tomorrow, you will have proper internet connectivity in this hall.

Sorry once again and thank you for bearing with us. That's all I wanted to say. Thank you very much. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

7A. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER (Ct'd) // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL EN PÉRIL (suite)

NATURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE NATUREL (suite)

AFRICA (Ct'd) // AFRIQUE (suite)

7A.54 Niokolo-Koba National Park (Senegal) // Parc national du Niokolo-Koba (Sénégal)

The Chairperson:

We will start now. The session with the Niokolo-Koba National Park, Senegal, and I would now like to give the floor to the Delegation of Rwanda to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the Niokolo-Koba National Park, Senegal.

The Distinguished Representative of Rwanda. You have the floor.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, Monsieur le Président.

Tout d'abord, Monsieur le Président, permettez-moi de vous remercier pour votre compréhension et flexibilité suite au léger désagrément matinal.

Thank you, Chair, for bearing with Rwanda.

Monsieur le Président,

Merci de me donner l'opportunité de présenter cet amendement. Le Rwanda a examiné attentivement les rapports techniques et félicite l'État partie et l'organe d'évaluation pour leur investissement dans la mise en application de la

Convention. Le Parc National de Niokolo-Koba est inscrit sur la Liste des biens en péril depuis 17 ans. Dix-sept longues années après lesquelles les raisons mêmes pour lesquelles le site a été mis sur la Liste en danger n'existent plus. En effet, le rapport de la mission de suivi réactif a félicité le Sénégal pour les excellents résultats obtenus par les équipes du Parc.

De plus, il est important de noter que l'État partie soumet chaque année des rapports de suivi écologiques.

Monsieur le Président,

Le Comité a soulevé des sérieuses questions concernant la durée prolongée pendant laquelle les sites demeurent inscrits sur la Liste des biens en danger. En tenant compte des efforts significatifs déployés par l'État partie pour améliorer l'état de conservation du site, il est impératif de réévaluer la situation. Nous comprenons que depuis que le site a été inscrit sur la Liste des biens en danger, il y a eu des engagements constants de l'État du Sénégal, du Centre du patrimoine mondial et de l'IUCN, même jusqu'à cette session du Comité.

Des informations pertinentes ont été fournies et nous avons donc proposé quelques amendements au projet de décision afin d'inclure les informations nécessaires pour aider le Comité à retirer le site de la Liste en danger.

Monsieur le Président,

Le Rwanda est plus que satisfait des réponses fournies par l'État partie aux préoccupations soulevées par l'organe d'évaluation, mais dans l'intérêt de tous, Monsieur le Président, si vous le permettez, nous demandons que vous accordiez à l'État partie du Sénégal l'opportunité de répondre à la question suivante : qu'a fait l'État partie pour satisfaire les conditions nécessaires au retrait du bien de la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril ?

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Your request to seek answers from the State Party has been noted by the Centre. I will take a pause and make an announcement that today, the Secretariat informs me that we will be having an extended session up to 7:00 pm in the evening. In addition to that, the time allocated for the Secretariat to respond to the Advisory Bodies will be cut down from 6 minutes to 3 minutes each. And now, we will continue.

I now invite Mr Guy Debonnet, Chief of the Natural Heritage Unit of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, to provide their comments. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

It is important to recall that this property is inscribed only under Criterion (x) because of its remarkable diversity of wildlife unique in the subregion. The statement of Outstanding Universal Values specifically mentioned its important mammal populations, including its population of lions, eland, elephant, leopard, African wild dog and chimpanzee.

The property was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2007, following the results of a wildlife inventory conducted in 2006, which showed a dramatic decline of key species from 1990 to 2006. Populations of hartebeest, buffalo, kob, waterbuck and roan all had declined by more than 90% compared to the census of 1990. Elephants, which at the time of inscription of the property on the World Heritage List were estimated to number in the hundreds, were not observed during the 2006 survey, and their population was estimated to be less than ten individuals. While the 2024 mission recognizes that the State Party recently made important efforts to address the poaching issue by strengthening law enforcement, the data on wildlife provided to the mission by the State Party, unfortunately, do not indicate that wildlife populations are recovering, and for some species, the trends continue to be downwards. IUCN will provide some detailed explanations on this.

In addition, the Mansadala basalt quarry also remains an issue of concern. We note that the State Party in its letter is making a commitment to close the quarry, but it is important that the closure and rehabilitation are effective before the site is removed from the List in Danger.

The potential impacts on the property of the Sambangalou Dam on the Gambia River, which is currently under construction, further remain an issue of concern. Once the reservoir behind the dam is filled, potential indirect and negative effects are anticipated. For these reasons, the Centre and IUCN consider that, at this stage, the property should be retained on the List of World Heritage in Danger, so that four fundamental conditions, conditions which are included in the draft decision can be fully met. IUCN will also further provide some technical explanations.

Thank you.

IUCN :

Merci, Monsieur. Merci, Monsieur le Président.

Dans le même sens que le Centre du patrimoine mondial, l'UICN rappelle que le bien a été inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril en 2007, suite aux menaces imminentes sur sa valeur universelle exceptionnelle, en particulier en ce qui concerne les populations de mammifères dont le nombre était gravement en baisse, les problèmes d'exploitation minière ainsi que les conséquences du projet de construction du barrage de Sambangalou sur la rivière Gambie, à quelques kilomètres en amont du parc.

Cependant, la tendance globalement décroissante du taux de rencontre des espèces caractéristiques de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien, tel qu'indiqué par le récent Rapport sur l'état de conservation du bien et confirmé par la mission conjointe du Centre du patrimoine mondial, demeure très préoccupante. La situation est encore plus alarmante concernant l'éléphant et le léopard, pour lesquels aucune donnée d'observation directe n'est disponible sur le bien depuis au moins 2005, ainsi que l'élan de Derby pour lequel une observation directe n'a été faite en 2023.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for this presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments from the Committee members. Do you have any? Let me note them down.

There was a question posed by Rwanda to the State Party of Senegal, which will be given the floor, after all the Committee members have spoken.

Kenya, you have the floor, to be followed by Japan.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Kenya has taken the note of the tremendous progress made by the State Party of Senegal in addressing the corrective measures on the Niokolo-Koba National Park property. We particularly observe the great efforts made in deploying an integrated operation of archaeological monitoring plant, targeting the species characteristic of the OUV with appropriate technological tools and trained experts for monitoring species trends.

Mr Chairperson,

This is a clear demonstration of the State Party's commitment to ensuring a sustainable conservation of the property.

Secondly, Mr Chairperson,

We note that the information on species trends indicate some significant increase in some of the species, indicating, as an indicator that the property species restoration is becoming successful. The recent move to close Mansadala basalt quarry by the State Party is also a, in our view, a tremendous effort to conserve the property.

Kenya, therefore, Mr Chairperson, believes that the corrective measures undertaken by the State Party of Senegal, it is timely and appropriate to support the removal of this property from the List of endangered properties.

I thank you, Mr Chair. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Japan, to be followed by Italy. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

We understand that Senegal has been working very hard and putting lots of efforts for a long time, since 2007, to reverse the situation of Niokolo-Koba National Park.

Although the reactive monitoring mission was conducted in March this year, the report is not available yet, and it looks like the view on the current state of conservation is different between the State Party and the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Body. This makes it very difficult to understand the actual situation.

In the paragraph 7 of the draft decision, it mentions "the fundamental conditions for the property's removal from the List of World Heritage in Danger", which sounds a new expression, and it looks like the two of the conditions are a summary or rephrasing of the eight items of the DSOCR adopted in 2015. So, we would like to ask the State Party Senegal to inform us the current situation of these four conditions for removal. And also, we would like to ask the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body to comment on that information in light of four conditions. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Japan, for those specific questions.

I now give the floor to Italy, to be followed by Zambia.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I would like to put some questions to the members, to the State and in particular, what is the impact of the bushfire and how much is the affection of advance of agricultural fields? And is there a national protection plan and how is it structured? And what is the impact of poaching on animals? And if there are actions to contract, to contrast that.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Zambia, to be followed by Belgium.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Esteemed members of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee,

The development and management plan for Niokolo-Koba, that is, national park has been urgently updated and implemented with funding from the NGO ^[unclear] Corporation and the UNESCO Dakar office. Experts will begin to work next week, as we have been informed, as the State Party of Zambia, and operational ecological monitoring plan is already in place, utilizing advanced tools such as Smart City Setup, a GIS soft QGIS for data collection and analysis.

Mr Chairman,

This aligns with Article 5 of the World Heritage Convention, which calls for the establishment of services for the protection, conservation and preservation of heritage.

Mr Chairman,

We have also been informed by the Senegalese counterparts that since 2016, the State Party has seen significant increase in species characteristic of the Outstanding Universal Value. However, it will be interesting to also, that is, compare notes between the two, that is, Parties, in this case we are talking of IUCN, which has got a different view, but it would be good to hear from the State Party of Senegal.

Recognising the incompatibility of the Mansadala basalt quarry with the park's integrity, the new Senegalese authorities have decided to close the quarry immediately. This decision is in line with Article 6 of the World Heritage Convention, Mr Chairman, which obliges States Parties to refrain from actions that could damage World Heritage sites. A rehabilitation plan is to follow, as we've been told, with national technical teams already being mobilized.

Mr Chairman,

To address the potential impacts of Sambangalou Dam on the park's hydrological regime, the High Commission of the Organisation for the Development of the Gambia River has committed to supporting mitigation efforts. A budget action plan and a memorandum of understanding to ensure financing for all necessary mitigation activities is also in place. This initiative is consistent with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines*, which aligns with the need for States Parties to inform the Committee of any major restorations and construction plans, which may affect OUV.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, Niokolo-Koba National Park is under robust strategic management with strong commitments and partnerships to ensure the conservation and preservation of the Outstanding Universal Value. At this end, Mr Chairman, as State Party of Zambia, we believe that, you know, to a large extent, the Senegalese government has put in place measures to make sure that they should be out of the List of in danger.

I submit, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, my brother Kagosi Mwamulowe from Zambia. I love that red hat, the red cap and the beautiful Zambian design jacket. It's beautiful.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Belgium, to be followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We have studied the dossier, and we would like to emphasise that the efforts of the State Party of Senegal are indeed very significant and therefore deserve our sincere appreciation.

As examples for important new positive elements in the dossier, we can refer to the updates of the development of the management plan, that the contract has been signed, that the funds have been allocated, as well to the closure of the Mansadala basalt quarry, where the State Party has committed to do so effectively, and the guarantees that were given for mitigating potential indirect negative impacts on the property from the Sambangalou Dam.

Nevertheless, we are a bit confused about the most essential attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value, namely the population of characteristic species. And therefore we would like to ask IUCN and the Centre for their views on this specific matter. If the situation of the population of these characteristic species has not been reversed, we believe that it is not desirable to state that the desired state of conservation for removal have been met.

And in this regard, dear Chair, I would like to refer to the important outcomes of the side event that was organised in this very session on Monday, Boosting World Heritage Conservation in Africa to Meet Global Targets for People and Planet. We heard very encouraging testimonies from sites in Central African Republic and Cameroon, where the status of as endangered sites led to revitalising the sites of Outstanding Universal Value. But we also learned, and that is an important message, I recall, that the process of removal from the In Danger List should not be rushed and requires a necessary time for recovery of the habitats and the species.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Qatar, to be followed by Lebanon.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

M. le président, je crois que le Sénégal a donné la preuve de son engagement, et il a répondu à tous les quatre points relevés par l'IUCN dans son rapport. En outre, il y a une lettre du Ministre de l'environnement de la République de Sénégal, sur la fermeture de la carrière de basalte. C'était le seul point qu'il fallait régler immédiatement, et c'est fait, M. le Président. Pour cette raison, le Qatar soutient le retrait du parc de la Liste du patrimoine en péril. Et, M. le Président, ça fait 17 ans qu'il est listé sur la Liste en péril, et c'est très long. Et on croit que le Sénégal et on salue le rapport qu'on a, bien sûr, écouté. Il a fait beaucoup d'efforts. Il a fait une grande preuve de son engagement et l'État du Qatar le soutien, le retrait de la Liste.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Lebanon, to be followed by Bulgaria.

La Délégation du Liban :

Merci, M. le Président.

Oui, effectivement, la question des biens en péril qui restent pendant des années et des dizaines de données sur la Liste en péril est un véritable problème, et le besoin de voir comment on peut réellement retirer ces biens de la Liste pour que la Liste ne soit pas une sorte de cul de sac sans fin est important.

Néanmoins, c'est que nous sommes un peu confus et je pense que beaucoup de membres du Comité sont confus, à cause des informations contradictoires. Je dis bien des informations contradictoires qui nous sont données. D'un côté par l'IUCN et le Centre et de l'autre par des États qui se sont exprimés comme la Zambie, le Kenya, etc. avec des informations contradictoires concernant essentiellement la question des espèces, parce que je pense que la question du renouvellement des espèces et du problème de l'extinction des espèces est un des points essentiels sur ce bien en particulier, puisqu'il a été inscrit sur la Liste, sur cette sur cette base-là. Donc, il faudrait réellement qu'on comprenne d'où vient cette contradiction au niveau des informations. Est-ce qu'il s'agit de rapports de conservation qui n'ont pas été analysés par IUCN ? Est-ce que c'est, il manque, je ne sais pas moi, il manque une mission qui aurait dû y aller, qui n'a pas été ? Il faudrait quand même qu'on ait, pour qu'on puisse décider, il faut qu'on ait véritablement des informations crédibles de la part et de l'État partie et de l'IUCN et du Centre. Sur ce point-là bien particulier, la question du renouvellement des espèces.

Merci M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Mr Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

We have examined the documents and listened to the arguments in the hall here. Senegal has responded to the factual elements identified in the reactive monitoring mission report and the DSOCR indicators. We see a very positive development, particularly towards updating the management plan and tools, improvement of the hydrological regime, positively reversing the trends in some of the species that are connected to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and also the closure of, the willingness to close the basalt quarry. Therefore, we congratulate Senegal for their great efforts.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, Senegal showed a lot of efforts and positive engagement in the protection of the site of Niokolo-Koba National Park. And we know that, I agree also with the previous speakers that all the information are not the same, but the State Party had already answered in many documents to many questions and had achieved many measures requested.

Therefore, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines believe that the site should be removed from the List in Danger and at some point, Mr Chair, when a site is in the List in Danger for 17 years, it becomes really counterproductive.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Now that the members, Committee States Parties have spoken, I would like to give the floor to Senegal to answer those questions. And then I will give the floor to the Secretariat to answer your questions.

Senegal, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

M. le Président, merci. Membres du Comité, merci.

M. le Président c'est un honneur pour nous, Sénégal, d'être là aujourd'hui et sur un sujet qui nous tient à cœur parce que le Parc National de Niokolo-Koba est lié à l'histoire du Sénégal. C'est notre plus important site et c'est notre fierté. En 2007, donc depuis 17 ans, le Niokolo-Koba était mis sur la.

The Chairperson:

Senegal, I'll just put a stop to that because Secretariat said Argentina put its plate up and down. So, I want a clarification. Is it up or is it down? Okay. It's up. So, I will pause Senegal because it's a Committee member that has put its plate up. So, I'll give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Argentina and request Senegal to kindly bear with us. Thank you. Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair. Yes, this time it was our fault. We apologize. We put our plate up at the last minute.

What we wanted to say has already been mentioned by other members. This is a similar case compared to other cases regarding the List of World Heritage in Danger. We consider that Senegal has done everything that was asked of it. There are still some things to be done, but we need to encourage the State Party to continue in its efforts and we need to encourage it to do so.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Argentina.

One more State Party, Committee member has put its plate up. It's Jamaica, so I'll request Senegal to exhibit some more patience.

And I'll give the floor to Jamaica. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair.

And we will not reiterate what has already been said. We wanted to just add our voice to having this site also be removed from the World Heritage List in Danger.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

And I granted you that courtesy because you are the land of Michael Holding and Courtney Walsh.

I now give the floor to Senegal to answer that question, the question, thank you.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

M. le Président,

Les trois raisons pour lesquelles le site avait été mis sur la Liste en danger, c'est du braconnage, c'est gérable; c'était du pâturage de bétail, des mouvements de bergers qui venaient sur le site, c'était déjà gérable; et le troisième, c'était un projet, c'était même pas quelque chose qui existait, c'était juste un projet. Et donc on a été mis sur la Liste pendant 17 ans. Pendant 17 ans, nous avons fait des efforts et à chaque fois, nous avons compris les rapports qui nous ont été présentés. Nous avons continué à travailler.

Les textes fondamentaux disent que quand un site, quand une propriété est détériorée, mais que sa détérioration n'est pas arrivée au point où c'est devenu irréversible, on peut le laisser sur la Liste. Et donc le Niokolo aurait pu rester sur la Liste du patrimoine en ces temps-là. Ces trois raisons n'existent plus. Nous avons été saisis sur quatre points. Nous avons reçu le rapport une semaine avant de venir ici. Nous avons répondu aux quatre points. Nos autorités ont pris l'engagement, la décision de répondre sur tous les points qui ont été posés, notamment la carrière de basalte.

La carrière de basalte, c'est 0,004 % de l'ensemble du bien. Ça servait à faire des routes. Ils nous ont dit de fermer. Le ministre de l'Environnement, qui est un professeur d'écologie, qui est l'ancien point focal du MAB en Afrique de l'Ouest, a pris la mesure de le fermer.

Le barrage de Sambangalou, ce n'est pas un barrage sénégalais. C'est un barrage pour les pays de la sous-région qui ont décidé d'avoir de l'énergie verte et qui ont décidé d'apporter de l'eau dans une zone qui est devenue aride et qui est devenue difficile au plan des impacts environnementaux. Ce barrage, nous avons décidé de travailler avec les autorités pour pouvoir réduire les impacts. Il faut comprendre que le fleuve, c'est un fleuve qui passe, qui ne fait que passer par le Sénégal, qui fait la Gambie et la Guinée Conakry.

M. le Président,

Sur la question des biens, justement ici, il est dit qu'il y a une baisse, grandement en baisse, que les espèces sont grandement en baisse. Les espèces n'ont pas disparu. Quand vous mettez en place des politiques, vous les mettez en œuvre pour avoir de l'impact sur le temps, sur le nombre d'espèces ; ça prend des années et des années. Nous avons fait 17 ans. Nos autorités nouvelles ont pris l'engagement. Je demande au Comité de nous faire confiance, de faire confiance en nos autorités sur les engagements qu'ils ont pris, sur les efforts déjà faits qui sont reconnus, et de sortir ce patrimoine de la Liste. Parce que, autrement, pour nous, nos populations qui regardent en ce moment en direct, cela voudrait dire que nos efforts n'ont servi à rien et cela pourrait avoir, être contre-productif et avoir un impact négatif, pas seulement sur nous, mais sur tous les Africains qui nous regardent.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I will now give the floor, as requested by some Committee State Parties, to IUCN.

IUCN :

Merci, M. le Président.

Sur la question des espèces, les informations à notre disposition proviennent à la fois du Rapport sur l'état de conservation fourni par l'État partie en février de cette année. Les deuxièmes informations proviennent du rapport de la Mission conjointe Centre patrimoine mondial et UICN qui a été conduite cette année même au mois de mars. Ces deux rapports corroborent sur le fait que la tendance globalement des espèces caractéristiques de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle, je convoque ici l'élan de derby, l'éléphant, le buffle, le chimpanzé, le lion et le lycaon, sont globalement décroissantes. Donc l'UICN ici partage l'espoir de l'État partie qu'il y aura une tendance positive à l'avenir. Mais l'UICN estime que cette tendance doit être démontrée avant que le site ne soit retiré de la Liste du patrimoine en péril, tout en rappelant que le bien est inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine en péril sur la base du seul critère (x).

À cela s'ajoute la construction en cours du barrage qui, comme l'a relevé le moment de l'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, aurait, je cite, « des conséquences désastreuses pour l'intégrité écologique du bien ». Et comme indiqué par l'analyse préliminaire et confirmée par la mission, le barrage va entraîner, notamment lors de sa mise en eau, une modification du régime hydrologique du fleuve de Gambie, avec des impacts négatifs sur la distribution de la grande et moyenne faune mammalienne, déjà fortement fragilisée par d'autres facteurs comme le braconnage qui, avec un pourcentage de 41 %, occupe toujours la première place des infractions dans le bien en 2023.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I'll now give the floor to the Secretariat to answer some questions.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We support the points that were raised by IUCN. I think it is important to see that this site is inscribed on the criteria of biodiversity, and that when it was inscribed on the List, in danger, 90% of many of the populations of species had been lost. And unfortunately, today the figures that we have received from the State Party are not convincingly demonstrating that this trend has been reversed. I think also some of the other issues that were mentioned are the issue of cattle, for example, during the mission, there was evidence that there is still cattle up to ten kilometres within the boundaries of the site. So, I think there is some issues here that still require further attention.

We do agree that the State Party has put over the last couple of years significant effort to change the situation. However, we need to have the, I think it is important for the Committee to have the scientific data to confirm that the trends have been reversed. Of course we do not, it is not possible to wait until we go back to the original populations, because that will take a long time, that is for sure. But what is important is to demonstrate that there has been a reversal of the downward trend. And unfortunately, today, based on the figures that we have received from the State Party, we cannot confirm that this trend has been reversed. On the contrary, some figures seem to indicate that for some species, the trends are further downwards.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see there are no more comments. Or questions.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7A.54** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous avons effectivement reçu un amendement soumis par le Rwanda. Pouvons-nous l'afficher à l'écran ?

Oui, on est en train d'essayer de. Oui, ça arrive. Voilà. Très bien.

Amendement qui débute avec le paragraphe 3, suggérant le retrait de la mention de certains des indicateurs.

Paragraphe 4, remplace « note avec préoccupation la tendance globalement décroissante » par « note avec satisfaction l'augmentation du taux de rencontre des espèces caractéristiques de la VUE du bien ». Avec également la modification suivante: « en comparaison de la situation pendant la dernière mission de suivi réactif de 2015 » virgule « et la poursuite du protocole de suivi en vue de la collecte de données actualisées pour les prochaines années 2024, 2025, 2026, notamment à travers la mise à jour en cours du plan d'aménagement et de gestion du bien, grâce à un financement déjà mobilisé », avec la suppression de la dernière mention « à l'exception du lycaon,

et l'absence persistante de données concernant la viabilité des populations de ces espèces, et en particulier l'éléphant, dans le bien ».

L'amendement propose l'insertion d'un nouveau paragraphe, le paragraphe 5, « Notant la clarification fournie par l'État partie à propos du protocole d'accord existant entre la Direction des Parcs nationaux du Sénégal et l'Organisation pour la mise en valeur du fleuve Gambie, concernant le suivi continu en vue de l'atténuation de tout impact négatif indirect potentiel du barrage de Sambangalou sur la VUE du bien, en particulier au moment de la mise en exploitation du barrage, ainsi que l'engagement formel des autorités sénégalaises de fermer définitivement et immédiatement la carrière de basalte de Mansadala et de mettre en œuvre un plan de réhabilitation des fosses issues de son exploitation ».

Paragraphe suivant qui devient le paragraphe 6, note avec appréciation le rajout « ayant permis la baisse drastique du braconnage », et la suppression de la fin du paragraphe.

L'amendement propose également la suppression des paragraphes 6, des anciens paragraphes 6, 7, 8 et 9.

Paragraphe suivant. L'amendement propose la suppression de la mention de l'expression « des inquiétudes » pour arriver à « et encourage l'État partie à poursuivre la mise en œuvre de ces mesures afin de réduire au minimum près les cas de collision encore enregistrés ». Sur ce point, je souhaiterais attirer l'attention des membres du Comité qu'il y avait une erreur de traduction entre la version française et la version anglaise. La version française faisant foi.

Le paragraphe suivant, pas de modification.

Paragraphe suivant, « Remercie l'État partie du Sénégal et ses partenaires financiers » à la place de « remercie les bailleurs de fonds ».

Paragraphe 13 qui devient le paragraphe 10, la suppression de la fin du paragraphe. Donc, pour arriver à « demande enfin à l'État partie de soumettre au Centre, d'ici le 1^{er} février 2025, un rapport actualisé sur l'état de conservation du bien ».

Enfin, le dernier paragraphe, le remplacement de « maintenir sur la liste du patrimoine mondial en péril » par « retirer le Parc National du Niokolo-Koba de la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril ».

Et si je ne me trompe pas, je pense que la Jamaïque avait apporté son soutien à ce dernier paragraphe.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I saw Senegal raise its plate, and then again put it down. I presume you wanted to take the floor. If any Member States want to take the floor, please keep its plate up till the time the name is called. If you want to take the floor, because this particular agenda item relates to your Member State, I will have to refer it to the Legal Advisor.

Am I permitted to give you the floor? Mr Legal Advisor, you have the floor.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

In response to your question, the applicable rule of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee is rule 22, paragraph 6, which reads as follows I quote. "States Parties shall not speak to World Heritage properties in their own territories, except at the explicit invitation of the Chairperson within the allowed time for their speech and in response to specific questions posed". End of quote, Mr Chair.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Senegal, our hands are tied. You were given the floor, to the specific questions posed by Rwanda and other States Parties, and you have clarified your position within the stipulated time period. So at this point in time, your request to take the floor again on your own behalf cannot be supported.

Thank you, Mr Rapporteur.

The agenda items, the amendments are on the screen. We shall go paragraph by paragraph.

Are there any objections to para 1 and 2? I see none.

We go to para 3. Are there any objections to para 3? I see none.

We go to para 4. Are there any objections to the amended para 4?

I request, Lebanon, please do not hold it in your hand. Just put it, there is a place, you just put it there and I will see it. Lebanon, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Liban :

Merci, M. le président.

Oui, tous ces paragraphes 4, 5, 6. C'est vraiment contradictoire. On ne comprend pas. Il y a dans le dossier, dans la proposition de départ quelque chose, et les modifications dit le contraire. Et on est vraiment complètement perdus. Comment voulez-vous qu'on puisse décider ? Personnellement, nous, nous ne pouvons pas décider là-dessus. Nous avons des informations, ce n'est même pas des points de vue, c'est des informations contradictoires. On dit quelque chose, on dit le contraire. C'est pas possible, c'est pas possible.

The Chairperson:

Rwanda, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président.

Pour revenir au paragraphe 4, je vais peut-être donner un élément de réponse pour répondre au délégué du Liban. Alors, dans les conclusions de la mission de suivi réactif de 2015, il avait été demandé à l'État partie d'arriver à une taille des effectifs, je cite, « favorisant la viabilité des espèces caractéristiques de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle », ce qui a été fait avec l'inventaire de la faune sur la base des quatre méthodes complémentaires, l'inventaire, l'inventaire pédestre, aérien en véhicule, ce qui a été, ce qui a été mentionné dans le dernier rapport de l'État partie.

Donc ce rapport de l'inventaire de la faune est disponible, aussi que les publications scientifiques de l'état de conservation des espèces caractéristiques de la VUE.

Et je rappelle également que le Centre, enfin, excusez-moi, l'organe d'évaluation et l'UNESCO ont félicité, on a, j'ai même, on a, je pense que ça a été, un instant. Donc depuis 2016, il y a une tendance des effectifs des espèces caractéristiques de la VUE qui a connu une hausse remarquable et avec la mise en œuvre du Protocole de suivi écologique et de surveillance. Et ceci a été, a valu un communiqué de presse de la part de l'UNESCO.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

May I request the Delegation of Greece? Thank you. To switch off the microphone, which you just did. Thank you.

Lebanon, you heard the response of Rwanda. We are right now at para 4. You mentioned that there is contradictory information in paras 4, 5, 6 and you are a bit lost. But after listening to the explanation by Rwanda, do you have any changes, opposition or acceptance to para 4?

The Delegation of Lebanon:

The Centre, the response to the Centre to what Rwanda said.

The Chairperson:

The Centre. You may have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I think the point is that, at this stage, there is no, according to the information we have received from the State Party, there is no convincing data that show that the populations of species have gone up again. I think I repeated already that the site was put on the danger List after the data showed that for many species, the decline was 90% of the original population, so only 10% left. And I think at this stage, no data have been provided to show that that tendency has been reversed.

And I want to refer here to a report that was submitted to us in the last few days, and I think also circulated to the State Parties, a report by Senegal of May 2024, which in its conclusion says that: « La taille et la densité estimées des populations d'espèces emblématiques sont encore relativement faibles dans le Parc national de Niokolo-Koba par rapport aux données dans la même zone à la fin des années 90 et ». And further on it says that « cependant, l'augmentation du nombre d'interventions de conservation dans et autour du Parc et la situation de sécurité stable par rapport aux autres aires protégées de l'Afrique de l'Ouest donnent l'espoir de tendance positive sur la population des espèces à l'avenir ». So clearly this report itself from the State Party, states that there is a hope that the tendency

will become positive in the future, which means that at this day, today, the tendency is not demonstrated to be positive.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Lebanon, you heard the response of the Centre. Please let me know your views.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Mr Chairman, what do you want me to say? We have contradictory information. In that case, Lebanon will abstain from any position.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Lebanon abstains from any position.

We are right now on para 4 as proposed by Rwanda. Are there any objections to the text?

I see Argentina has raised its plate. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Can I just say that we would like to try and find a halfway solution, a compromise solution. We fully respect what IUCN has just said and what the Advisory Bodies are saying and what the Secretariat is saying. We acknowledge that there are difficulties. However, what we would want is that the State Party, which is really doing all it can to improve the situation, can indeed start solving the problem and show the way for all of us, as has been done in other places. Now, that doesn't mean, of course, that everything is perfect.

There is admittedly a contradiction, an obvious contradiction between the first drafting of the paragraphs and what has just been told. But what we don't want, I mean, what we do want to see is that the State Party of Senegal could be put in charge and be left responsible of doing its work, as it has been doing for some time, according to the reports we've received. So, what we want, what we would want is to say that we can hand over this responsibility to Senegal, rather than keeping this property on the List in Danger, because in a way, again, it is something of a sanction, of a punishment, or at least it's felt to be such by the States.

If the circumstances and if the situation goes on worsening, as may well occur, then we will re-include it on the List in Danger. But I think all these years in, after all these years of hard work, we need to leave, give some, the State Party some leeway. Let us therefore maybe look at the amendments in these paragraphs and then look separately at the last paragraph. So admittedly we should look at what is not going well. But the Senegal should handle the situation, not the Committee.

The Chairperson:

Right now, I am only concerned about the text that appears on the screen. If there are any suggestions to the acceptance of the text or alterations, then please let me know.

Saint Vincent, Saint Vincent, you want to raise? You raised your plate, and you kept it down.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr Chair,

I think that that we don't have all the information. The information given by the State Party, they date from 2018. But it seemed that there is a report which was not issued or is not read by the Advisory Bodies. So just we want a clarification about the reports and the information given in main reports. So, we know that the State Party had made a lot of efforts from 2015. And there are more information in the last report, which maybe apparently is not issued or is not read by the Advisory Body.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

The Centre, there is a specific question raised by Saint Vincent that there is a report. Can you? And they have sought clarification. You have the floor. Kindly clarify on that specific point raised by the Distinguished Delegate.

The Secretariat:

If the Distinguished Delegate of Saint Vincent is referring to the 2018 inventory, we did look at that inventory. And that inventory actually shows that the situation is very similar to the 2006 inventory. And the report I was referring to, which was sent to us by the State Party, I think also circulated to Committee members, the report I cited, dates back from May 2024, Rapport sur l'état de conservation de quelques espèces fauniques emblématiques du Parc national de Niokolo-Koba, May 2024.

The Chairperson:

At this point in time, I shall invoke Clause 22.6, under which I had stopped Senegal earlier. I will invoke the same powers of the Chair, and it says, "except at the explicit invitation of the Chairperson."

So, we need some clarifications, and I will give the floor to Senegal to clarify on the questions raised. There is a report which is mentioned, which is not mentioned. So, would you like to take the floor and clarify? You have the floor.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci. Merci M. le Président.

Donc, en ce qui concerne les données, moi je ne vois pas de contradiction parce que en fait, si vous regardez, je vous renvoie au tableau, Tableau 1 du Rapport de suivi réactif, sur ce tableau-là, il y a bel et bien les informations sur les différentes espèces qui ont été citées, notamment l'élan du Derby, la panthère, le lion. Et il y a des publications qui suivent. Et ces publications, ce sont des publications qui sont récentes, 2021, 2022 et 2023 et qui attestent que, les populations emblématiques du Parc sont bel et bien, n'est-ce pas, présentes au niveau du site.

Et également, pour le rapport de suivi réactif, les données qui ont été présentées, ce sont uniquement des données d'observation directe, alors que les documents que nous avons fournis, ce sont des données d'observation directe et d'observation indirecte, n'est-ce pas ? Je pense que, également il y a sept documents de suivi écologique qui n'ont pas été cités, n'est-ce pas, dans le rapport de suivi écologique.

C'est la raison pour laquelle nous, Délégation sénégalaise, nous maintenons, ce que nous avons dit, n'est-ce pas, sur l'amendement. Parce que, en fait, notre année de référence, c'est 2015, 2005 et 2015, il y a eu un inventaire de la faune. Après 2015, il y a eu, 2016, un autre inventaire et également les données de suivi écologique. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous avons dit qu'il y a une augmentation de la population faunique et on peut pas évaluer ces populations-là uniquement sur la base d'un seul indice, c'est-à-dire l'indice kilométrique d'abondance. Il y a aussi bien l'indice kilométrique d'abondance et également l'estimation de la taille des populations. Donc regardez les publications au niveau du rapport de suivi réactif à la page 18, Tableau 1, il y a bel et bien les informations qui confirment que les populations fauniques sont bel et bien présentes, n'est-ce pas, dans le parc, et sont viables.

Merci M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

At this point in time, I am only concerned at the draft amendment which the Rapporteur has presented, which he received. And we are on para 4. I'm not really looking at philosophical explanation, I'm only looking at the text. Now my question is simple. Is the text as shown, the amendment presented by Rwanda, is it acceptable or would someone want to suggest a modification to this text? I am not really interested. Because we gave the floor for debate earlier. Right now, once the Rapporteur has presented the amendments, we have crossed the philosophical stage and reached a grammatical stage. So, I would request, if there is, if there is any objection to this text, please let us know. Otherwise, we have, we would be adopting it.

Are there any objections to this text in para 4? I see none.

You go to para 5. Are there any objections to this amended para 5? I see none.

Go to para 6. Is there any objection to para 6? I see none.

Is there any objection to the cancellation suggested by Rwanda for the old para 6 and the old para 7?

Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We have listened very carefully to the debates and the additional information from the Centre, from the State Party, and we have to, we are, we have to face that there are still some, some concerns remaining. But I, and that's why actually we would like to have this initial para 7 that refers to the indicators that are so important for this site, that we keep them into this decision.

So, we would like to propose to change the first sentence of this para in the following: "urges the State Party to fully implement the following priority actions based on the recommendations from the reactive monitoring mission".

And then we would like to keep point a). Sorry.

Point b) should be changed accordingly, as followed: "document the stated upward trends observed in the property's characteristic species of the OUV through a census of wildlife species in order to establish a new baseline to monitor further recovery of the OUV".

The Chairperson:

May I request you to read slowly, please?

The Delegation of Belgium:

I repeat, "document the stated upward trend observed in the property's characteristic species of the OUV through a census of wildlife species in order to establish a new baseline to monitor further recovery of the OUV".

The Chairperson:

May I request the editors that in English, "senses" start with an S, but "census" starts with a C.

The Delegation of Belgium:

And then, Mr Chair, I would like to propose to keep points c) and d) of the initial para 7 in the draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Are there any objections to the Belgium suggestion?

I see Rwanda would like to take the floor. You have the floor.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci. Monsieur le président.

Je vais attendre, laisser le temps de finir. La version française, est ce qu'on pourrait remonter aux débuts du point, s'il vous plaît ? Merci beaucoup.

M. le Président, le Rwanda souhaite conserver l'amendement tel que proposé, l'amendement du Rwanda, bien évidemment.

Alors, la première proposition de la Belgique ne nous convient pas. Alors, l'État du Sénégal a donné toutes les garanties. Concernant le point a), le plan de gestion est budgétisé. Il est non seulement budgétisé, le personnel est formé et identifié. L'État nous donne les garanties nécessaires. On n'a pas urgemment demandé à l'État partie de le faire. L'État partie nous a donné toutes les garanties comme quoi le plan de gestion est en cours et sera fait.

Deuxième point, le point b). Je vais commencer par le point c) sur la. Merci. La proposition de la Belgique de conserver le point c). On a un engagement ferme d'un Ministre d'un État parti et je pense que cet engagement par lettre au Centre du patrimoine mondial devrait être suffisant.

Et le point d). L'État partie, je considère que l'État partie nous a donné toutes les garanties quant au barrage. Alors en effet, je vais juste revenir avec le point sur le régime hydraulique, le barrage. Un instant, si vous me permettez, parce que je ne m'attendais pas à autant d'amendements. Un instant. Excusez-moi, M. le Président. Pour le barrage, alors, donc, tout d'abord, le barrage est situé à environ 60 kilomètres du bien. L'étude d'impact environnemental et social détaillé sur le bien a été effectuée comme demandé, et le suivi d'un plan d'action sur la, et le suivi d'un plan d'action sur la biodiversité. Un protocole d'accord budgétisé a été élaboré et je considère que l'État partie nous a donné encore des garanties suffisantes. La proposition du Rwanda, c'est de conserver notre amendement, qui est de supprimer le Point 7.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, we have two contradictory positions out here.

Qatar, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président, de nous avoir donné la parole pour la deuxième fois.

Juste, on essaie vraiment d'avancer sur, bon, ce rapport, notamment sur ce paragraphe. Regardant les deux propositions, l'État du Qatar, vraiment, on a bien écouté les Advisory Bodies et l'État partie, ce qu'on a dit c'est qu'il a donné beaucoup de preuves de son engagement, et réel aussi, des efforts procéduraux. Ça veut dire que des procédures qui étaient bien faits par l'État partie et dont le forme aussi de ces, si on va regarder en plus les autres paragraphes, nous voulons garder la proposition du Rwanda pour bien garder aussi le cœur du texte même. Parce qu'on soutient aussi le retrait de ce site de la Liste. Donc il faut aussi donner l'État partie la confiance, l'opportunité de continuer aussi d'aider le Centre pour bien remplir ses engagements. Donc c'est la raison pourquoi le Qatar se tient de garder, conserver le texte comme il est amendé par, mandaté par le Rwanda.

Merci beaucoup M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Please add Qatar's name to sticking with the Rwandan amendment.

I see Lebanon, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Liban :

Nous comprenons parfaitement la demande de l'État partie de dire : Faites-nous confiance, nous voulons, nous avons beaucoup avancé, nous avons fait beaucoup de choses, nous avons pris des engagements, etc., et donc nous demandons que ce bien soit retiré de la Liste en péril. Bon, nous serions d'accord là-dessus.

Par contre, il est clair que la situation n'est pas complètement rose, que tous les problèmes ne sont pas complètement résolus. Il y a encore des problèmes, il y a encore des choses. C'est très bien, l'État parti va avancer, il a pris des engagements. Par contre, je pense que les demandes de la Belgique sont normales. On enlève, on retire le site de la Liste en péril. Mais d'un autre côté, on demande d'une part le suivi des indicateurs, l'actualisation du plan d'aménagement, la documentation des tendances à l'augmentation. C'est tout à fait normal. On a enlevé le site de la Liste en péril, mais d'un autre côté, on demande à l'État partie de continuer pour s'assurer que peu à peu, les choses vont revenir dans un état beaucoup mieux qu'il ne l'est actuellement. Je pense qu'il faut garder ces remarques tout en disant à la fin qu'on enlève le site de la Liste en péril. Voilà.

The Chairperson:

Okay. Lebanon is supporting the Belgium suggestion. We can put Lebanon next to Belgium, because they find sense in this.

Anyone else would like to take a position? Because here we have two State Parties, there are two groups that are giving some views.

Italy, you have the floor. And after that I will give the floor to the Secretariat.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Just to add our name, let's say in the list of Belgium and Lebanon, we agree with them.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Italy.

I'll now give the floor to Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Chairperson.

The State Party of Zambia would like to state that we are in support of Rwanda's submission to keep the amendments as they were before Belgium's intervention.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I give the floor to the Secretariat to comment.

The Secretariat:

Thank you. Chair. We believe that the.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Alors, l'idée de mon intervention ici est peut-être pour rappeler un peu au Comité son travail principal. Son travail principal, c'est non seulement le suivi des états de conservation ou les décisions qu'il prend, mais aussi l'accompagnement suite à des décisions qui peuvent être prises. Et il se trouve ici qu'avec les informations fournies dans le rapport du Secrétariat et les Organisations consultatives, et les discussions que vous avez eues avant d'examiner le projet de décision, il y a un certain nombre de questions qui mériteraient un accompagnement et un suivi de l'État partie, si le site doit être retiré sur la Liste en péril. C'est ce qui vous permettrait de continuer d'accompagner et de renforcer le travail de l'État partie. Ça ne veut pas dire que vous ne faites pas confiance à l'État partie. Vous faites confiance à l'État partie, mais votre rôle est d'accompagner la sortie du site quand vous prendrez la décision. Et ces recommandations, que le Secrétariat a proposées, sont des recommandations qui vont vous permettre de faire un suivi. Rappelez-vous que sortir un site de la Liste en péril, c'est aussi immédiatement après soutenir l'État partie pour aller un peu plus loin dans les actions et continuer à l'encourager par rapport à ces efforts.

Et je pense que le Secrétariat vous a proposé un certain nombre de recommandations, et il est pour moi de l'intérêt de votre travail et d'accompagnement de l'État du Sénégal de vraiment aller dans ce sens-là, de ces efforts à travers ces recommandations, de manière à ce que les prochains rapports que le Sénégal fournira soient des rapports qui vous permettent de continuer à mesurer tous les efforts qui ont été faits et qui ont permis au Sénégal de déployer autant d'actions et qui vous permettent aujourd'hui certainement d'apprécier l'ensemble des mesures correctives qui ont été mises en place.

Donc, c'est dans ce sens-là que vous avez besoin de donner au Sénégal un ensemble de recommandations précises pour accompagner ce site qui est très important et qui a été inscrit sur la base d'un critère, un seul, le critère (x). Et c'est un critère extrêmement important.

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

I will now give the floor to Japan, followed by Kenya.

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes. Thank you, Chairperson.

As Lebanon said, we also support the removal of this site from the List of World Heritage in Danger. But in this paragraph 7, para 7, we also support the chapeau by Belgium. And also, the Secretariat said, as this site is the Criteria (x), so we think that the especially the paragraph b) is very important. So, we also support the Belgium para b). Yes.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I give the floor now to Kenya, followed by Mexico.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Yes. We want to continue with the support for removal of this property from the List of endangered property and also align ourselves with the position of Rwanda by adopting the amendments.

Mr Chairperson, we have been treated with a lot of information by the State Party where they have taken the baselines and follow-up studies, which shows that the property has a viable population of the characteristic species. And so, we expect this viable population to continue growing, to bring the property into increased trends of these populations.

And so, I believe then the para 7b), Chairperson, that that could automatically, or most likely need not to be on this. And more so, that they have also demonstrated that already there is commitments among many of the other provisions in these paras. And so, Mr Chairperson, we stand with the position of Rwanda.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Good afternoon and thank you for giving me the floor.

Mexico would also like to support the proposal to take the site off the Danger List.

But, along the same lines as Belgium, we'd like to align ourselves with these recommendations. And obviously, we agree with what the Director of the World Heritage Centre said, that following these recommendations, or at least offering the support is very important, because this really is the area in which we're talking about some of the most representative mammalian species. Very important.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Can I request the editors to copy Belgium, all the names and paste them in all subsequent, including Japan. Can you copy it from the first para? Yes. Just copy paste it. And do the same thing for the other viewpoint of Rwanda, Qatar. Okay.

I will now give the floor to the Republic of Korea, and then I will move my head this side. Republic of Korea, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Chair.

Republic of Korea also agrees that this item is removed from the List of danger, but also agree with Belgium and others who want para 7 remaining here.

The Chairperson:

Please add the name of the Republic of Korea.

And now I'll give the floor to Argentina, followed by Saint Vincent. Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

We are sorry to, you know, give you a stiff neck when we're asking you to look at different parts of the room. We hope it's not a problem. We wanted to thank the very clear intervention of the World Heritage Centre's Director, who explained very, very clearly what the issues are.

What we want to do is, what we want to do is move to the very last paragraph where we see the responsibility of Senegal. But it's important to see how the different, the IUCN reports and the other reports have contributed to all of this discussion. And so, we can align ourselves with Belgium, Lebanon and the other authors so that we can continue working hand in hand on this property, which we do hope will be removed from the danger List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Can you please add Argentina's name after the Republic of Korea in the first para.

I give the floor to Saint Vincent, to be followed by Ukraine.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Actually, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wanted to add some wording to have a consensus. But it seems now that many States Parties agreed to keep the recommendations and to accept this wording as it is. So, we can, especially that many also said that they accept to remove the site from the List in Danger.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Would you like to add your name to any of the two or not?

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Yes, Mr Chair. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

May I ask you, where would you like to add your name?

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Yes.

The Chairperson:

I ask you where. Can you just tell us where you want to add your name.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

First paragraph. Yes. Yes, please.

The Chairperson:

Please add the full name to Saint Vincent.

I give the floor now to Ukraine.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Ukraine fully supports the proposal of Belgium, Lebanon and Italy.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Jamaica. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair.

We also would like to align ourselves with Belgium and others.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Please add the name of Jamaica.

Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Actually, about para a), paras c), d) and e)s is. We are.

The Chairperson:

Just copy paste all the names and we'll put them. The editors will do that.

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes. We've added our name to the. Another one.

The Chairperson:

May I request the editors to please copy the names from the first paragraph and paste them in subsequent paras? Is it okay?

The Delegation of Japan:

No, no, no. Please remove the paras a), c), d). Remove our name from. Please, paras a), c) and d). Yeah. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, you only want your name in the first para.

The Delegation of Japan:

First para and the b).

The Chairperson:

And para b). But you support Rwanda, Qatar, Zambia for the removal of the subsequent paras?

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes, yes. I'm sorry for confusing, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Bulgaria, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We would like to support the proposals of Belgium for all the 4, a), b), c), d).

The Chairperson:

And Japan, if you can, if the editors can go to the first para, please. Japan, if you read the first para it, there is a word called "Urges the State Party to fully implement the following indicators based on the recommendation of the reactive monitoring mission", and thereafter the indicators are mentioned. Now, if you agree to the first part and say I do not agree to the latter part, it does not make some logical sense, at least to me, because there are the, it is mentioned the word, "the following indicators". So, based on the language as it appears on the screen, would indicate a), b), c), and d). That's why I posed the question to you again, Japan.

We will bring para a) back on screen. Just before para a). Sorry. The introductory para. Right. And read from the word "urges". "Urges the State Party to fully implement the following indicators based on the recommendations of the reactive monitoring mission". Colon. It's not a full stop. It's a colon, which means what comes subsequently is connected to what is being defined as the following indicators. Now, if you are saying I support the first part, but I do not support the latter part. Would you like to revisit your position and let us understand?

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Sorry. Yes, we wanted to emphasize the para b), but yeah, please go back to the paras a), c), d), go back to the opinion of the Belgium.

The Chairperson:

Okay. Just put Japan's name. You just copy all the names from the top para and paste them back again. Okay. Now it seems that we have 11 countries that are supporting, including Belgium. Belgium, Lebanon, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Argentina, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Ukraine, Jamaica, Bulgaria. That's 11 countries that are supporting, but there are four countries that are supporting the Rwandan position.

Now to reach a consensus, a simple majority is required, but an amendment may require a. We'll have to ask the Legal Advisor. For an amendment to pass through, a simple majority is required? Or would you require a two thirds majority which would indicate a broad-based consensus? You have the floor.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, in response to your request, to your question, the rules applicable are rules 37 and 38. In this regard, I point out that amendments would depend, the majority would depend on the amendment concerned.

According to rule 37, the decisions of the Committee on matters covered by the provisions of the Convention shall be taken by a majority of two thirds of the Members present and voting.

But according to rule 38, all other decisions of the Committee shall be taken by a majority of the States members present and voting.

Rule 38, paragraph 2 points out that decisions as to whether a particular matter is covered by the provisions of the Convention, and decisions on any matters not covered by the present rules, shall be taken by a majority of the States.

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Here, the original text was suggested to be amended by Rwanda. So, for Rwanda to pass its amendment would require a. If it doesn't, if the matter is covered by provisions of the Convention and decisions on any other matters not covered by the present rule shall be taken by a majority of States Parties present and voting. So, Rwanda would require a simple majority or a two thirds majority? For this amendment to pass, the Legal Advisor, I want a specific answer. Would Rwanda require a simple majority or a two thirds majority for its amendment to pass in lieu of the contrary position taken by a large number of States Parties?

First Rwanda, I know you have. You're asking the floor, but Saint Vincent asked the floor before you, so I will give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

My Delegation does not consider that it is a vote. We are discussing. We have expressed our positions. So, I am not sure if it is a vote, but of course we want to know if Rwanda would like to keep its amendment or not. But for my Delegation, I don't consider it as a vote.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Yes. Rwanda, would you like to take the floor?

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

So, we will agree with the consensus.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

That's a very wise decision, Rwanda. I congratulate you for your intelligence. *[applause]*

And Zambia, Kagosi, you want to take the floor now? Because Rwanda has agreed to it. All right. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Chair.

In the spirit of give and take, Zambia would also want to withdraw itself from the previous Rwanda side. Now we want to go to Belgium. I hope Belgium will invite us.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Everybody will invite you with your beautiful dress. Thank you.

So please remove the names of Rwanda and Zambia.

I will yield the floor to Kenya. Kenya, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Our difficulty of moving at this point is motivated by the fact that the desired outcome is to remove the site from the List of danger. However, the original text that was proposed to be deleted was in line with the earlier perspective where there was intention to retain it there. So, there is discontent there, and my proposal is that we need to take cognizance of the State Party's efforts, as have been clearly articulated, and review the points under which we are urging the State Party to implement, or else there will be a contradiction. That's my considered opinion.

The Chairperson:

Okay. Kenya, would you like your name to remain there, or would you like your name to be removed? Can you please answer that simple question? You have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair. I would, I would. Actually, let me just say it very simply. Once the items under what we are urging, the State Party are aligned.

The Chairperson:

Sorry, the question is very simple, very specific. Would you want your name to be removed? Yes or no? That's it please. You've already had your floor two times.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Remove my name. Please remove my name.

The Chairperson:

And before I give the floor to my brother from Qatar. Would you also like your name to be removed from there? Yes. Please remove Qatar's name as well.

So now we have reached a consensus.

India, I thought you had raised your plate and then put down. Would you like to take the floor?

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

India would like to express the efforts that Senegal has been taking is indeed quite a challenging. And of course, from the commitment that they are, they have provided us. However, at this point of time, it is important to go with the data presented to us. And so, India would align with Belgium and Lebanon and yes.

The Chairperson:

Clearly in support of the consensus. Thank you.

So, the Belgium proposal stands and you can undelete the rest. Para a). No, no not that. Yes. Para a), undelete. Para b), undelete. One second. Uh, no, no. Do not undelete para b), please. There is a specific. Yeah. Go to para c). Yes. Undelete para c). Para d), you undelete.

Okay, now we are. No, we'll go to para 8 later.

Come up again. Okay.

The first part of para 7, the introductory part of para 7, how it appears. Are there any objections to it? I see none.

Go to para 7a). Please increase the font size. Yes. Are there any objections to para 7a)? I see none. Please undelete that a) part? Yes.

Go to para b). Is there any objection to the amended para b) as it appears on the screen? I see none.

Go to para c).

Please undelete para b) first. Not that part. Only the index part.

Can I see how 7b) looks? Correct.

Now go to 7c). Is there any objection to 7c)? I see none.

Go to 7d). Is there any objection to 7d)? I see none.

Go to para 8, that has been suggested by Rwanda to cancel. Is there any objection to the Rwandan amendment? I see Japan has raised its plate. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you. Chairperson.

We haven't looked at the mission report yet, so we don't know what is the exact recommendation from that mission. But we suppose the mission recommendation will be very helpful for the State Party to work the conservation, to work on the conservation of the site. So, we'd like to ask the reason why this paragraph was deleted.

The Chairperson:

Rwanda, Japan has asked you a very specific question that they have not seen that 2024 reactive monitoring mission. And, but in principle, they would be supporting that. And they want to ask you a question. Why did you delete this para, Rwanda? You have the floor.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le paragraphe avait été proposé à la suppression car nous avons proposé la suppression du paragraphe précédent. Voilà, voilà la logique.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Okay, now that the previous para you have accepted, you would also accept para 8. Okay. All right. Please. Undelete para 8.

And undelete that number 8.

And you can remove Rwanda's name from there.

Okay, now we go. That, it will not be para 7, because para 7 was already agreed on top, I guess. So, this would be. Yeah, you have to undelete the number 7. Yes.

We go to para 9, I guess. Para 9.

Japan, would you like to raise the same question regarding the deletion of para 9 by Rwanda?

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes. Maybe we haven't heard the reason why this paragraph was deleted. So maybe we can ask the Rwanda why. The reason why?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

And Rwanda, would you give the same rationale? Okay, perfect. So, you undelete para 9. Oh, sorry.

You have the floor, Rwanda.

The Delegation of Rwanda / La Délégation du Rwanda :

Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

So, yes, partly there's the same rationale, but the second part of the amendments. Well, of the of Point 9, I'm going to read it in French.

À partir de « rappeler », « rappelle qu'une analyse approfondie du rapport d'EIES ».

So, I'm okay with deleting the first part because it's the same rationale as before. But I will request to maybe delete the second part.

À partir de « rappeler ». L'analyse du rapport d'EIES a été fournie par l'État partie et on ne comprend pas si c'est une question.

It's a question for the.

Excusez-moi de mélanger le français et l'anglais. C'est une question adressée au Secrétariat. Le rationnel d'une analyse. L'analyse approfondie d'un rapport qui a été déjà soumis par l'État partie. C'est une question au Secrétariat, et en fonction de la réponse je proposerai soit de maintenir ou pas.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Secretariat, Rwanda has sought your guidance to retain or delete that part of the para.

You have the floor. Mr Lazare, please. Thank you.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Yes. Thank you, Chairperson.

I will just start by saying that the World Heritage Centre received a letter. I received a letter from the Minister of Environment of Senegal. And I think this is what the Ambassador, His Excellency, the Ambassador of Senegal, has said in his intervention. And I do confirm that we received, we received a letter saying that the construction, that the, no, the letter was on the quarry, that the quarry has been stopped.

Here, I think the issue is about the construction of the dam in Sambangalou. And the Ambassador said the reason why this was continued, that it was not exactly there. So, Mr Chairperson, I think effectively my colleague Guy Debonnet could give more clarification on this. And you may wish to give the floor to Senegal to specifically clarify this issue.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Rwanda, can you state your question again regarding that part of the para that you need some guidance from the Secretariat?

The Delegation of Rwanda / La Délégation du Rwanda :

Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

So, the question was to have a.

Avoir, comprendre pourquoi l'analyse du rapport déposé par l'État partie, le rapport doit être encore analysé, doit avoir une analyse approfondie. Est-ce que ce rapport n'a pas encore été lu par le Secrétariat ? N'a pas encore été analysé ? Et, effectivement, pour compléter ce que le Directeur du Centre vient de mentionner, il y a effectivement des garanties qui ont été données par l'État partie, d'où la proposition de garder cette deuxième partie du paragraphe supprimé. Et voilà.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Secretariat, you have the floor.

Le Secrétariat :

Comme l'analyse a été faite par l'IUCN, je pense que c'est plus approprié que IUCN réponde à la question.

UICN :

Merci beaucoup pour la parole.

Donc, le rapport de l'étude d'impact environnemental pour le projet de barrage de Sambangalou a été successivement demandé au Sénégal depuis 2015 par le Comité. Et en 2023, l'État du Sénégal a effectivement soumis au Secrétariat pour évaluation par l'IUCN des études complémentaires qui ont été faites sur les impacts de ce barrage. L'IUCN a fait une analyse préliminaire de ces documents, mais a réitéré la demande du Comité à l'État du Sénégal de soumettre le rapport d'étude d'impact environnemental, ce que l'État du Sénégal a fait effectivement au cours de la mission de suivi réactif, la mission conjointe de suivi réactif de mars 2024. Donc, c'est en mars 2024 que l'État partie du Sénégal a remis à l'équipe de la mission le rapport d'étude d'impact environnemental pour le projet de barrage. Et donc c'est ici, l'IUCN et le Centre du patrimoine mondial propose que l'IUCN fasse une évaluation de ce rapport-là et soumette nos recommandations à l'État partie.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Rwanda, with that guidance, would you like to let us know? Will you? Can we undelete para 9 or there are specific parts of para 9 you would like to remain as deleted?

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

I will also please request the Director of the Centre to maybe give the floor to the State Party to give more clarification.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

You may request, but the Director of the World Heritage Centre does not have the power to do that. That power rests only with the Chair. And the Chair is more than happy to satisfy the request of the sister from Rwanda.

Senegal, do you not want to take the floor at this point in time? Or you want to take the floor? Because there is a specific request by a State Party asking a question, and the Chairperson wants that question answered. Senegal, please answer the question.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Oui, merci, M. le Président.

Bon, en fait, pour le rapport de l'étude d'impact environnementale, ça a été envoyé en, avant, en 2023 par e-mail au niveau du Centre du patrimoine mondial. Et les éléments de la mission, quand ils étaient venus, ils étaient d'accord sur ça, c'est eux qui n'avaient pas répondu et ça a été envoyé par, Monsieur ^[unclear] de l'OMVG. Après, quand ils ont réclamé ce rapport-là, on leur a donné ça sur place, n'est-ce pas ? Et pour ce problème-là, pour le barrage, il y a déjà des garanties. Parce que cette même organisation a fait une étude et un plan d'action sur la biodiversité. Après, ce plan d'action sur la biodiversité, ils ont établi, élaboré, un protocole d'accord avec la direction des parcs nationaux pour que, s'il y a des impacts potentiels, que ce plan d'action-là puisse être mis en œuvre. Et tout cela, c'est budgétisé et les documents sont disponibles, et ça a été partagé avec eux.

Mais de toute façon, on n'est pas aussi, on ne s'oppose pas, n'est-ce pas, au maintien du bas. Parce que le barrage se situe à. Du paragraphe. On ne s'oppose pas. Mais sachez que le barrage est situé à 70 kilomètres en amont, n'est-ce pas, du parc. Mais toutes ces garanties-là ont été données et partagées au sein du.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, you have made. You have. You have mentioned all that many, many times. You have mentioned all those data. Please keep it short. So, you don't mind letting that para remain.

Rwanda, you heard that answer.

Please undelete para 9. And remove Rwanda's name.

We go to para 10. Are there any objections to para 10 and how it appears? "And to establish a protocol for the care of injured animals to reduce post-accident mortality". Animal rights. Love for animals. Is there a? There should be a protocol. Okay. There are no objections to para 10.

Go to para 11. There is no amendment.

Go to para 12. "Thanks the State Party of Senegal and its financial partners, who continue to support the conservation of the property, in particular the Government of Norway". Are there any objections to the use of the words "financial partners" instead of the word "donors"? I see none.

Go to para 13. Finally, "request the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1st February 2025 an updated report on the state of conservation of the property". Are there any objections?

Yes. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you. Chairperson.

We would like to retain the original paragraph, but "and the implementation of the above". And maybe delete the rest until "for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session". So, it should be "And the implementation of the above for the examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session".

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

No. Japan wants to undelete it, which means it remains, and "the implementation of the above, in particular on the progress made towards fully meeting the fundamental conditions for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger". Full stop. Japan wants that para undeleted. Yes.

Rwanda, do you have any objection to the Japanese suggestion?

The Delegation of Rwanda / La Délégation du Rwanda :

Oui, M. le Président, à partir du moment où on a supprimé le paragraphe 7, donc il faudrait garder le paragraphe jusqu'à « et sur la mise en œuvre des points ci-dessus mentionnés » point.

Undeleted, but the second parts to be deleted, please.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Japan. Are you satisfied with that condition? Okay.

Remove the word of. Remove the name Japan. Because they are satisfied with the explanation given by Rwanda. Remove the name. Sorry. Sorry. Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes, I agree with the current screen. Current condition.

The Chairperson:

I understood you very well. Thank you.

Please remove the name of Japan. Just do what I'm saying, please. Thank you. Okay.

Now "for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session", Japan wants to keep that. Rwanda, you want to delete it? No, Rwanda does not want that deleted. Remove Rwanda's name. Okay. Thank you.

So, para 13, as it appears now, does anyone have any objections?

Lebanon and Argentina, do you want to comment something on that? You want to comment, Argentina?

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

No, we are fine with these latest changes, so yes, we have something to say about the upcoming paragraph.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Lebanon, your name is written? Okay. It's cancelled. All right.

So, there is no objection to para 13.

We go to para 14, "decides to remove Niokolo-Koba National Park, Senegal from the List of World Heritage in Danger". Is there any objection to this? I see three Member States.

Please do not play with your country's nameplate. Just keep it there till your name is called. That's all I'm requesting. Do not do this. Do not wave in the air. Just keep it. You know, just keep it like this. Is it so difficult? Just let it remain like this. Thank you. We have three Member States.

First, I'll give to Belgium, followed by Argentina.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We would like to add Belgium. And I would like also to take the opportunity to invite the colleagues from the Committee and especially our colleagues from Zambia to Belgium.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Belgium.

You know, Kagosi, it's only after my appreciation that you know, you're receiving all these invites, and you are so, you know, after hearing you are found to be so knowledgeable, and it's such a pleasure to hear you. Thank you for coming to India. And thank you for that beautiful invitation, Belgium.

I give the floor to Argentina. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

Yes. We would like the name of our country to be added to the list. And this paragraph. And we would like to commend the consensus that we feel we are reaching, because this really is what we were seeking from the beginning, which was, hand the responsibility back to Senegal, to keep working hand in hand with us.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Argentina.

I give the floor to Lebanon, followed by Saint Vincent.

La Délégation du Liban :

Oui, merci, M. le Président.

Tout d'abord, je pense que le Rapporteur a oublié d'indiquer notre nom sur cette décision de retirer le Parc de la Liste du patrimoine en péril.

Et ensuite on voudrait remercier, je voudrais vous remercier, à vous, M. le Président, pour cette atmosphère très agréable que vous êtes en train d'insuffler dans notre réunion. Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for the appreciation from Lebanon. I wish my wife was here to hear it, but. Thank you so much.

After Lebanon, I give the floor to my colleague from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I think also the name of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was omitted. We say that in the first intervention we have done.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Bulgaria, to be followed by Mexico.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you.

We also would like to add the name of Bulgaria among the countries supporting this.

The Chairperson:

I now give the floor to Mexico, followed by Italy.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

Yes, please also include the name of Mexico to the list of supporting countries. And we just wanted to reiterate that being on the List in Danger is not a punishment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Italy, to be followed by Viet Nam.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

And we would like to add our name in the list.

And congratulations.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Viet Nam, to be followed by Kenya.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I would like to make two points. The first one, we also would like to add Viet Nam to the list.

And the second point is that we would like to thank the World Heritage Centre for the explanation, because that was really helpful for the discussion and the decision-making process of the Committee.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Kenya, followed by Ukraine.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

We are very glad to be included on the list. It inspires State Parties in Africa to work very hard towards coming out of the Danger List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Ukraine, followed by Zambia.

La Délégation de l'Ukraine :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous voudrions que le nom de l'Ukraine soit inscrit dans la décision.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

I will now give the floor to Zambia, followed by India.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you. Chair.

We are even wondering why Zambia is not appearing there, because in our introduction we had already declared that we are solidly behind the State Party of Senegal.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

India would definitely like to be part of that list. And we definitely want to support Senegal in all its efforts.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

And we have. There are no further objections. Before I adopt the whole para as a whole, please let me congratulate Ornella Kaze from Rwanda for doing an excellent job. The explanation that you have given, the questions that were posed to you, it shows how thorough you were with your work. Single-handedly you have defended the amendment and you have withdrawn your objections. You have withdrawn your position and compromised and negotiated. I think this is what diplomacy is. And in a way, this large consensus has been developed because of the excellent work that you have done. And I will give this appreciation of yours to your Ambassador, my friend François. Thank you. *[applause]*

And of course, my congratulations to my friend Souleymane Jules Diop. You are on the verge of achieving what has not been achieved for 17 years.

So now we will go back to the whole decision and adopt it. Please go right at the top.

We have seen all the paras. Is there any objection to adoption of the draft decision as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 7A.54** adopted as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Thank you very much.

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property, or in this case, the State Party. Souleymane, I know you're happy, you can't forget the Chair so quickly.

The Delegation of Senegal:

Chair, I'm doubly happy. When I arrived in this country, and I didn't say it, I'm amazed by the diversity in your country, the richness of your culture, your history, your heritage. And I said all that to you in the morning, the first morning I arrived. And when I tasted the first lamb biryani, but this time the biryani, which is the authentic biryani. And I thank your country for that, for welcoming us here. I say thank you to the whole members of the Committee, to the whole Ambassadors, Excellencies, Ambassadors in the UNESCO.

We know the responsibility behind this decision, and we will try our best to fulfil all the requirements and all the advice we received here. It's all Africa that really appreciates this decision. Not only me, not only Senegal. And I think it's a very important day and encouragement in the path of developing better relations in a very fair world. So, thank you very much. Thank you all, everybody, those who had who had some interrogations, maybe restrictions, we thank. All this is a lesson for the future for us.

We are a very small country, but we love to be loved by everybody. So, thank you very much. Thank you. We do appreciate a lot what we achieved today. It's not a victory of not only me, my Delegation, but our country. People are following in the media's, people working in the national park, this important national park, which is our pride, our following life, direct the decision and we want to share our joy, our happiness with all of you.

Thank you very much. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Rwanda, I know I've already appreciated you, but we are running short of time. Quickly, Rwanda. Thank you.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you. Chair.

Twenty seconds, I promise. I just wanted to congratulate Senegal and to also thank you, Chair, for your kind words. But I think my colleague back in Paris, Ornella Kaze, will be very happy because I'm Joelle Bucyana.

Thank you, Chair. And congratulations, Senegal.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I apologize for making that mistake, but I got confused. But the appreciation was then not for Ornella. The appreciation was for you. Thank you.

Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Chair.

It is with great pride and immense gratitude that I stand here before you today to extend my heartfelt thanks for the momentous decision to remove the Niokolo National Park from the World Heritage List in Danger. This achievement is a testament to the unwavering commitment and collaborative efforts of the State Party of Senegal. International partners such as African World Heritage Fund, through its capacity-building programmes with IUCN Dakar office and all financial partners involved. This support provided by these partners, and the steadfast commitment of the State Party, has been instrumental in implementing effective conservation measures, in enhancing community engagement and promoting sustainable development in and around the park. Today, as we celebrate this achievement, we also recognize the importance of continued vigilance and cooperation. This journey to protect and preserve Niokolo, that does not end here, Mr Chairman, it is a continuous commitment that requires our collective efforts, resources and expertise.

Mr Chairman,

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the World Heritage Committee and the African World Heritage Fund for Africa, to the African States Parties, for the unwavering support and partnership. Together, we have demonstrated that through collaboration and dedication, we can achieve remarkable outcomes for the benefit of our natural heritage as well as the well-being of our communities.

Thank you once again for your steadfast commitment to conservation and for standing with Senegal in our mission as Africans to protect Niokolo-Koba National Park. We look forward to continued collaboration and success and in these years to come.

Mr Chairman,

I would also want to appreciate the wisdom and the great guidance that you have provided throughout this sensitive, that is, file.

Thank you, Mr Chairman, I submit.

The Chairperson:

I'll give the last speaker, the Observer State Party of Uganda, the floor. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Uganda:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Uganda takes this opportunity to congratulate Senegal for removal of the Niokolo-Koba National Park on the World Heritage List in Danger. This achievement, indeed, it is a testament and unwavering commitment of our collaborative efforts from different stakeholders, communities and conservationists.

Today, Uganda is one of the States Parties that achieved this same removal of a site on the World Heritage List in Danger, which is Kasubi Tombs. And from that time, I want to inform you, Mr Chair, that we have seen changes at the site.

And we believe that even with Senegal, after this achievement, there will be immense changes. And where we are looking at the species, we believe that the communities will have that effort from this support that they have received. They will be able to put more efforts to ensure that the wildlife is conserved. We want to thank the African Delegates and the African World Heritage Fund, the World Heritage Centre and all stakeholders for this support to Senegal.

We thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Uganda.

I'm informed by Mr Lazare, a very proud son of Africa, that there is also Tanzania. So, I give the floor to Tanzania.

The Observer Delegation of Tanzania:

Chairperson,

Since it's my first time to take the floor in this session, let me congratulate the Government of India for successfully handling the 46th World Heritage Committee meeting.

The United Republic of Tanzania would like to congratulate the State Party of Senegal for this achievement, made possible by commitment and collaborative efforts of the State Party, international partners such as Africa World Heritage Fund and all the financial partners involved. Deepest appreciation should also go to the World Heritage

Committee and World Heritage Centre that demonstrate collaboration and dedication on outcomes for the benefit of our natural heritage and well-being of our communities.

As Tanzania, we have the experience of having a site of Kilwa Kisiwani for ten years in in danger List and we worked very close with Centre and Africa World Heritage Fund to remove, and now the site is doing extremely well.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Tanzania.

Now, before we go to the next agenda item, Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo cannot control himself with his happiness. So, I am forced to give him the floor as well.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

Effectivement, vous pouvez comprendre la grande satisfaction du Secrétariat et de l'UNESCO dans son ensemble. Comme vous le savez très bien, la priorité Afrique fait partie des priorités de la Directrice générale et de l'ensemble du Secrétariat et de vous aussi, les Amis de l'Afrique. Et c'est grâce à vos soutiens, à votre accompagnement, à tous les pays donateurs qui appuient et qui soutiennent les activités en Afrique, dans les sites du patrimoine mondial, qui ont soutenu les activités au Sénégal et dans ce parc et qui vont continuer à le faire, donc la raison des recommandations très justes et très bonnes que vous avez décidées aujourd'hui pour accompagner le Sénégal. Le Sénégal va continuer à travailler et nous continuerons de soutenir le Sénégal.

Je voudrais remercier aussi l'UICN qui a travaillé aussi beaucoup avec le Sénégal pour ce faire, et remercier l'État partie à travers vous Excellence Monsieur l'Ambassadeur Jules Diop et tous les experts qui sont aujourd'hui présents, qui ont expliqué au Comité tous les efforts que le Sénégal a produit et vous, merci, M. le Président, pour votre leadership.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Lazare.

And this is not just a victory for Senegal. I think it's a victory for all of Africa. And it sends a very positive message. Thank you all. Let us proceed now to the next item.

7B. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (Ct'd) // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD (suite)

7B.5 Notre-Dame Cathedral in Tournai (Belgium) // Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Tournai (Belgique)

The Chairperson:

We are going back to 7B. And the Secretariat has suggested we go to Notre-Dame Cathedral in Tournai, Belgium. I would now like to give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Lebanon to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of Notre Dame Cathedrale in Tournai, Belgium. Excellency, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Liban :

Merci, M. le Président,

Je serai bref. Le rapport sur l'état de conservation du bien, présenté par l'État partie le 1^{er} février 2024, concerne plusieurs projets se situant dans le centre historique de la ville de Tournai, dans la zone tampon du bien et dans la zone tampon du beffroi situé à proximité immédiate de la Cathédrale et qui constitue l'un des composants du bien en Série C943 Beffrois de Belgique et de France.

Le Centre du patrimoine mondial et l'ICOMOS ont fait part de leurs inquiétudes concernant trois de ces projets.

La démolition reconstruction du Pont des Trous, les travaux ont débuté en 2019 et le pont a été reconstruit.

Le deuxième projet, le Carré Janson, adjacent à la cathédrale, est en cours d'exécution, malgré l'avis du Centre du patrimoine mondial et de l'ICOMOS, qui ont considéré que l'étude d'impact n'était pas satisfaisante.

Et le Musée des Beaux-Arts, monument emblématique de l'architecte Victor Horta, où le Centre et l'ICOMOS considèrent également que l'étude d'impact n'est pas satisfaisante.

Le projet de décision considère que ces trois projets, chacun de manière différente, constituent des altérations du tissu historique de Tournai et représente une menace possible pour la préservation de la VUE du bien et des beffrois de Belgique et de France.

L'impact de ces projets n'est évidemment pas comparable à la situation dramatique à laquelle nous assistons depuis plusieurs années dans un grand nombre de centres urbains inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, avec la construction de bâtiments de grande hauteur qui dénaturent de façon irrémédiable le tissu urbain historique et dont nous avons plusieurs exemples aujourd'hui dans l'Item 7B. Évidemment, le bien dont nous parlons, la Cathédrale de Tournai, n'est pas comparable à cela. Mais ces projets, dont nous avons plusieurs exemples, sont proposés pour adoption sans discussion et ne seront malheureusement pas discuté ici à cause du lobbying politique.

En ouvrant la discussion sur l'état de conservation de la Cathédrale de Tournai, nous souhaitons mettre l'accent sur un problème général qui est que, contrairement aux dispositions de l'article 172 des Orientations, nous assistons à la réalisation de projets dans des zones protégées au titre de la Convention, en particulier des bâtiments de grande hauteur, sans prendre en compte l'avis du Centre, sans prendre en compte l'avis des organes consultatifs qui se trouvent de ce fait mis devant le fait accompli. Cette pratique est extrêmement dangereuse. Elle constitue une menace pour la crédibilité de la Convention.

Il est essentiel de rappeler aux États parties qu'en ratifiant la Convention de 1972, ils reconnaissent que les biens situés sur leur territoire constituent un patrimoine mondial à la protection duquel il est du devoir et de la responsabilité de la communauté internationale dans son ensemble de participer. Ce n'est plus des biens uniquement nationaux, c'est également des biens du patrimoine mondial.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now invite Ms de Sancristobal, and ICOMOS to present their comments. You have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much, Chair. The Notre-Dame Cathedral is located in the city of Tournai, very close to the belfry of Tournai, as can be seen on the map. The belfry is a historic bell tower and is, as has been mentioned, a component of the Belfries of Belgium and France World Heritage property. There is a historic relationship between the Cathedral and the belfry. The Cathedral is the historic seat of religious power, and the belfry was constructed as an emblem of civic power in a spatial and thereby symbolic relationship with the Cathedral. The statement of Outstanding Universal Values for the World Heritage property Notre-Dame Cathedral in Tournai notes specifically, and I quote: "that its integrity is also expressed through its location in the urban fabric, a veritable landmark in the centre of the urban landscape, as well as through its visual and symbolic relations to the nearby belfry" end quote.

As mentioned, the project called Carré Janson is under construction directly adjacent to the Cathedral, in its buffer zone, and it is also located in the buffer zone of the belfry. The project entails the conversion of four historic buildings and the insertion of a Contemporary four-story structure in the courtyard, topped by a panoramic roof terrace on the fifth. As has been noted, this project has received negative reviews from ICOMOS but also from the State Parties Royal Commission for Monuments, Sights and Excavations.

Additionally, a current proposal for the alterations of the Musée des Beaux-Arts would introduce another vertical element into the urban landscape setting. ICOMOS has also provided guidance on amending this proposal. A final municipal decision on the project execution is planned for 2025.

With your permission, Chair, the World Heritage Centre would like to add some brief comments in this response.

Le Secrétariat :

Merci M. le Président.

Le Centre souhaite uniquement ajouter que ces projets viennent s'accumuler à la démolition et à la reconstruction du Pont des Trous qui ont eu lieu sans notification préalable au Centre du patrimoine mondial, comme le prévoit le paragraphe 172 des Orientations devant guider la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial. Le Pont des Trous, certes, se situe à l'extérieur du bien et de sa zone tampon, mais il se situe dans son cadre plus large et dans la zone tampon d'un autre bien du patrimoine mondial, Beffrois de Belgique et de France.

L'ensemble de ces projets représente une érosion du paysage urbain qui constitue le cadre de la cathédrale et du beffroi. Ces projets et leurs effets cumulatifs sur le bien sont à l'origine de la demande du Secrétariat à l'État partie de soumettre pour la première fois, à l'attention du Comité, un rapport sur l'état de conservation de la Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Tournai.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for the presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments. I see none.

I will now invite you to adopt the draft Decision for **46 COM 7B.5** concerning this property, but before doing so I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendment.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendements concernant la Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Tournai.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The draft decision that appears before you is in the original. Are there any objections for its adoption? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 7B.5** adopted. ^[gavel]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property. I see none.

Horizontal plate means you do not want to intervene, vertical plate means you want to intervene. I have not given you the floor because your plate is horizontal.

Yes, Belgium, you might take the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

I'm just raising my plate Mr Chair. Thank you.

But to say that we do not wish to take the floor, actually. There was some misunderstanding. Sorry.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see no further requests. Let's proceed then.

**7B.18 Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
// Stonehenge, Avebury et sites associés (Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord)**

The Chairperson:

We are now going to discuss the property proposed for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I now invite Ms Berta de Sancristobal and ICOMOS to present the reports on the state of conservation of the cultural properties located in this region and opened for discussion. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Since 1994, the state of conservation of this property has been under review by the Committee because of the threat posed by the A303 highway and its planned upgrading scheme, including the construction of a tunnel and open cut sections traversing the Stonehenge component of the property. The scheme has been the subject of five World Heritage Committee decisions between 2017 and 2023, and four advisory missions between 2015 and 2022, which together represent a decade of substantive and sustained dialogue with the State Party.

In 2021, the Committee noted that if the development consent order for the scheme was confirmed by the UK court, the property would warrant inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Despite this, the State Party reissued a DCO in 2023 for the A303 scheme without incorporating the changes requested by the Committee.

At its last session, the Committee requested the State Party to submit a set of corrective measures, including modifications to the scheme consistent with the Committee's decisions and the recommendations of the 2022 advisory mission.

The updated state of conservation report, submitted by the State Party on 1st February 2024, includes responses to the latest Committee decision and an information report on proposed design developments. These include 3.5-metre-wide cantilever sections along each side of the length of the proposed western cutting, and an additional 150 metre wide green bridge.

The State Party held meetings with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies on 11th January and 11th April this year. A third meeting was held on 11th July this year, following the publication of the state of conservation report. The design developments presented by the State Party only partially mitigate the visual impact of the western end of the property, and do not meet the minimum requirement clearly set out in the Committee's last decision and in the recommendations of the 2022 advisory mission.

On 19th July 2024, the State Party reported on the current court appeal of the DCO decision, which was heard between 15 to 17 July. The Court of Appeal has not yet delivered its judgment. Factual errors identifying the analysis of the published state of conservation report have been agreed with the State Party. Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the analysis state that the Committee requested that the scheme be redesigned to remove 3.5 kilometres cutting within the property. However, the open cutting at the western end, which is the main focus, has a length of approximately 550 metres. The identified errors in no way affect the conclusions of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, nor the draft decision before the Committee, since the minimum change requested by the Committee was an extension of the underground section of the western end of the tunnel to at least the western boundary of the property.

Considering that the A303 scheme as approved by the DCO and its current remaining form poses an imminent threat to the property and if implemented, would have a serious and irreversible impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, including its integrity, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies consider that the property, Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites, meets the criteria for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, in accordance with paragraph 179 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

The World Heritage Committee and the Advisory Bodies have been consistent over years in the advice provided to the State Party about the proposed A303 scheme through the Stonehenge component of the property. The Committee has already accommodated the proposed incursions at the eastern end of the property but has consistently advised that the proposed tunnel should be continued to at least the property boundary to the west. Multiple Committee decisions have advised that a four-lane highway through part of the property in a cutting cannot be seen to protect its integrity. The current proposals, with cantilevers and a second bridge across the proposed western cutting, have not addressed fundamental flaws and are not consistent with the Committee's decisions.

The name Stonehenge applies to both the main henge and to the wider landscape. What must be protected is the entire component of the property, not just one ring of stones, but the full ensemble of prehistoric features, including barrows, sight lines and archaeological sites. The main henge is a highly visible and globally recognised monument, and the 2022 advisory mission acknowledged that the proposed tunnel would improve its immediate setting, but the current scheme would also irreversibly change the wider ceremonial archaeological area, resulting in a significant negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

The serious permanent impacts arising from the current scheme could and should be avoided by further design changes.

It is concerning that, contrary to consistent requests by the Committee since 2018, underground cabling work in preparation for the scheme has already started in the vicinity of the property, and the overall construction contract has been let.

In its current form, including the new 2024 modifications, the scheme would result in ascertained danger to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property within the meaning of paragraph 179.A of the *Operational Guidelines*, arising from permanent, irreversible loss of attributes which support its Outstanding Universal Value.

The recommendation that the Committee to inscribe the property on the List of World Heritage in Danger is not made lightly, but has become necessary to provide a framework within which the imminent destructive components of the A303 scheme can be reconsidered, and the State Party can deploy its utmost resources in accordance with Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention to facilitate the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for this presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments before I give the floor to the Rapporteur. I see none.

Japan, you have the floor, to be followed by Kenya.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

Japanese Delegation thanks to the State Party, United Kingdom, for their long-standing effort for this site. We also thanks to the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS for their continuing hard work.

As we all know, this Committee has a long, long history of discussion on this site, more than 20 years, especially on the road issue. There were huge discussions on how to conserve the site, its archaeological value, as well as landscape value. Now, carefully reading the working document draft decision, it is a kind of, allow me to say, surprise for us, because after a long history of deliberation, we thought this road issue was in the final phase for settlement, but it is suggested to put it on the List of World Heritage in Danger. So, if you allow me, Chair, we would like to ask the State Party UK about the reason why current proposal was chosen among various options, especially on the west portal area of the road. I understand, we can see the information on the document, but considering its importance, we would like to hear the State Party's points.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Japan, for asking that question to the State Party.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Kenya, followed by Jamaica.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

I would on the outset wish to convey the UK's commitment to finding an appropriate solution compatible with the OUV of the Stone Henge, as was requested at **31 COM 7B.104**, in 2007. I want to demonstrate that by indicating the following, that the UK has considered 50 different options for resolving the negative impacts of A303. In addition, the UK has mobilized many, many experts cutting across the fields of archaeology, history, science, among others, to be invested in this for the last 30 years. Indeed, are there plans to deploy up to 120 archaeologists to the site for 18 months during the duration of the works that are anticipated?

I would want to also confirm that there have been in constant communication with the Advisory Bodies, and a total of six missions have been undertaken to date.

I would also want to dispute the claim that work has already commenced. The true position is that preliminary preparations have are ongoing, but no mobilisation or physical work has already commenced.

Allow me also to indicate that the UK has committed 1.7 billion GBP to undertake what their experts perceive as the best solution for mitigating this long standing challenge.

I would also want to indicate that the area in dispute, the length of the road in dispute, is only 0.7 kilometres, and that small portion is not sufficient, in our considered opinion, to cause any significant impacts on the OUV of the very precious Stonehenge.

I would want to reiterate the UK's commitment to find a solution and deploy it, and to seek the permission of this World Heritage Committee to allow the UK to commence the works so that we can be able to conserve and preserve the OUV of the very precious Stonehenge.

Thank you very much. I submit.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Jamaica, followed by Italy.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair.

In reviewing the ICOMOS report and dialogue with the State Party, Jamaica commends the UK for the work already carried out for the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated sites.

It has been evident over the years that, through dialogue with ICOMOS, recommended actions have been implemented by the State Party to see the continued preservation of this iconic site. This includes, but are not limited to, revised management and governance for the property, new educational facilities in consideration of the technical review by ICOMOS, and consistent dialogue among stakeholders.

In relation to the road scheme being considered for implementation, we do note the recognition of the UK's continued dialogue with the Centre and ICOMOS, as we know that this really is the best way to ensure that there is a best way, or the proposed best action in preserving serving the assets' OUV. The UK has indicated it has tried to find varying solutions to the A303 road network, but that it is unable to fully meet the requests made due to the significant financial outlay. They have, however, proposed further considerations that, while not fully addressing the previous decision of the Committee, have provided some adjustments towards them.

As such, Chair, we believe that further dialogue with the State Party of the UK would be beneficial, as there is no issue seen with the upgrading of the A303 road, but with the extension to the western boundary of the property.

We are of the view, in light of this, that the property should not be placed on the World Heritage List in Danger, but that a middle ground, a place of compromise be found in relation to the road upgrade. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Italy, followed by Zambia.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you. Mr Chairperson and esteemed colleagues,

We carefully analysed the state of conservation report and the ICOMOS evaluation of the property. We extend our gratitude to the State Party for providing detailed information on the extensive consultations undertaken with the diverse range of stakeholders, including heritage NGOs, local governments and communities. We acknowledge the State Party's commitment in investing additional funds in the scheme, specifically to address heritage priorities within the boundaries of the World Heritage site.

We are fully aware of the State Party's expertise in the field of rescue archaeology and appreciate their major efforts in conducting investigation works that utilize both advanced technologies and competent human resources. These competencies are clearly demonstrated in the project. We trust that the same level of attention towards the conservation of this heritage site will be maintained in the subsequent stages.

We strongly encourage constant monitoring to avoid any potential risks. Furthermore, we recommend maintaining a continuous dialogue with the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre to prevent any further critical issues.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Zambia, followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

As the State Party of Zambia, we would like to appreciate the continuous dialogue that has been going on between the State Party of the United Kingdom and the Advisory Bodies.

However, Mr Chairman, we have got a concern that at the time when the State Party of the United Kingdom has been trying hard, or is trying hard to make sure that the impacts are minimised, and we say this, that the impacts are minimised simply because we have a situation where there were three roads, the first road was removed, now we go to the second road, they have dealt with it and when they are even dealing with the third mitigation measures, by even sanctioning the visual impact, that's when we are about to decide to put them on the in danger List. Because when you look at that road which is being proposed, it is literally taking out the visual impact, the impacts, it is out of the line of sight. So when you talk of visual impacts, that would have been submerged. And, that being the case, we feel that it will be too much for the Committee to decide otherwise.

Beyond that, there is also the policy of, I mean, the Policy Document on Sustainable Development, which UNESCO itself adopted in 2015, and this policy of sustainable development talks about, you know, the protection of, you know, the Outstanding Universal Value, but at the same time, looking into the aspects of, you know, the community benefits. And this road which is passing through this site is also contributing to issues of sustainable development. So we should also look at that aspect. Otherwise the Policy of sustainable development will be a document which will be in vain in terms of the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. So from this point of view, the State Party of Zambia is very convinced that there is no need to put this site on the List of endangered properties.

I submit, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the distinguished Representative of Qatar, followed by Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Yes. Thank you, Mr Chair.

We observed that the UK Government has demonstrated a strong commitment to the conservation and enhancement of this property so far. However, the proposed A303 Road Improvement Scheme has been a point of contention, primarily due to concerns about its impact on the site's OUV. We acknowledge the extensive efforts made by the UK State Party to address these concerns, including the recent design adjustment, which aimed to mitigate the potential adverse effects on the property. The introduction of cantilevered edges and an additional green bridge are commendable steps towards reducing the visual and physical impact of the road scheme.

It's important to recognise, Mr Chair, that the proposed design developments offer enhanced mitigation measures that aim to preserve the integrity of the property. We feel it's a positive stride towards balancing developmental needs with heritage conservation.

Considering the State Party's proactive measures and ongoing dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies, it reflects a genuine commitment to safeguarding the site's OUV. Therefore, the Delegation of Qatar supports the intervention and points made by the distinguished Delegations of Kenya and other States Parties.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to be followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

[Inaudible] ...work of the United Kingdom State Party in their sustained effort towards finding a solution to mitigate the adverse impact of the A303 highway on the integrity of the Stonehenge heritage site.

This situation can be classified as a clash between archaeology and the environment. The State Party has submitted a proposed development which should reinstate the natural environment across the entire site once the highway is removed. The assurance is given that the design of the tunnel was generated following extensive invasive and non-invasive investigations and site mapping. Furthermore, archaeological finds should immediately trigger work stoppage. All of this is not without compromise, especially at the western end of the proposed tunnel, where course, topography and human interactions dictates its length, route and location.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is satisfied that the UK State Party has maintained dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies throughout this process and will continue to do so. We nevertheless urge the State Party to submit the outstanding documents and designs to the World Heritage Committee before December 31st, 2024.

In conclusion, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is of the opinion that placing Stonehenge on the World Heritage List in Danger is not warranted at this time. We therefore support the amendment as presented by Kenya.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

May I request Zambia to please make your name plate horizontal.

I give the floor to the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Republic of Korea understands that Stonehenge showcases the development of architectural culture and that any irreversible change needs to be taken seriously. We take note of the UK's efforts in participatory conservation through cooperation and partnership. We recognize that the State Party has deliberated several various options for

the protection of the site over the past 30 years. While the new road plan contributes to the protection of Stonehenge, it also raises various concerns.

We would like to reiterate our statements from yesterday that the World Heritage Committee and the inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger is not to punish the States Parties for their shortcomings, but rather a way to protect World Heritage and mobilize support. Dialogue is the most important means to that end. While both the Advisory Body and the State Party are committed to the protection of Stonehenge, it is unfortunate that they have very different views on the new road. The Republic of Korea calls for the continuation of dialogue between the State Party and the Advisory Body. While the UK and the Advisory Body are in conversation, we could further wait to make the decision to inscribe the site on the List of danger. The Committee can evaluate the progress at the 47th session and request that the due date of the SOC not be delayed from February to December 2025.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Bulgaria, followed by Mexico.

La Délégation de la Bulgarie :

Merci, Monsieur le Président.

En comprenant les inquiétudes exprimées par l'ICOMOS concernant l'intégrité du lieu, nous aimerions rappeler quelques faits.

Comme cela a été déjà souligné à plusieurs reprises, au cours des 30 dernières années, l'État partie a examiné environ 50 options différentes pour le schéma de route, et tout cela était en réponse aux recommandations du Comité. Et l'option actuelle, car même aujourd'hui a le soutien de l'Agence nationale du patrimoine culturel et des principales ONGs travaillant dans le domaine du patrimoine culturel. Ceci est dû en grande partie au fait que cette option est la plus favorable en ce qui concerne les structures archéologiques. Tout d'abord, le tracé du projet proposé est pratiquement identique à celui de la route A303, dont les vestiges culturels en place ont été déjà étudiés ou partiellement perturbés pendant la construction de la route. Malgré cela, le projet d'investissement prévoit des recherches archéologiques approfondies dans la servitude.

En ce qui concerne le monument lui-même et l'endommagement de ses attributs, les vibrations associées à la construction, à exploitation, et le bruit sont les plus menaçants. Tous ces aspects ont été analysés en détail dans plusieurs documents, et l'étude d'impact réalisée ne suscite aucune inquiétude. Une analyse systématique et détaillée de la nappe phréatique et des risques qui y sont associés, a également été réalisé sur la base des facteurs de risque répertoriés. Une surveillance continue des indicateurs est également prévue, ce qui permettra de prendre des mesures en temps utile si nécessaire.

Je vous remercie de votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Such iconic monuments that are greatly covered and well-known across the world are always controversial. Think back to what happened a few years ago, when we were discussing the building of the high-speed railway in the vicinity of Sagrada Familia in Barcelona.

Now, from what we get from what the State Party is saying, there will be no impact on the structure of the monument, no significant alteration and no significant impact on the foundations of the monument or on the surrounding landscape. A detailed survey, a detailed environmental impact assessment conducted with conservation experts has been conducted, and for the last 13 years, the State Party has been implementing the recommendations of the consultative bodies and the World Heritage Centre, conducting the relevant consultations. Now, these major infrastructure projects always lead to questions and cause difficulties when they are close to such properties.

We agree with the recommendation of Kenya and others, namely, that we should give the State Party, the United Kingdom, a little more time to go on working on the issue and submit the best possible project to help build this piece of infrastructure with the support, as has been the case up until now, by the Centre and consultative bodies.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Since all the Committee States Parties have spoken. I see that Ukraine has raised its plate. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you very much.

So, we see that the State Party tries to reduce the consequences of road construction, understand the existing archaeological risks, and conducts the necessary research. These are positive factors for the preservation of the object in the existing condition. We believe that the object should not be included in the List of the World Heritage in Danger.

At the same time, it is important that the country to conduct monitoring missions and constant interaction with the competent authorities.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I will now give the floor to the State Party of the UK to respond to the queries posed. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

Thank you, Chair.

Over 50 options, including surface roads to the north and south of the property, have been thoroughly explored over the years. The scheme has been revised and amended, including the tunnel being lengthened in response to recommendations in order to reach consensus over the vast majority of the design. At the western portal, we have fully explored the recommendations for bored tunnel and cut-and-cover extension, which would have significant impact on the transport infrastructure on the edge outside of the property, meaning these are not considered feasible. We responded to the 45 COM request for corrective measures to the adverse visual impacts and connectivity by proposing an additional green bridge and cantilevered sides to further hide the view of the road, seeking to find a middle ground. The proposed scheme means the 0.7 kilometres of open road is below the sight line in a cutting, and only visible right by the edge of the 25 square-kilometre site. It will not in any way be visible to visitors to the Stonehenge Circle, 1.4 kilometres away. This cut and partial cover option is the best available to address the adverse impacts of the existing road on this iconic site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now invite the Secretariat to give its views.

The Secretariat:

It will be first ICOMOS, if I may.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

ICOMOS would like to make a number of clarifications in response to the interventions made by the members of the Committee.

Firstly, ICOMOS emphasises that this component of the property is not a ring of stones. This component of the property is a large area which includes barrows, archaeological sites and the interrelationship between them. And so if the Committee is to make a well-informed decision, it's important to understand that the proposed A303 infrastructure involves a very substantial cut, not into the setting of the component, but into the component itself. It is not a correct understanding of the project to say that it will have no significant effect on the monument, it involves cutting out part of the monument.

ICOMOS is concerned to clarify, in case there was a misunderstanding of the earlier remarks, that it is true that physical work has not commenced within the property, but it is also true that, explicitly, contrary to the request of the Committee at its last session, preparatory works have in fact commenced in the vicinity, and the State Party has acted to proceed with the project by letting the construction contract.

ICOMOS therefore just wishes to clarify with respect to the intervention of the Honourable Delegate from Korea, that if the matter before the Committee were to be deferred for one more year, it is very likely, consequent on decisions of the UK courts, that the physical damage that is of great concern to the Advisory Body and the Secretariat would, in fact have occurred by the time of the 47th session of the Committee.

And finally, with respect to the intervention from the Honourable Delegate from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, it's actually not proposed to reinstate, and I think I'm quoting "the natural environment across the entire site". Firstly, this is a largely cultural constructed environment and it's not some reconstruction of natural areas. And secondly, notwithstanding what's proposed, already we've agreed at the eastern end that there will be a substantial physical intervention and ingress into the property of a four-lane motorway, and at the western end there will be, in fact 950 metres, not 700, of four-lane motorway through the property, albeit with two bridges of 100 metres and 150 metres respectively.

So, insofar as the Committee is informed by the advice that has been provided, the Committee should not have any misunderstanding and should clearly focus on the fact that this proposal involves a substantial permanent adverse intervention, and it is the clear technical advice of ICOMOS that it would permanently adversely affect the integrity of the property and therefore its Outstanding Universal Value.

Thank you. Chair.

The Secretariat:

If I may add, just to reply to the Delegations, that I invite to continue the dialogue between the Advisory Bodies, the Secretariat and the State Party, which, of course, both the Advisory Bodies and the State and the Secretariat always remain available. But it will be important to give guidance on what this dialogue would, what the topic of this dialogue would be, because to, also, to add on what my colleague from ICOMOS said, that when the next session of the Committee starts, works normally should have started pending the decision of the court. If the State Party has informed the Advisory Bodies, has informed the Secretariat, has informed the Committee, you just heard, that this is the best available outcome. So, it's important that in its decision, the Committee gives guidance to the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies what the further consultations that you are inviting. What would be the subject of those further consultations?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Let's proceed then.

I will now invite you to adopt draft Decision **46 COM 7B.18** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci M. le Président,

Nous avons effectivement reçu un amendement soumis par le Kenya concernant Stonehenge, Avebury et les sites associés.

Amendement qui débute avec le, considérant le paragraphe 2, en ajoutant des références à des réunions statutaires précédentes.

Plus loin, au paragraphe 5, « Note que le projet d'amélioration de la route A303, ci-après dénommé le projet. » À ce titre, je fais une petite parenthèse pour m'adresser au Délégué du Liban qui avait émis quelques soucis avec la traduction du terme « design » qu'il avait proposé par « projet ». Nous avons consciemment traduit « design » par « conception » dans cette traduction française, puisque le mot « projet » est traduit en anglais par « scheme » qui est utilisé plusieurs fois dans le projet de décision. Parenthèse refermée. « Ci-après dénommé le projet à Stonehenge, composante du bien estimé à 1.7 millions de livres sterling ». Un peu plus loin dans le paragraphe « et que, comme l'indique le rapport sur l'état de conservation du bien soumis par l'État partie en 2024, la conception peut être améliorée après l'attribution des DCO, et note également l'autorisation de faire appel à cette décision a également été accordée ».

Paragraphe suivant, « Note », et avec la suppression de la première partie du paragraphe, « que les travaux préparatoires à proximité du bien ont commencé et que l'État partie a soumis un ensemble de mesures correctives au Centre du patrimoine mondial avant le 31 janvier 2024 dans le rapport de l'État partie sur l'état de conservation du bien de 2024 qui comprennent la modification du projet pour répondre aux impacts négatifs indiqués dans les recommandations de la mission de conseil ».

Paragraphe suivant, « Prend note du fait que l'État partie a pris en compte plus de 50 options différentes pour le projet au cours des 30 dernières années, avec des amendements et des modifications pour répondre aux

recommandations du Comité et qu'il a le soutien de l'Agence nationale pour le patrimoine et d'ONGs de premier plan dans le domaine du patrimoine ». C'est une proposition d'insertion de nouveau paragraphe.

Paragraphe suivant, qui devient le paragraphe 8, « Reconnaît l'engagement de l'État partie » à la place de « l'intention déclarée ».

Fin de paragraphe, « lesquels représentent un ensemble de mesures correctives pour modifier le projet ».

Paragraphe suivant, remplacer « exprime son profond regret » par « note que les modifications de conception proposées ne changent pas le projet, en pleine conformité avec les recommandations de la mission de Conseil de 2022, mais reconnaît que les modifications de conception proposées permettent de mieux atténuer les impacts sur l'intégrité du bien ».

Insertion d'un paragraphe 10, « Encourage l'État partie à continuer d'explorer d'autres options qui pourraient réduire plus avant », on remplacera par « réduire davantage », « les impacts négatifs sur le portail ouest ».

Paragraphe suivant, « considérant ces précédentes demandes » à la place de « réitère », suppression de « réitère également » et du terme « avis cohérent », du terme « cohérent ».

En fin de paragraphe, « note que les informations soumises par l'État partie selon lesquelles une extension du tunnel en tranchée couverte ne réduirait pas l'étendue des ressources archéologiques devant être retirées, puisque les infrastructures requises pour l'option de tranchée couverte nécessiteraient des fouilles archéologiques plus étendues que dans l'option proposée par l'État partie ».

Paragraphe suivant, « note en outre », avec la suppression « conserve encore des tronçons » au lieu « d'importants tronçons », et suppression de la deuxième moitié du paragraphe.

Insertion d'un nouveau paragraphe 13, « Note également que le projet proposé aurait un impact positif important sur la VUE du bien, comme l'a reconnu la mission de conseil de 2022 et offre une solution pour répondre aux impacts négatifs de la route A303 existante ».

Paragraphe suivant, remplace « des sites » par « ayant considéré la possibilité d'inscrire Stonehenge et les sites associés, reconnaît que les modifications de conception proposées permettent une meilleure atténuation des impacts sur l'intégrité du bien et que les impacts du tronçon ouvert de 0.7 kilomètres au portail ouest ne constituent pas un péril suffisamment avéré ou potentiel qui justifierait l'inclusion sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril ».

Suppression du paragraphe suivant, « demande en outre ».

Insertion d'un nouveau paragraphe, « Note que le projet avec les modifications de conception proposées représente la solution la plus faisable pour l'État partie eu égard à l'impact de la route A303 sur le bien ». On rajoutera « route A303 » dans la version anglaise pour une meilleure compréhension.

Et enfin, le dernier paragraphe, « Demande enfin à l'État partie de soumettre au Centre du patrimoine mondial, d'ici le 1^{er} décembre 2025 pour examen à sa 48^e session ».

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We will now go paragraph by paragraph.

Para 1. Are there any objections? I see none.

Para 2. Are there any observations or objections to para 2? I see none.

Para 3 and para 4. Are there any objections?

Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

I'm sorry, Chair, I have another version of Kenya's proposal, which is not the one which is here. It was the previous version. I'm sorry.

The Chairperson:

Paras 3 and 4. Is there any objection? I see none.

Para 5.

Lebanon. Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

What does it mean, costed at 1.7 million? We don't care about what, how much it costs. I mean, what's important is the effect on heritage. May it, even if it costs 5 million, we don't, we are not concerned with this money or how many Sterling. Please, we should remove this. We never, in any decision of the Committee, we said this cost 2 million, 5 million, 1 million, 2 million. It does not exist. What's important is the effect on heritage. Please, we should.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I sense the spirit. And that's the spirit of the World Heritage Convention. That it's not the cost, but the intent. And Lebanon wants it to be deleted. Kenya, can you live with that?

The Delegation of Kenya:

Must oblige.

The Chairperson:

Okay. Kenya agrees to that. We go on. Yes. Kenya has agreed. And that as outlined.

So, is there any objection to para 5 as it appears now? I see no objection.

Go to para 6.

I have seen an intervention. The Secretariat requests an intervention for para 6. The Secretariat has the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

On behalf of the Secretariat and ICOMOS, we are mindful of the views expressed by the members of the Committee. But in the interests of the decision being factual and accurate, we would highlight that the 45th session of the Committee made some very explicit decisions about the minimum requirements, and while it is obviously a matter for the Committee to accept the design or not, the fact is that the current 2024 design does not deliver the corrective measures that were explicitly stated in the 45th session decision, and the Committee may seek to adjust that accordingly.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

You have heard the Secretariat say that the latest report does not reflect in principle, the decision taken in the 45th session, and the Committee may like to adjust it.

Can you help us with a text with which the Secretariat would be comfortable? I know you have given an original which has been cancelled, but now you have chosen to intervene on the amendment. So, I can refer to you or I can refer to the Rapporteur. Or you can speak to the Rapporteur and the Rapporteur can make the correction.

Or Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I think that the problem is relates to this paragraph that says, "Modifying the scheme to reflect the Committee's decision, as informed by the recommendation of 2022 advisory mission". If you remove just this paragraph, I mean, "modifying the scheme to reflect the Committee decision". If we just remove, sorry, "to reflect the Committee's decision as informed by the recommendation of the mission". This will work. I mean, "submitted a set of corrective measures to address the adverse impact set out in the advisory mission". Yeah, but it's not, I mean, the problem here is that the State Party says that it reflects the Committee decision, and the Secretariat says it does not reflect. So if we remove this. The State Party has presented a report. This report says it is addressing the adverse impact, but we don't know if it's. If we just remove this phrase, "modify the scheme to reflect the Committee's decision as informed by the recommendation". It will work.

The Chairperson:

Okay, so you correct. The Secretariat, with the Lebanese suggestion, does this appear factually correct?

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I think the last part of the sentence in blue, it's actually repeating a bit of the same because, let me go to English, "informed by the recommendation of the 2022 advisory mission", or "to address the adverse impacts set out in the advisory mission recommendations". Seems a bit of the same. So, if we delete it in one place, perhaps it would be more consistent to delete it also in the other place.

The Chairperson:

Okay, so just delete the last part.

Also subject to the approval of Kenya. After listening to the deliberations, Kenya, is it acceptable to you?

The Delegation of Kenya:

Yes, Mr Chairman, thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Kenya.

Yes. Just to be grammatically correct, I mean, yes, you have got that right.

Mr Lazare, you want to take the floor?

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Yes. No, Chairperson. I thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I just want to clarify and then probably to inform all the Committee members that, what we are trying to do with the draft decision, as you have been asking us, as the Secretariat, is to follow up on your previous decisions. And also to provide you with the best recommendations and advice that you want when you are requesting for advisory missions. So we mobilize experts, the best experts, to study with you the situation and provide you the advice, and we bring the reports to the Committee, and you take some decisions.

So, in this paragraph we would like just to avoid that it doesn't read well, in the sense that you are contradicting your own decision you have taken last year requesting the State Party to halt until the Committee has reviewed comprehensive information package. And that's the reason why we have put this. And I think now it reads in a different way, but it's okay. What is important is that it can sound better when it's read.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any objections to para 6? How it appears now? I see none.

Go on, para 7, "Takes note that the State Party has considered over 50 different options for the scheme over the last 30 years, with amendments and modifications to respond to recommendations by the Committee, and has the support of the National Heritage Agency and major heritage NGOs".

I have an inclination of what Lebanon will say, but you have the floor, sir.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

I'm sorry, Chair. First of all, we should remove "to respond to recommendation by the Committee". Since the Committee decision that was taken last year is not respected. And then I'm sorry, but the support of major heritage NGOs, we know that other major heritage NGOs do not support the project. So, let's remove "and major heritage NGOs". It has the support of the National Heritage Agency, okay. But major heritage NGOs, some of them are with, some of them are against.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So now the para is "Takes note that the State Party has considered over 50 different options for the scheme over the last 30 years, with amendments and modifications, and has support of the National Heritage Agency".

Kenya, is it okay for you?

The Delegation of Kenya:

The point is, comes out clearly. So, we are happy with that.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any further comments on para 7? I see none.

We go to para 8. The word "stated intention" has been replaced by "commitment", and the line has been added at the end, which "constitute a set of corrective measures to modify the schemes", which means the Committee is, as a whole, is authenticating these measures. Would the Committee want to be associated with this statement?

Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Mr Chairman, in paragraph 5, we say that the design can be refined. In paragraph 5, we say that permission to appeal was given. So we cannot, we as the Committee, say that the proposed adjustments constitute a set of corrective measures to modify the scheme that are in direct response to Committee decisions. We can say that it is better, we can say whatever you want, but we cannot. If we say that the design can be refined, as it is said in paragraph 5, and if we say that permission to appeal was given, which means that it's open to modification. So, it's better not to be so affirmative. Let's be less affirmative. Let's remove "which constitute a set of corrective measures to modify the scheme". It would be better.

The Chairperson:

I yield to the experience of Lebanon.

Please remove it.

And I go back to my dear friend from Kenya. And is it okay with him?

The Delegation of Kenya:

Must oblige, Chairman. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

We go to para 9, "Notes that the proposed design developments do not modify the scheme in full accordance with the recommendations". Notes. I repeat, "notes that the proposed design developments do not modify the scheme in full accordance with the recommendations of the 2022 advisory mission and its Decision **45 COM 7B.62**, in particular, regarding the western end of the Stonehenge components of the property but recognises that the proposed design developments offer enhanced mitigation of the impacts on the integrity of the property".

Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Yes, Mr President. In paragraph 10, we are saying that we encourage the State Party to continue to explore whether there are any further options to further reduce the adverse impact of the western portal. So maybe all the, I mean, we recognise that the proposed design development in paragraph 9 offers enhanced mitigation of the impacts. And then we say, let's look and explore any further options. I think that we should remove totally paragraph 9 and keep paragraph 10. In that case, things are clearer in order not to be.

The Chairperson:

Okay. So, Lebanon seeks deletion of para 9 in lieu of what's mentioned in para 10.

Kenya, please let me know your expert views.

The Delegation of Kenya:

I think for consistency, the Honourable Delegate, His Excellency from Lebanon is correct. We would have to go with him with his suggestion.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Para 10, "Encourages the State Party to continue to explore whether there are any further options to further reduce the adverse impact of the Western portal". Okay. I guess, are there any objections to the deletion of para 9? The earlier para 9? I see none.

The next, the new para 9, "encourages the State Party", are there any objections to this para? I see none.

We go to the new para 10. Kenya's suggestion, "In view of its previous request that the State Party should not proceed with the A303 route upgrade for the section between Amesbury and Berwick Down in its current, further modified form, and its previous advice that the minimum change required includes an extension of the underground section of the western approach in tunnel and/or cut-and-cover at least to the western boundary of the property, with the western portal relocated as far to the west as reasonably practical, thereby reducing the length of the cut-and-cover section and minimising the extent of archaeological resources which must be removed". "Notes the information provided by the State Party that an extension of the tunnel in cut-and-cover would not minimise the extent of archaeological resources, which must be removed as the infrastructure required for the cut-and-cover option would require a greater area of archaeological excavation than the State Party's proposed option".

Yes, Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

I'm sorry, Mr Chair. I think this discussion about the extent of archaeological resources, is it better, bigger or smaller, etc. all this should be removed. Maybe we say, "with the western portal relocated as far to the western to the west as reasonably practical". Stop there and we remove all the rest, which is the, I mean, the extent of archaeological excavation is related to the project that we want in order to preserve, to best preserve the OUV of the property. Doing archaeological research is not bad. I mean, you can do a lot of archaeological research. You can have a lot of archaeological resources needed, which is okay. I mean, it's not a problem.

The Chairperson:

Okay. Kenya?

I request the editors to please strike out what Lebanon is saying. Delete, please. Yes. Thank you.

Kenya, I would like to know your views.

The Delegation of Kenya:

I'm here to check if the sentence will still remain intact. If it does, then we are happy with the amendment.

The Chairperson:

You can read it. It's on the screen.

Kenya, is it okay now for you?

Can someone check for its grammatical correctness? The Rapporteur, you have the floor.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Peut-on proposer la décision commençant par « Note eu égard aux précédentes demandes selon lesquelles l'État partie ne doit pas procéder à l'amélioration du tracé ». Donc remplacer le « réitère » initial de la décision par « note ».

The Chairperson:

"Notes in view of its previous requests that the State Party should not proceed with the A303 route upgrade for the section between Amesbury and Berwick Down in its current, further modified form, and its previous advice that the minimum change required includes an extension of the underground section of the western approach", in brackets "in tunnel and/or cut-and-cover" bracket closed "at least to the western boundary of the property, with the western portal relocated as far to the west as reasonably practicable". That's it.

Kenya.

The Delegation of Kenya:

It reads well, Chairman. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any objections to this para 10 as it appears? I see none.

We go down to para 11, "Further notes that the current scheme, as modified in January 2024, still retains dual carriageway sections exposed in cuttings, particularly those at the western end of the Stonehenge component of the property".

The Secretariat would like to take the floor. You have it.

The Secretariat:

Sorry, Chairperson, it is on the next paragraph because now the numbering has changed.

The Chairperson:

So, noted.

Are there any objections to this new para 11, how it stands on the screen? I see none.

Let's proceed to the new para 12, "Also notes that the proposed scheme would have a significant positive impact on the OUV of the property, as acknowledged by the 2022 advisory mission, and provide a solution to the acknowledged adverse impacts of the existing A303 road".

The Secretariat, you have the floor, but Lebanon has asked. Lebanon, you have the floor first.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Just wanted, I just wanted to say, the Secretariat and the, let's say the draft decision says that the project will have a negative impact. Now we are saying it has it will have a positive impact. Let's not take any position there. I mean, let's leave the discussion open, because we said that the project could be better transformed, that we say that the State Party can further find other options. Let's not say neither that the project has negative impact or positive impact. Let's remove totally this 12 and then go to the 13 and try to find an agreement on the 13. But let's remove it completely because, I mean, it's in contradiction with a lot of things.

The Chairperson:

The Secretariat, now that the para has been deleted.

Kenya, are you okay with this deletion?

The Delegation of Kenya:

I think it agrees very well with what we've been pursuing so far and opening channels for modifications.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Lebanon has been the guiding light in these discussions. I have never had the pleasure to be to your beautiful country, but seeing, you know, I always love Lebanese food, but Lebanese wisdom is now guiding us. So I'm so impressed by the experience and the guiding light of Lebanon. ^[applause]

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Mr Chair. We would like to invite you to Lebanon.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much.

This is the beauty of the World Heritage Convention. It not only helps you win and get properties inscribed, but also an international check on it, but also helps you win friends and helps you win the hearts of people. And that is so important in today's world. If we can win the hearts of our friends, I think that itself is a great step forward.

We go to para 12, Kenya's suggestion. "Having considered whether to inscribe Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites", blah blah blah blah "on the List". Okay. "Recognizes that the proposed design developments offer enhanced mitigation of the impacts on the integrity of the property, and that the impacts of the proposed open 0.7 kilometre cutting at the western portal do not constitute sufficient ascertained or potential danger to warrant inclusion on the List of World Heritage in Danger". If I'm not mistaken, I had heard the Secretariat or ICOMOS mentioned that, you know, 0.7 kilometres is 700 metres. It's not 700 metres, but it's 950 metres. If I'm not mistaken, I had heard that.

The Secretariat, could you clarify on this amendment?

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

The correct answer is 950 metres because that is the length of the cutting. It is true that the cutting does have two bridges which would, in plan form, reduce, looking straight down from above, the visible area of the four-lane highway to 0.7 kilometres. But if the reference is to the cutting, what it should correctly say is 950 metres.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. We are now on para 12.

Qatar, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

Juste, après bien avoir écouté l'ICOMOS et cette explication, si vous nous permettez, M. le Président, de demander à l'État partie de nous clarifier sur la clarification d'ICOMOS pour qu'on puisse bien comprendre mieux la situation et la raison derrière cette proposition, bien évidemment, et l'explication d'ICOMOS.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I will now like, as requested, I would like to give the floor to the State Party to answer the specific question. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

Thank you, Chair.

The clarity is over the word "open". So, it's 950 metres, as ICOMOS stated, but we've included the word "open" in "open cutting". So, with the two bridges there is only 750 open. Sorry, sorry 700 metres of open cutting remaining.

The Chairperson:

So, the word "0.7 kilometres" is correct? The UK?

The Observer Delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

Of open cutting. The original text was correct.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, we thank you so much for that suggestion, Qatar.

ICOMOS, after listening to the explanation by the State Party, they have used the word "proposed open cutting". And I think you have also mentioned the same. Now 0.7 kilometres would seem right.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

ICOMOS doesn't press the point. ICOMOS was simply answering the technical question. It's not material to the substance of the paragraph.

Thank you. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Yes, but the question was on numeric values and you, and we wanted specific answers. And I'm thankful to the Ambassador of Qatar for having understood it, and thankful to the State Party of UK to have answered it very specifically.

Now the para, how it stands, para 12. Are there any objections to the Kenyan amendment?

Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Mr Chair, we opened the possibility of negotiation and discussion between the State Party and the Advisory Bodies in order to better answer the demands or the proposals of the Committee. Et cetera, et cetera. We are speaking about 700 metres. It's nothing. I mean, it's a small detail if we take into consideration the length of the whole site. Maybe, let's don't consider neither inscription or non-inscription. Maybe, let's only say well, as the State Party, in consultation with the with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Body to prepare a state of conservation with the new project for the next Committee session. I think this is the best, better solution we can find. Neither say that, well, we have to inscribe it on the List in Danger, nor say no, no, no we don't inscribe it. Let's leave the things open for the negotiations between now and next year. Mainly, mainly that permission to appeal was given, which means that the project will not start before the appeal decision is given. So, it will probably be delayed for 2026 so we can at that time see what happens. This is what I would like to say.

The Chairperson:

We are now dealing with a specific text of the para. The specific text. I just want to.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

I just propose to remove completely this paragraph, paragraph 12, remove it completely. And replace paragraph 12 and modify paragraph 13. Sorry.

The Chairperson:

We will take one step at a time. Para 12 has been recommended for deletion by Lebanon.

Kenya, I would like to know your views. Are you in concurrence with Lebanon?

The Delegation of Lebanon:

There is consistency again. Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Kenya.

Are there any further objections on the delay? Any objections on the deletion of para 12 as it stands on the screen? Kenya has said for consistency. Kenya agrees to it.

Qatar, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Qatar :

M. le Président, excusez-moi de reprendre la parole encore une fois.

Juste après, bien évidemment, bien analysé et bien écouté, et avec tous mes respects, les explications de toutes les délégations précédentes, l'ICOMOS et l'État partie, moi, je préférerai bien sûr garder la paragraphe 12 comme édité et proposé par Kenya. Je pense que ce paragraphe 12 clarifie vraiment la situation, et donne bien sûr, de façon très efficace, avec des informations utiles de continuation avec l'État partie de dialoguer aussi avec le, avec tous les partis, notamment le Secrétariat et l'Advisory Body. Juste une proposition, s'il est possible.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Qatar.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Thank you, Mr Chair, I agree with the Ambassador of Qatar. We prefer to keep this paragraph, and he explained very well why we should keep it.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

But Kenya has agreed with Lebanon to have it deleted.

Qatar.

La Délégation du Qatar :

M. le Président, on est dans un Comité vraiment avec une atmosphère très positive, constructive, que vous guidez, ce Comité. C'est pour ça, Qatar a demandé si les autres États membres peuvent nous rejoindre sur notre proposition de garder l'amendement du Kenya, et si notre collègue du Kenya est d'accord, bien évidemment, on va aller de, garder la proposition de Kenya.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I echo with the Distinguished Ambassador of Qatar and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, that I think we need to keep this paragraph. And because I think we would like to perhaps, we would like to hear more clarification from the State Party about this issue, the possible impact of the proposed design development. What kind of impact does the proposed design development could have on this property?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

So, you want to hear from the State Party what kind of impact the proposed design would have on the property?

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes, indeed. We'd like to hear more further clarification on this point.

The Chairperson:

Okay.

Lebanon, you have raised your plate. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon / La Délégation du Liban :

Oui. Excusez-moi, M. le Président.

Mais si on reconnaît dans ce paragraphe, que les modifications de conception proposées permettent une meilleure atténuation des impacts sur l'intégrité du bien, "recognize that the proposed design development offer enhanced mitigation of the impact of the integrity of the property".

Why did we ask in paragraph 6, I think or 5, the State Party to further modify the proposal and find better proposals? I mean, there is a contradiction here. Either we remove the other paragraph, or we change this paragraph. I mean, there's something, we should be coherent.

The Chairperson:

We'll go back to the paragraph 5, please, that has been referred to.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

I don't know which number it is. It's blue. It's paragraph in blue which was proposed by.

The Chairperson:

The modifications? "Takes note", it's para 7, "takes note that the State Party has considered over 50 different options for the scheme".

The Delegation of Lebanon:

No, it's not this one. No, it's not this one.

The Chairperson:

Can the Rapporteur help us?

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Yes. Encouraging. Paragraph 9.

The Chairperson:

Okay. Paragraph 9, "Encourages the State Party to continue to explore whether there are any further options to further reduce the adverse impact of the western portal". Now that the Distinguished Representative of Lebanon says that this contradicts the, this forms the rationale why he proposed to cancel the para 12. If I'm not mistaken.

I see India has raised the plate. India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I was only trying to find a sort of a midway solution to this para 12 that we are stuck at. But, you know, now that we have, we are reading 9 again, perhaps, perhaps we may have to reframe, but if we could go back to para 12, which we were discussing, this one, I think we would also align ourselves with Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Japan that we keep it, but we partially keep it. In a sense that the first part of it, wherein it says, you know, "having considered whether to describe", I think that bit could be deleted, and we could start with "recognizes that the proposed design developments offer enhanced mitigation of the impacts", and, you know, it can continue, well, it can continue till the end. But now that we have to read it in conjunction with paragraph 9, I think we would have to study it once again. And I would also want to see what follows thereafter, because it seems quite a few of these paras are interlinked with each other, as the Distinguished Delegate from the Lebanon has pointed out. So, but we could keep partially and remove the first part of it.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

All these amendments are already present on the blue form that has been emailed by the Rapporteur. So, I request State Parties to open their laptops, log in to the system and access the amendments and scroll up and down whichever paras they wish to choose.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Yes, I think that we should keep paragraph 9 as it is. And I would agree with the proposal just coming from India on para 12, to remove the beginning of 12. But I think we should keep 9.

The Chairperson:

Okay. Lebanon, you have the floor. So now para 12 as suggested would be "recognizes", this is because of the para 9, "that the proposed design developments offer enhanced mitigation" and so and so.

Now my question is: Qatar would you be okay with that?

La Délégation du Qatar :

Oui, M. le Président. Ça nous convient, donc avec la proposition de l'Inde et Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Qatar.

Japan, would you be okay with it?

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Kenya, would you be okay with it?

The Delegation of Kenya:

I'm looking at 12 and 9. And proposing that for 12 to stand on two feet, 9 should actually go. The proposal.

The Chairperson:

The 9 is always standing. Let's not go into the past right now. But I know 12 will stand on its two feet, because that's why the suggestion has been made by India and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Qatar and Japan are supporting it. It says, "Recognizing that the proposed design developments offer enhanced mitigation". Para 9 was "explore further options". Para 12 says "Recognizing that the proposed design offers enhanced mitigation" and they do not constitute sufficient ascertained or potential danger to warrant inclusion, because the intention of the Member States right now appears not to have it included in the List of World Heritage in Danger. So there has to be some form of a justification.

In lieu of that, Kenya, can you live with how it appears now on the screen?

The Delegation of Kenya:

I now, I now understand the connection.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

Rapporteur, would you like to fine-tune the language or it's okay?

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Pas de modification textuelle, simplement peut-être préciser que le paragraphe 9 qui a été accordé par le Comité, « incite à pousser à d'autres options » tandis que, comme vous l'avez dit, le paragraphe que nous considérons actuellement reconnaît que c'est déjà une amélioration, ce qui n'est pas spécifiquement contradictoire avec ce qui a déjà été adopté.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, are there any further objections to para 12? I see none.

Let's go to para 13. Kenya has requested a cancellation of that para that refers to the DSOCR. Are there any objections to the deletion of the old para 13?

And the new para 13, "Notes that the scheme, with the proposed design developments, provides the most feasible solution for the State Party to the impact of the A303 road on the integrity of the property". I mean, after all this, do we really require para 13?

Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Sorry, Mr Chair, if we say in paragraph 9 that the State Party would try to find better solutions, we cannot say here that this is the best, better, best solution. So, remove also paragraph 13 and we keep the paragraph 14 as amended by Kenya.

The Chairperson:

All right Kenya, is it okay with you?

We are towards the end of the, to adopting it and giving my sister the Ambassador of UK a very happy evening.

Are you okay with this Kenya.

The Delegation of Kenya:

I would have preferred to keep number 13.

The Chairperson:

Okay. But do you agree with this? We know your preference. But you are, you know, we are reaching towards the end, and it is ultimately para 14, what you want. And Lebanon has said that they're okay with it. So can you, are you okay with the deletion request by Lebanon so that we can move on to para 14? It's going to be 7:00, so I will have to adjourn the meeting for tomorrow. Please let me know, Kenya.

Qatar.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Juste pour vous confirmer qu'on est perdus. On ne sait pas de quel paragraphe on parle, 13 qui était proposé et supprimé par Kenya ? Ou on est au 13, nouveau paragraphe 13 ? C'est juste une question. Où on est ?

The Chairperson:

Thank you for that question.

The old para 13 which was struck out, there is no objection to the Kenyan proposal to strike out, which appears in the red colour.

The new para 13, which appears in the blue colour, Lebanon has said that they would they want it deleted. But Kenya has said that they would prefer it would remain. So, I'm trying to appeal to Kenya that, Lebanon has also said that they are okay with para 14 and after going through all the paras up to 12, we are on the verge of completion, hit the hammer, clap and go.

But because of that, now we are stuck at 13 and it is past 7:00. So, I may have to adjourn the meeting and take this item up tomorrow. So, is it possible that the Lebanese suggestion, for sake of consensus, be accepted, is my humble request? That's what I am looking at. The colour blue. Do you accept the Lebanese proposal to delete it?

Kenya.

The Delegation of Kenya:

The main advantage of keeping number 13 is that it is very properly aligned with 12. But that was my thought.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

I think it is perhaps better to delete this paragraph simply from the point of view that in para 14 we are asking for an updated state of conservation report. So since we are asking for an updated report, which will be discussed in 2026, as we can see it, it allows us an opportunity to go back and see whether that, you know, that is the most feasible solution. So perhaps, yes, it should be. We would also think it can be deleted.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Kenya, you have listened to the rationale from a State Party. Would you be okay with its deletion after listening to the clarification?

The Delegation of Kenya:

After second consideration, since we have number 9 and number 12, and as explained by India, I think we will have an opportunity to review how best it has worked because we have also offered room for modifications to get the best outcome possible.

The Chairperson:

So do you? Are you in a position to accept the Lebanese suggestion to delete para 13? So, all right. Thank you.

Lebanon, you have raised your plate and kept it back again. Okay.

Any further objections to para 13? I see none.

We go to para 14. Finally, "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1st December 2025, an updated report on the state of conservation of the property and the implementation of the above for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session". Are there any objections to this? I see none.

Let's go back to the entire paras. Is there any objection to adoption of this decision as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 7B.18** adopted as amended [gavel].

Congratulations UK and congratulations to everyone else. [applause]

I would now ask whether any Observer State Delegation would like to express themselves about this property. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

We welcome the Committee's decision, and we would like to sincerely thank Committee members for their time, attention and consideration you have given to this item. In particular, we thank the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Kenya for their support in submitting this amendment. We care passionately about the UK's heritage, especially our iconic World Heritage sites. It has been a long and complex process, rightly so for a project of this size and a site of this importance, in order to arrive at the current proposed scheme. The scheme will transform the site, restoring peace and tranquillity, bringing back the dark night skies, reconnecting the site and giving the stones and landscape the respect and setting that a World Heritage site deserves. We would like to recognise the extraordinary amount of time and effort from a huge number of people that have contributed to developing this solution, including the World Heritage Committee, World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies. The UK will continue to be committed to open dialogue and a collaborative process, with the importance of heritage at its heart. The UK will also continue to engage with the Open-ended Working Group and remains committed to supporting the value and spirit of this important Convention.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Let's proceed then.

Dear colleagues,

We have now reached the end of our afternoon session. We will resume at 10:00 am tomorrow morning the examination of the remaining reports under Agenda Item 7A, state of conservation reports of properties listed, inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Once this is concluded, we will resume the examination of Item 7B. The Secretariat will shortly circulate a revised calendar for their examination. I also remind all Bureau members of our fourth meeting at 9:30 am tomorrow in the Summit Room at level 2. Thank you.

And now I give the floor to the Secretariat to make an announcement.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson. What I wanted to say after such a passionate debate is that we have three side events, and we really apologize because they were planned earlier, but they will start immediately after the closure, the adjournment of this session.

The first side event is co-organised by UNESCO, World Heritage Centre and the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage. And this event is also supported by the Governments of Australia and Canada, and it is entitled The World Heritage Convention and Demonstration of Free, Prior and Informed Consent. And it will take place in room MR6 from 7:15 pm.

And the second side event is organized by the Category 2 Centre, Wildlife Institute of India, and it is entitled World Heritage Related C2C Under the Auspices of UNESCO: Prospects and Opportunities. And this side event is taking place in room MR19 or also starting from 7:15 pm.

And lastly, the third side event of this late evening is co-organized by ICCROM, the Swiss Federal Office of the Environment, IUCN, ICOMOS and UNESCO, and it is entitled Better Management of Our World Heritage: How to Use the Enhancing Our Heritage Toolkit 2.0. And this side event is taking place in the ABS Space Room, MR17, also starting immediately, at 7:15 pm.

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

This meeting is adjourned till tomorrow. Have a nice evening.

The meeting rose at 7:09 pm // La séance a été levée à 19h09.

FOURTH DAY
Thursday, 25 July 2024
SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING
10:18 am – 1:16 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

QUATRIÈME JOUR
Jeudi 25 juillet 2024
SEPTIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h18 – 13h16
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues, *Namaste*.

Before we resume our session, I would like to inform you of the outcomes of the fourth meeting of the Bureau. The Bureau recommends that the session starts this morning with the examining of the three following state of conservation reports for consideration under Item 7A, for which a request to open for discussion was received on Tuesday, 7A.4, Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, Ukraine; 7A.5. L'viv – The Ensemble of the Historic Centre, Ukraine; 7A.6. The Historic Centre of Odesa, Ukraine.

We will then resume the examination of the state of conservation presented under Item 7B according to the updated calendar circulated to you yesterday evening by the Secretariat. If you all agree, we will proceed this way.

Regarding Item 8B on nominations of the World Heritage, to the World Heritage List, the Secretariat will circulate shortly this morning a calendar of examination of the nomination under consideration, which accommodates the numerous requests received from State Parties.

I also wish to recall that the Budget Working Group will start today, from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm in the Bureau meeting room under the chairpersonship of Miss Chiara Franco of Italy. Thank you very much.

We will now proceed with 7A Culture, Europe and North America. I now would like to open our examination of the following three state of conservation reports.

I'm sorry, the Secretariat just informs me that the Host Country would like to make some announcement, some housekeeping announcements regarding technical issues. You have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving India the floor. And a very good morning to all the delegates.

There are two very small announcements.

One, I would like to inform all the delegates, the Distinguished Delegates in this room, that yesterday's issue that we faced regarding the Wi-Fi has now been resolved. However, as per a precautionary measure on every table, there have been 1 or 2 LAN cables that have been provided. We have been informed by our technical experts who's looking after the Wi-Fi, that as much as possible that we should use these LAN cables because here the net connection is very very fast, and then remaining can use the Wi-Fi services as they have been indicated earlier. So, it is my urgent request. And in case anybody needs a connector to connect the Wi-Fi with their laptops, those connectors are already available with our teams and they will be very happy to provide you. So that is one.

And second is I would also like to inform the August gathering here that we have an app called UPI One World. And I think this has been circulated and it has been put on everyone's table. Those who would be interested to download, we would encourage them to do so. And the Government of India has already decided that anybody who would be downloading this app for the purpose of shopping, purchases, etc., that a token sum of rupees 2,000 will be pre-installed in that, and therefore it will encourage the delegates to use the money. We don't, because in India now we hardly use the physical money and that all the transactions are digital.

Thank you very much Chair.

7A. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF THE PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER (Ct'd) // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL EN PÉRIL (suite)

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (Ct'd) // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD (suite)

The Chairperson:

Thank you. We'll now open our examination of the three following state of conservation reports: 46.COM/7A.4, Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, Ukraine; 46.COM/7A.5, L'viv – The Ensemble of the Historic Centre, Ukraine; 46 COM7A.6, The Historic Centre of Odesa, Ukraine.

As you may recall, on Tuesday we received a request from a member of the Committee to open these three items for discussions. Consultations have been conducted over the past two days with all Committee members in order to reach a consensus. I would like to express my thanks to ADG Culture Mr Ernesto Ottone and to the World Heritage Secretariat for trying their best to reach a consensus in which we were trying to accommodate both the amendments that we had received. However, even such a balanced view was, we couldn't arrive at a consensus, and this was a pretty unfortunate thing. But this is how things stand, that a consensus was not reached.

I am therefore requesting the Secretariat to put on the screen the text of these three draft decisions as they are proposed for adoption.

7A.4 Kyiv: Saint-Sophia Cathedral and Related Monastic Buildings, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra (Ukraine) // Kyiv : Cathédrale Sainte-Sophie et ensemble des bâtiments monastiques et Laure de Kyiv-Petchersk (Ukraine)

The Chairperson:

Kazakhstan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Distinguished Chair, dear fellow members of the Committee. *Namaste*.

Please let me briefly inform you once again of the rationale behind our amendment. The first SOC reports on the three discussed properties as part of the List of danger were reviewed during the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee last year in Riyadh. All the decisions consensually taken by the Committee ten months ago, namely **45 COM 7B.59** and **45 COM 7B.60**, continuously used the agreed language. Moreover, it was the same language that was proposed in the draft decisions for these dossiers by the Advisory Bodies. However, we were genuinely surprised to find out that the language of the current draft decisions on the same matters has been changed without any evident reasoning or expert assessment from the appropriate bodies.

Dear colleagues,

We all understand the current geopolitical situation and the tragic realities in some parts of the world, including in the state of Ukraine.

The Chairperson:

Please, there is a point of order. Please hold. From Belgium.

Belgium, please cite the rule of procedure and the precise point of order.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes. Good morning, everyone. Thank you, Mr Chair.

Indeed. We would like. As you explained, there is no consensus on this. We just would like to suspend the debate. And that's why we interrupted the Distinguished Delegate of Kazakhstan and call for a roll call vote by Rule 40.3 of the Rules of Procedure. And we also regret, of course, that we did not have a consensus. We also would like to thank you, Mr Chair, for your efforts. We know also, together with ADG and the Director, that there were many consultations, and we always prefer a consensus. But now that we are in this position, we believe that debating this item indeed is no longer useful. And that's why we call for this vote.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Okay. I will, I will. The point of order is that you want to interrupt the Delegate and call for a vote while he is delivering his statement. So, I'll have to refer to. We'll just put a pause to evaluate your request.

I have been informed that that does not constitute a point of order. It is a procedural motion which you will, you can raise your plate and mention it when you get the turn. Kazakhstan, may you kindly continue.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Thank you, Chair.

I would also like to commend the work of the ADG and the Secretariat for trying to find a consensus.

As I mentioned, we all understand the current geopolitical situation and the tragic realities in some parts of the world, including in the State Party of Ukraine.

At the same time, it is the belief of many in this room that the work of the World Heritage Committee should remain expertise-based and as least politicised as possible. The UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council have more relevant competencies on judging the nature of armed conflicts in and between the UN Member States, and they do exercise their obligation to do so.

As equal members of this Committee, we believe that we should all strictly comply with its mandate and impartially follow the standing Rules of Procedure and the *Operational Guidelines* of our Convention. In taking this position, our Delegation stands for the interests of this Committee, and it does not matter, it does not matter for us which State Party introduces a proposal. The new wording proposed in the original draft decision, if adopted, would create a precedent enabling any State Party to demand naming another State Party in a situation of conflict. Indeed, this new wording does not practically help to protect the concerned heritage in danger, which is the main goal of our Convention. I would repeat: by adopting this new wording, we change little on the ground in terms of providing real protection for the heritage concerned, but set a precedent with quite unpredictable consequences for any part of the world.

In this regard, it is proposed to introduce amendments which change the paragraph 3 of the draft Decisions **46 COM 7A.4** and **46 COM 7A.5** and **46 COM 7A.6**, which are identical, as you can see on the screen, with only one technical correction that it should be, in English, "the war prevailing in Ukraine". But that was a mistake in sending a file. In case there is no consensus on our amendment, we propose holding a vote on it and we propose it to be held by secret ballot.

I thank you for your attention, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

So, we, as I asked earlier, also to have a vote on this. We obviously agree on this. However, we.

The Chairperson:

No. No, I would like to interrupt you. What you mentioned earlier was a point of order. So, with regards to the point of order, we have already said that that did not constitute a point of order. So, what you mentioned there does not, cannot be considered. And that is why we have given you the floor, because you are second in the list and you may now make your statement, or you may also request a procedural thing as per your wish. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

So, what we would prefer actually is to have the roll call vote on this matter, because this is a public issue. The war in Ukraine has now, the illegal war of aggression from the Russian Federation, has now been lasting, it's in its third year, so everybody knows the position of every country on this issue. This has also been, in many multilateral organizations already decided upon. There have been numerous decisions by the competent bodies in the UN, including the General Assembly. So, we don't see the point of having a secret vote on this. This is in public interest. This is policy of countries. This is not, we are not voting for a person or against a person. We are expressing positions of our countries in a public forum, and that's why we would prefer a public vote, and more precisely, the roll call vote I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Would anyone else?

Kenya, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

We propose that the vote be done through a secret ballot.

The Chairperson:

We have two countries now that have called for a vote by secret ballot.

As advised by the Legal Advisor.

Yes, Kazakhstan, what is the point you're making?

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Probably it's the same one, hopefully, that the Legal Advisor would refer to. Is that. Excuse me. It's Rule 41 that we would like to refer to, that a decision shall be voted by secret ballot whenever two or more States members shall so request, if the Chairperson so decides. So, we have a request of two members of this Committee, and it's up to you, Mr Chair, to decide.

The Chairperson:

No, that is, "or if the Chairperson so decides", but that "or" part, that it's upon the Chairperson to decide or not to decide. Right. Right now, we have only one country has asked for a secret ballot and the other country has supported it. Now, I have seen some more countries that have raised their plates.

So, the Legal Advisor has advised me that I should listen to some more countries as well. I do not, it's not my desire at this stage to impose my position.

So, I will now give the floor to Bulgaria, followed by the Distinguished Representative of Greece. Bulgaria, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Bulgaria supports Belgium's proposal for a roll call and a public vote. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Bulgaria.

Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Chair.

Same position. We think that in particular for these kinds of issues, roll call votes are needed. Secret vote is much more linked when we decide over persons, not over issues. That's why Greece supports the roll call vote.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Roll call. Thank you, Greece.

I now give the floor to Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We support the Belgian proposal on roll call vote. Our best hope is to seek consensus. But if the voting is unavoidable, we think that the best, a roll call vote on this matter is the best way possible.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Japan.

I give the floor to Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Zambia is going for a secret ballot.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I give the floor to Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

First of all, we would like to express our regret for the lack of consensus and the fact that the vote was called, despite all the efforts. And we would like to support a vote by roll call.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Jamaica.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to support a vote by secret ballot.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Jamaica.

Any other Member State would like to take the floor? Türkiye, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Türkiye would also like to support a secret vote.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Any other Member State would like to take the floor? Because we have five supporting this by roll call.

Yes, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

We would go by secret ballot.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Excuse me, Mr Chair, but I don't know what we are doing.

There is a very clear rule. Rule 41, that says a decision shall be voted on by secret ballot whenever two or more State members shall so request, or if the Chairperson so decides. We have seen more than two persons asking for secret ballot, so we are forced to go to secret ballot. Why are we losing time? You know, secret ballot is something

that takes a lot of time. If we have to vote for the three draft resolutions on secret ballot, it's going to take the whole day. So, let's start immediately. Because, I mean, we're not. We're losing time. I'm sorry.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Legal Advisor would like to respond to the point raised on Rules of Procedure 41 by the Distinguished Representative of Lebanon.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, the Rules of Procedure are as follows. The applicable rules of procedure are Rule 40 and Rule 41 with regard to the conduct of the vote. Although I should take, I should underline that at this stage, Mr Chair, you had asked for comments from States, and my understanding is that you had, for the time being, opened the debate. While States have focused their comments on the way in which the ballot should be conducted, you had asked for comments from the States members of the Committee on the item in general, you have not yet moved to the examination of the decision, properly speaking, nor opened the vote in any manner whatsoever.

Mr Chair, Rule 40 says that voting shall normally be by a show of hands. But Rule 40, at paragraph 3, says that "a vote by a roll call shall also be taken if it is requested by not less than two States members before the voting has taken place, takes place". Rule 41 on secret ballot states that "the decision shall be voted on by secret ballot whenever two or more States members shall so request, or if the chairperson so decides". End of quote.

Mr Chair, with your permission, and without wishing to take too much of your time, I would like to mention the same rules in the French language, since they are not exactly the same. Rule 40 in French reads as follows. I am reading in French: « Les scrutins ont lieu normalement à main levée ». Rule 40, paragraphe 3 reads in French, « En outre, le scrutin par appel nominal est de plein droit si il est demandé par deux États membres du Comité au moins avant le début de l'opération ». Article 41 on secret ballot reads as follows, « Le vote a lieu au scrutin secret chaque fois que la demande en est faite par deux États membres du Comité au moins ou si le Président en décide ainsi ».

Mr Chair, in the current situation, my understanding is that two States, at least two States, actually more than two States have asked for a secret ballot, but also two States and more than two States have asked for a roll call. This is the reason why.

The Chairperson:

Yes. I will interrupt you.

Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Mr Legal Advisor, it seems the Legal Advisor has not been in the Committee. This is probably his first Committee. All the experiences we had in the Committee since 2001, each time we have two or more that are asking for roll call and two or more are asking for secret ballot, always in the Committee the secret ballot prevails. This has been the experience since 2001, and if the Legal Advisor doesn't know the rules of the Committee, let him ask the previous one. The previous people that were there in the Committee. I'm sorry, we were losing time because, I mean, it's not possible. Ask the Legal Advisor that was there since 2001. He will tell you. I mean, this is the rule. This is how what happened. I mean, it prevails when the secret ballot is asked by two or more, it prevails. I'm sorry to say this. I would have preferred that we finish easily and that we finish on time. But this is the rule.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much for your guidance. We were looking for this guidance since a long time.

The Legal Advisor, you have the floor.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

I thank the Distinguished Delegate from Lebanon for his comments. I would like to point out that this is not my first Committee, and I have more than 25 years of experience in public international law.

Mr Chair, in response to the request of, to the question of the Distinguished Delegate of Lebanon, I should point out that the situation has not happened that often in this Committee. The last time, to my knowledge that it has happened, is at the 37th session. At that point in time, there was a request for a vote by secret ballot and a request,

competing request, for a vote by roll call. On that occasion, Mr Chair, the Committee decided to take a vote to decide which way to proceed, whether to proceed on the secret ballot or on the roll call.

Let me give my legal advice in addition to that. Mr Chair, the Rules of Procedure, Rule 40 and Rule 41 contain, and this is the reason why I read them in both languages, Mr Chair, the Rule 40 and Rule 41 do not set a clear precedent between a request of roll call and a request for secret ballot. For the request of roll call, it says that it shall be taken by roll call if it is requested by not more, by not less than two States members. I should point out that the French is even stronger in that regard, in that it says that « le scrutin par appel nominal est de plein droit si il est demandé par deux États ». Rule 41 says that the decision shall be voted on by secret ballot whenever two or more States shall so request. Rule 41 in French says, « le vote a lieu au scrutin secret chaque fois que la demande en est faite par deux États membres du Comité au moins ».

In those circumstances, Mr Chair, the precedent I can relay to is that the Committee, given the ambiguity of the norms, has decided to make a decision and in faced with two competing requests, has decided to decide itself how to proceed. And this is fully in line with the principle that a Body is always master of its own procedure.

Thank you very much, Mr Chair, for giving me the floor.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Distinguished Representative of Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Mr Chair, to intervene again.

What I'm saying is the Legal Advisor doesn't follow very well what happens in the Committee. It's not true that the last one was in 2013, in Cambodia. The last one? The last session where there have been a competing vote between a roll call and a secret vote, was in 2017 in Krakow, and in that case, the Legal Advisor that was existing, that was there in Krakow, said that the secret vote prevails, that if we have two or more that ask for a roll call, and if you have two or more that ask for secret vote, the secret vote prevails. And there are, there were several members of the Committee that said, well, the Committee should vote, should decide, and the Legal Advisors say no, the rule is very clear. Go back to the 2017 case in Krakow, you will see that this is what happened.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

As of now we have Kazakhstan, Kenya, Zambia, Jamaica, Türkiye, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Lebanon that have supported a call for a secret ballot. We had.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

To impose a secret ballot.

The Chairperson:

Okay. The rules impose a secret ballot as per Rule 41. And we had a similar request by five Member States that had wanted a vote by roll call. At this point in time, seeing the mood of the house, I will rule in favour of the secret ballot. The Secretariat may kindly make the arrangements.

Before the vote begins, as per Rule 42.1, the Chairperson shall appoint two tellers from amongst the Delegations of the members of the Committee to scrutinise the votes called, the cast. I presume that Mexico and Zambia have volunteered to send the two tellers. You will be giving us their names. And I invite both of them to please come up on the stage.

Türkiye, I see you have raised your plate.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Mr Chair, I was just wondering if you would clarify what it is we're actually voting for. Because there are two amendments. So, when we actually vote, are we voting yes or no for the Kazakhstan amendment, which is paragraph 3? Or are we voting also for all the amendments, including paragraph 5, which is the Ukrainian amendment? Because I think that those who would be voting for the Kazakhstan amendment would probably not also accept the fifth paragraph amendment by Ukraine either. So, it's not a question of whether you want to leave it in the original format or accept the amendments, there should be two votes because there are two separate amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Yes, there will be two votes. First will be for the Kazakhstan amendment. The second will be for the Ukraine amendment.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you very much for clarifying.

The Chairperson:

And thank you very much for asking such, one of the most important questions. Thank you.

Members of the Committee,

We are in the process of starting.

I would like to give the floor to the Secretariat to explain to us the procedures for the conduct of a vote by secret ballot. Mr Eloundou Assomo, you have the floor, please.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I just want to explain the counting of the votes. So, allow me to recall Rule 42.2, which is on the counting of the vote, of the Rules of Procedure. When the counting of the votes is completed and the tellers have reported to the Chairperson, he shall announce the results of the ballot, bearing in mind that the voting will be recorded as follows. From the total number of members of the Committee will be deducted the number of members absent, if any, the number of blank ballot papers, if any, the number of invalid ballot papers, if any. The remaining number will constitute the number of votes recorded.

I also wish to recall the voting arrangements for the conduct of the secret ballot. Each member of the Committee will be given an envelope and a ballot paper, and I think it's being done. Two tellers from among the Delegations of the Committee members who can be physically present, need to be appointed by the Chairperson with the assistance of the Secretariat. I think this has been done. The two tellers, together with members of the Secretariat, shall be present during the voting and counting of the ballots. The conduct of the board will be in accordance with Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure.

Mr Chairperson, I would like to recall, of course, that Zambia and Mexico have kindly volunteered to serve as tellers during this session.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

As the voting process is on, Senegal, you may not take the floor at this point in time. May you kindly lower it?

Thank you.

The Delegation of Senegal:

Chair, so it's a question related to the vote itself. So.

The Chairperson:

No.

The Delegation of Senegal:

It's just a precision I'm asking. So. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

No. As of now, please lower your plate. You want to raise a point of order? Then we will evaluate it from a point of order. Otherwise, and if you want to express your happiness for the tremendous achievement of yesterday, then of course. But after the voting is over. Thank you.

I will request the Secretariat to kindly recall the question, the point on which the voting is happening at this point in time.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The voting is taking place on the following question: Are you in favour of the amendment proposed by Kazakhstan in paragraph 3 of the draft Decision **46 COM 7A.4**?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

And I request the tellers to please come up. I will request the Secretariat to take the names of the country one by one. So, they come up and cast your vote.

Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I will call the members of the Committee by alphabetical order. Argentina. Followed by Belgium. Followed by Bulgaria. Followed by Greece. Followed by India. Followed by Italy. I now call Jamaica. Followed by Japan. Followed by Kazakhstan. Followed by Kenya. Now I call Lebanon. Followed by Mexico. Followed by Qatar. Followed by Republic of Korea. Now I call Rwanda. Now I call Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Followed by Senegal. Followed by Türkiye. Followed by Ukraine. Followed by Viet Nam. And last, Zambia.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

As a result of the voting by secret ballot, which has taken place earlier on today. The results are as follows:

Number of Committee members present and voting: 21.

Number of Committee members absent: 0.

Number of blank ballot papers: 5.

Number of invalid ballot papers: 2.

Votes in favour: 6.

Votes not in favour: 8.

Majority required: 8.

Therefore, the amendment is rejected. *[applause]*

I see there are no representatives wanting to take the floor at this point in time, thank you very much.

We now go to the next amendment.

I now give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to guide us through the second vote.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

I will now read the question which will have to vote as it is in the screen: Are you in favour of the amendment proposed by Ukraine in paragraph 5 of draft Decision **46 COM 7A.4**? Thank you. Okay.

I will now invite Committee members to vote. I will call by alphabetical order. Argentina. Followed by Belgium. Followed by Bulgaria. Followed by Greece. Followed by India. Let me now call Italy. Followed by Jamaica. Followed by Japan. Followed by Kazakhstan. Followed by Kenya. Followed by Lebanon. Followed by Mexico. Now I call Qatar. Followed by Republic of Korea. Followed by Rwanda. Followed by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Followed by Senegal. Followed by Türkiye. Followed by Ukraine. Followed by Viet Nam. And last Zambia.

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

As a result of the voting by secret ballot, which has taken place earlier today, the results are as follows.

Number of Committee members present and voting: 21.

Number of Committee members absent: 0.

Number of blank ballot papers: 6.

Number of invalid ballot papers: 1.

Votes in favour: 8.

Votes not in favour: 6.

Simple majority required: 8.

Therefore, the amendment is adopted. [gavel] [applause]

I see no representatives are taking the floor. Thank you very much.

Now, can I have the draft decisions reflecting the results of the voting on the screen, please? So that the decision can be adopted as a whole. Can I have it on the screen, please? Yes. The Kazakhstan amendment will be removed. Just revert to the original.

The Ukrainian amendment will be accepted.

Mr Rapporteur, is it okay?

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

C'est conforme, c'est conforme.

The Chairperson:

Okay, now, now we are going to accept this draft decision as a whole.

Mr Rapporteur, would you like to intervene again?

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

La version telle que votée est la suivante. Paragraphe 3, « Déploire l'invasion massive de l'Ukraine par la Fédération de Russie et les pertes de vies humaines ». Ensuite paragraphe 5, « en appel à la Fédération de Russie de s'abstenir de toute action ».

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Is it matching both in the English and French versions? Okay, we are now going to adopt this decision as a whole. I see no objection.

This decision is adopted. [gavel]

Now, regarding the remaining two dossiers, may I request, because the mood of the Member States.

I see Ukraine has raised its plate. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Dear Chairman, dear colleagues, Excellencies,

The World Heritage Convention aims to protect valuable cultural sites during peace and war. Therefore, it is essential to use its mechanisms to address the damage caused by conflicts. One effective method is to list endangered cultural heritage sites into the World Heritage List in Danger. When the Committee decides to add an object to the list, it has to clearly state the reasons behind it, and this clear approach should particularly apply to the war related threats. Therefore, we appreciate the exact and clear wordings on the decision texts.

Our goal is to protect cultural heritage as a part of our political agenda, ensuring future generations reach it undestroyed. We insist on being explicit about threats, as diplomatic and neutral wordings have proven ineffective in preventing destructions. Explicit language helps highlight the nature of threats, no matter if the damage is caused by direct attacks or indirect impacts towards the cultural heritage.

Dear Chairman,

Yesterday and today morning we all witness how the heavy rain is falling to the beautiful land of India due to monsoon. It is the third year in a row we are witnessing the missiles falling to the beautiful land of Ukraine due to Russian Federation. So, Dear Chairman and Committee, let me express my deep gratitude to those members who are brave enough to call things in their own names.

Thank you.

7A.5 L'viv – the Ensemble of the Historic Centre (Ukraine) // Lviv – ensemble du centre historique (Ukraine)

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

As stated that there are three dossiers. You have seen the mood of the Committee members for 46.COM/7A.4. We are really very short of time and the voting process takes a lot of time.

May I request the Kazakhstan Delegation? Yes, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Yes. Mr Chair, in the interests of this Committee and our joint work, we understand the mood of the house, so we withdraw our amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Kazakhstan, for. ^[applause] Thank you.

And we have also seen the mood of the House with regards to the amendments of Ukraine, which the House has accepted. May we take that the Ukrainian amendment will be accepted for both these two draft decisions? Unless there are any objections? I see none.

So, the Ukrainian amendments will be accepted.

And we now go to. We now go to these draft decisions to adopt them individually.

Draft Decision **46 COM 7A.5**, L'viv – the Ensemble of the Historic Centre, Ukraine.

Mr Rapporteur, can you see if it is correct?

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, Monsieur le Président.

Si on prend en compte le retrait de l'amendement kazakh, il ne reste plus que le paragraphe 5 avec l'amendement soumis par l'Ukraine, qui est exactement le même que pour le précédent dossier, « en appel à la Fédération de Russie de s'abstenir de toute action susceptible et afin qu'elle remplisse ses obligations en vertu du droit international ».

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Is there any objection to this draft decision being adopted as a whole? I see none.

This decision is adopted as amended. ^[gave!]

7A.6 The Historic Centre of Odesa (Ukraine) // Le centre historique d'Odesa (Ukraine)

The Chairperson:

We now go to draft Decision **46 COM 7A.6**.

Mr Rapporteur, can you guide us? If the text is ok?

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, Monsieur le Président.

Les mêmes commentaires que pour les précédents dossiers. C'est conforme.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any objection to this draft decision being adopted as a whole? **46 COM 7A.6**, The Historic Centre of Odesa, Ukraine. I see no objection. The draft decision is adopted as amended. ^[gavel]

We will now proceed to the next Agenda Item, but before I do so, there were some comments made against the Legal Advisor, and it's fair that I give him ... Sorry. I see. I'm sorry.

The Russian Federation would like to take the floor as an Observer State Party. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the Russian Federation:

^[interpretation from Russian] Thank you, thank you, Mr Chairman. The decision that has been adopted is null and void. It contains confrontational politicized vocabulary, unacceptable offensive allusions to regarding the Russian Federation that is beyond the scope of the Convention. It leads to escalation. The Committee overstepped its mandate. It claims to have attributive functions. And the Decision goes beyond the fundamental provisions of the Convention. The key threat to the properties come from the Kyiv regime. The Kyiv-Pechersk monastery is one of the most ancient Christian properties. The local community, which for centuries has been persecuted, the monks are removed from management of the property and there is attempted violence on them. Why are some delegates not speaking out in favour of the monastic community of Ukraine? This is a biased approach because the Western countries, which have supported this, are not seeking to preserve the cultural traditions but are seeking purely political results. The result is the deplorable. We are in situations which go well beyond the limit of the Convention.

What we are talking about is the neutrality of the Secretariat. Instead of seeking to strictly apply the Rules of Procedure of the Committee, the Secretariat is governed by the principle whereby all are equal, but some are more equal than others.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

As I mentioned before, a Distinguished Delegate had given his opinion, and comments were made on the Legal Advisor. So, it's fair that I give the floor to the Legal Advisor to respond to the question, to the comments. Mr Legal Advisor, you have the floor.

The Legal Advisor:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, I have requested the floor after the end of your examination of these draft decisions insofar as a member of the Committee earlier made, during the discussions, an inaccurate account of the prior practice of the Committee, and I want to be sure to set the record straight for future reference.

Mr Chair,

My earlier legal advice has been that the rules of procedure do not set a clear precedent between a roll call and a secret ballot, and in this regard I have read the relevant rules in English and French. I also pointed out that the situation has not arisen frequently in the past, and I did mention the precedent of the 37th session, in which, faced with competing requests for roll call and secret ballot, it was the Committee that made the decision on the way to proceed on the advice of the then Legal Advisor.

A Delegation wrongly indicated that there was a further precedent at the 41st session. However, on that occasion, the Committee was faced with competing requests for secret ballot and vote by show of hands. I repeat, show of hands, not roll call. The then Legal Advisor then understandably advised that in such a situation, the vote by secret ballot takes precedence.

Mr Chair, I stand by the legal advice that was provided by the then Legal Advisor at the 37th session. I stand by the legal advice that was provided by the then Legal Advisor at the 41st session. And I stand by the legal advice that I have provided to the Committee earlier today, which is fully aligned with those two precedents and with the Rules of Procedure of the Committee.

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Thank you, Legal Advisor. I have known you from the past couple of years and earlier. We have always depended on your advice and thank you so much. I assure you that there was no ill intention from any of the Distinguished members of the Committee. In the heat of the moment, Committee members and others, I know, we try to do what is the best for, from our point of view. And while appreciating the experience and the advice and the guidance given

by Committee members, I consider your values, your views and your advice also to be of very importance to me, as it has helped us in the past to find a way out and a way forward. And I continue to cherish your advice.

Thank you. Let's proceed.

7B. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (Ct'd) // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD (suite)

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite the Director of the World Heritage Centre for 7B, Mr Eloundou Assomo, to read the list of the properties located in the region of Europe and North America, for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

So, since we are resuming to 7B, the following list of properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Butrint, Albania;
- Frontiers of the Roman Empire – The Danube Limes (Western Segment), Austria, Germany and Slovakia;
- Fertő Cultural Landscape, Austria, Hungary;
- Le Havre, the City Rebuilt by Auguste Perret, France;
- Paris, Banks of the Seine, France;
- Budapest, including the Banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter and Andrassy Avenue, Hungary;
- Tokaj Wine Region Historic Cultural Landscape, Hungary;
- Archaeological Areas of Pompei, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata, Italy;
- Natural and Culturo-Historical Region of Kotor, Montenegro;
- Centennial Hall in Wrocław, Poland;
- Sanctuary of Bom Jesus do Monte in Braga, Portugal;
- Arslantepe Mount, Türkiye;
- Diyarbakır Fortress and Hevsel Gardens Cultural Landscape, Türkiye;
- Historic Areas of Istanbul, Türkiye; and
- Derwent Valley Mills, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out adopted. ^[gave]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion. I see none. Let's proceed then.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÏBES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

7B, Culture, Latin America and the Caribbean.

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in Latin America and the Caribbean region for which the reports are all proposed for adoption without discussion. You have the floor, sir.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following two properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Sítio Roberto Burle Marx, Brasil;
- Churches of Chiloé, Chile.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out adopted. ^[gave]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion. I see none. Let's proceed then.

AFRICA // AFRIQUE

7B.21 Aksum (Ethiopia) // Axoum (Éthiopie)

The Chairperson:

7B, Culture for Africa, discussion proposed by Lebanon and Kenya, Aksum, Ethiopia. For the next property located in the Africa region two Delegations have requested its discussion. First Lebanon and then Kenya.

Therefore, I would now like to give the floor to the Delegation of Lebanon to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of Aksum, Ethiopia. Lebanon, you have the floor. I repeat, Lebanon, you have the floor. There is no Delegate sitting on the.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

I'm sorry, Mr Chair. I'm trying to find my colleague who is working on this file, and I don't know where she is. I was looking for her. Can we?

The Chairperson:

She's making a 100-metre dash to you right now, you know? Yes. And she's reached. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Chair.

Sorry for this delay. Before the vote will be longer. So, dear Chairperson, dear Distinguished Delegates,

The serial cultural property of Aksum, Ethiopia, in the Tigray region, has been one of the early sites to be inscribed on the List of the World Heritage in 1980, with Criteria (i) and (iv). The ruins of the ancient Aksumite civilization covered a wide area in the Tigray Plateau. The most impressive monuments are the monolithic obelisk, royal tombs and the palace ruins dating to the sixth and the seventh century A.D.

Through decades, the property faced many factors and challenges, among them management, structural stabilization, ground rising water, development, boundaries and interpretation infrastructure. The last reactive mission, monitoring mission of the Advisory Bodies, dating back to 2016, have provided several recommendations.

The episode of armed conflict in the province of Tigray between 2020 and 2022 have raised considerable concern on the condition for the maintenance of authenticity or integrity of the property, and the potential impacts of the conflict on the cultural heritage in Tigray region. Despite the peace treaty signed in November 2022, the exact situation today on the ground remains unclear. The lack of reliable information, latest State Party report accessible is dated 2019. Since the 2024 report has been submitted late and accordingly not processed by the World Heritage Centre.

This contributes to maintain serious concerns on the condition of conservation and management at the World Heritage property, especially when information relayed by the World Heritage Centre refer to significant conservation threats. Our question is for the State Party to kindly clarify the status of the property on its state of conservation.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We have noted the question posed by Lebanon for the State Party to kindly clarify.

I would now like to give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Kenya to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of Aksum, Ethiopia. Excellency, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair, for giving Kenya the floor.

Kenya opened the draft decision on the request of the State Party because we noticed that the draft decision was not in line with the current reality of the state of affairs concerning the property and doesn't reflect what was submitted in March 2024 by the State Party. The draft decision refers to elements that date back to 2019, which was five years ago, and therefore it's not very helpful for the State Party.

Moving forward, the State Party had actually contacted the World Heritage Centre to inform of the delay that they were experiencing because of difficulties accessing the site due to the conflict in northern Ethiopia. And so they missed the 1st February deadline. However, they were able to submit the new SOC report by March, which was a month later. So, based on these elements, we wish to have the draft decision to reflect the current condition of the site.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now invite Mr Muhammad Juma Muhammad, Chief of the Africa Unit of the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, to provide their comments. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee,

The World Heritage Centre received the state of conservation report for the Aksum well beyond the deadline of 1st February 2024 and the cut-off date of 29th February. This is why the Secretariat could not provide comment, I mean, Committee, with up-to-date report of the state of conservation of the property, and it could not incorporate in the latest information of the State Party in time. However, the Secretariat and Advisory Body were and still continue to be in constant dialogue and communication with the State Party to follow up the situation in Aksum, and in this regard, Mr Chair, we are also exchanging and following other sites of Ethiopia, for example, Lalibela, and supported them technically and financially in the action. We will continue accompanying Ethiopia by providing guidance, assistance needed. We are hopeful that the joint World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM monitoring mission can be carried out soon, as soon as possible, which will provide a full picture of the reality to the site, and will formulate targeted recommendations for the effective and sustainable conservation management of property.

As regards the proposed draft, Mr Chairman, as initially presented to the Distinguished Committee members, in the draft, it is important to note that the Committee could simply, I mean, we are simply reiterating concerns raised in the previous decision areas.

Mr Chair, with your permission, ICOMOS would like also to add some additional comments.

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair. Members of the Committee,

ICOMOS will expand on the state of conservation of the property. The concerns on its state of conservation relate first and foremost to its fragile monuments. The stabilization of both the Stela Three and the mausoleum, as well as addressing the rising water table in the Tomb of Brick Arches all remain critical. ICOMOS's technical reviews highlighted the high risk attached to past proposals for the stabilization of Stela Three and recommended further consultation. The Committee requested in Decision **44 COM 7B.3** that the State Party submit all documentation for the proposed interventions to these three structures to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies. It further requested that the State Party only commence with implementation once full agreement on technical details and monitoring protocols have been agreed to. Finalising and submitting the previously requested detailed boundary delineation map for the property and its buffer zone to the World Heritage Centre remains a matter of urgency. The Committee's request for heritage impact assessments on the thematic master plan and structure plan for the City of Aksum remain relevant.

Seeing the range and scale of challenges faced at the property, the draft decision before the Committee includes a repeat of its request to the State Party to develop an action plan, with timelines for the implementation of the recommendation of past mission, recommendations and the previous decisions of the Committee.

A reactive monitoring mission, as recommended in the draft decision before the Committee, would report on the general state of conservation of the property and identify measures needed to ensure the management and protection of its OUV. It will also provide the opportunity to assist the State Party in addressing previous Committee decisions and suggest improvements to the intervention designs for the stabilisation of Stela III, the mausoleum and the Tomb of the Brick Arches. The mission can also assist the State Party in addressing urban control in the buffer zone and wider setting of the property. It is therefore important that this mission is dispatched as soon as possible, and the State Party be requested to not implement any projects in the property until the recommendations of the mission are available.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for this presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments before I invite the Rapporteur. Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you very much, Chair.

First of all, we really appreciate the intense and continuing dialogue between the Centre, the Advisory Body, and the State Party. But we also know that we, as Committee members, rely on documents put before us. We are not part of this dialogue. We sadly cannot visit all World Heritage properties before each session. So, we take decisions based on documents put before us. Therefore, as a general point, so not specifically related to Aksum, but as a general point, we would like to call on all State Parties to submit all relevant information in a timely manner.

But we would also like to ask the Centre and the Advisory Bodies for flexibility in exceptional cases. And maybe this is something that we need to consider when we continue the Open-ended Working Group. We should also start thinking about ways to include the latest information in the decisions we take as a Committee member, because between the 1st of February and the meeting in summer, it's quite a lot of time. It's half a year almost. Things can happen and sometimes it's important to take into account what has happened in the latest weeks and months when we take a decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We recognize the exceptional circumstances faced by Ethiopia and the conservation of the Aksum World Heritage site due to the conflict in Northern Ethiopia. We commend Ethiopia's efforts to overcome these challenges despite the severe access restrictions. We furthermore acknowledge Ethiopia's commitment to addressing issues such as boundary delineation and the impact of conflict and structural stability of significant heritage elements. The proactive steps by Ethiopia demonstrate their dedication to preserving the OUV of the Aksum site. So we are, we believe that the proposed amendment by Kenya is in order.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Rwanda. You have the floor.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président,

L'État partie du Rwanda soutient les efforts fournis par l'Éthiopie quant à l'élaboration du document de l'état de conservation du bien, de même que le plan d'action prévoyant des échéances pour la mise en œuvre des recommandations des missions de 2013 et de 2016 et des décisions antérieures du Comité. Les documents transmis donnent réponse aux inquiétudes manifestées par les organes consultatifs, qui sont la finalisation de la délimitation des frontières et de la cartographie détaillée du bien. Les travaux de gestion et d'entretien à l'intérieur et autour du bien restent de la priorité de l'État partie et de la communauté locale qui vit et pratique la valeur du bien.

L'accord de paix récemment conclu a permis d'assurer la viabilité et la durabilité du bien du patrimoine mondial, à relever les défis posés par les conflits grâce à des interventions appropriées. Des interventions positives pour protéger, améliorer et promouvoir le bien du patrimoine mondial dans l'action, bien entendu, par l'engagement de l'État partie et des communautés ont été sérieusement amorcées.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see that there are no more requests from Committee members.

Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Chair.

We are happy to note that the Italian Funds-in-Trust for the Aksum archaeological site improvement project provided funds for the preparatory studies for the reinstallation of the obelisk and capacity-building for archaeological conservation. Phase 1, covering reinstallation of the obelisk. Phase 2, consolidation of Stele III. The State Party began the Stele III consolidation project and the complete study of Aksum Stelae Field through a self-financing initiative, which was expected to begin implementation before the outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent conflict. All the materials required for the consolidation of Stele III have been imported, according to our understanding, and delivered to Aksum, and they are still on site. Since the implementation of the peace agreement, a new study is under revision and work is about to commence.

The State Party of Zambia also wishes to note that due to the conflict in Northern Ethiopia, the property's assessment had been challenging until the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities and Peace agreement. The agreement helped to ensure the viability and sustainability of the World Heritage property, as well as to address the challenges of the conflict with proper interventions.

The protection, enhancement and promotion of World Heritage property through community engagement cannot be overemphasized. Interventions will have an impact on the safeguarding and protection of World Heritage property and its sustainable conservation.

The report mentions looting of artefacts and goods as well as damage to structures within the property. We understand that the property itself has not suffered damage and remains in its previous status. However, since there have been incidents of looting, the State Party has expressed the need for support from the World Heritage Centre for the restitution of looted artifacts and goods.

The mention of violence against civilians, we believe, is out of context as this assertion exceeds UNESCO's mandate, and we understand that the State Party wishes that to be retracted.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I will now give the floor to the Secretariat.

I cannot see Viet Nam's nameplate. Yes. Viet Nam, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We understand the special situation in the State Party, and we highly appreciate all the efforts made by the State Party to conserve the site. And in that regard, we would like to support the amendments brought to the text.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see there are no further requests, so I'll give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, and then I will ask Mr Muhammad Juma Muhammad and ICOMOS also to answer your questions.

Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je voudrais simplement peut-être clarifier, auprès des membres du Comité, le processus de préparation des rapports. Le travail que le Secrétariat fait est un travail qui est très rigoureux. Nous devons analyser les rapports et préparer les décisions pour vos travaux. Vous nous demandez de le faire. Vous avez fixé des dates butoir. La date butoir pour la réception des rapports d'état de conservation est le 1^{er} février de l'année avant la date du Comité. Et si cette date a été fixée, elle nous permet de recevoir les rapports, de les transmettre à l'ICOMOS, que nous commençons un travail d'analyse. Et les rapports qui arrivent après cette date butoir, il est très difficile quelquefois de les prendre en compte. Je comprends l'intervention de la Belgique qui nous demande de la souplesse, et je peux vous assurer que de la souplesse, nous en avons et nous faisons et nous allons continuer à le faire. C'est juste que vous compreniez que, si nous ne faisons pas ce travail en respect des dates butoir, les documents ne seront pas prêts comme vous le souhaitez. Et nous allons continuer effectivement, à le faire. Et c'est aussi la raison pour laquelle nous insistons et nous vous encourageons vraiment, à tout faire pour nous soumettre les rapports à temps. C'est vrai que certains, il y a des situations très particulières, et ces situations particulières nous, nous les prenons effectivement en compte. Pour le cas de Axoum, je peux juste vous assurer que nous travaillons très étroitement avec l'État partie et nous avons accompagné la situation et le suivi de ce site depuis l'année dernière avec l'État partie et nous allons continuer effectivement à le faire.

Donc je voulais simplement vous dire cela, que ce sont des dates butoirs et je voudrais vraiment vous encourager et encourager tous les États parties à tout faire pour nous fournir les rapports très attendus. Cette année, nous avons reçu à la date butoir 50 % des rapports uniquement. Donc, quand les rapports n'arrivent pas suffisamment tôt, nous avons aussi un peu du mal à vous fournir les analyses et les projets de décision pour votre examen. Voilà.

Merci M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Mr Muhammad Juma Muhammad, and ICOMOS, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I don't have to add anything, but our colleague ICOMOS wanted to add something. With your permission.

The Chairperson:

I have seen a State Party has raised its plate. Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Just to reassure the Director that we are well aware of the enormous amount of work that is before you to process all these SOC reports. And we are well aware also of the limited capacity and believe me, we know that you go to extreme lengths to accommodate this Committee. But still, we feel that latest information could be crucial. And therefore, and again, this probably is something for the Open-ended Working Group, we should look at maybe reinforcing you, maybe looking at ways to make your life easier by working in standard formats or more digitally. I don't know, but I think it's something that we need to look at in the future.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Yesterday, while having dinner with certain members of the Secretariat, I also had the same view that the Distinguished Representative of Belgium has shared. I really appreciate and commend the Secretariat for the hard work they do in preparing this SOC reports. And one of them said that sometimes it's 3,000 pages and, you know, and they have to read all that. And I said it's TBL. And they asked me, what is TBL? And I said, torture by literature. So perhaps we should try to, perhaps if some technology can be incorporated, as very rightly suggested by the Delegate of Belgium, to shorten things up, have a template, who knows. The Open-ended Working Group could look into it. But I completely stand by what the Distinguished Representative of Belgium has said.

Thank you and I now give the floor to ICOMOS to continue.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much, Chair.

ICOMOS has noted the presentations from the various States Parties providing additional information, and it's in this context that we believe that a reactive monitoring mission would be an adequate mechanism. An urgent reactive monitoring mission would be an adequate mechanism to provide further information on the condition of the property and actions to be undertaken.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see that there are no further questions or comments.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.21** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Concernant le site d'Axoum, nous avons effectivement reçu une proposition d'amendement soumise par le Kenya, coécrite par la Zambie.

Débutant avec le paragraphe 3 de la décision, remplaçant « regrette que l'État partie n'ait pas soumis en temps opportun un rapport sur l'état de conservation du bien » par « prend note de la soumission du rapport sur l'état de conservation du bien par l'État partie ».

J'ai également pris en compte que l'État partie du Kenya souhaitait voir souligné dans la décision que le rapport avait été soumis en mars 2024. Je peux donc suggérer au Kenya, s'il souhaite avoir la mention en mars 2024 à la fin du paragraphe 3, s'il souhaite clarifier, clarifier ce fait.

Plus loin, nous avons une proposition de suppression des paragraphes 4 et 5 qui exprimaient à deux reprises des inquiétudes.

Et enfin, à l'ancien paragraphe 7, nous avons la suppression de la mention « dès que les conditions de sécurité le permettront ».

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none. Let's go to the draft decision, para by para.

Are there any objections to the adoption of paras 1 and 2? I see none.

We go to para 3, "takes note of the State Party's submission of the report on the state of conservation of the property in March 2024". Are there any objections to this para 3? I see none.

We go to para 4. Para 4 is cancelled and para 5 is cancelled. The old paras 4 and 5. Are there any objections to the cancellation of old paras 4 and 5?

I see Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Chair, I will recommend to keep the para 4 as a principle of rules, because otherwise everybody will submit on the late, will do a late submission. So, I will recommend to keep it as it is.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Kenya, can you accept that? You have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair.

If we're going to keep it, we want to have, we want to include something if we're keeping it. So "notes with concern that the lack of timely reporting from the State Party due to the conflict in northern Ethiopia until the implementation of the cessation of hostilities and Pretoria Peace Agreement". Really makes it difficult. Instead of "makes it difficult", perhaps "makes it challenging". And then we take out, "given the significant conservation threats it faces". For that one, we are relying on the reactive monitoring mission to give us that kind of verdict.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Lebanon, are you okay with it?

The Delegation of Lebanon:

No objection.

The Chairperson:

Okay.

Mr Rapporteur, is it okay?

Le Rapporteur :

Oui, je simplifierai en français en disant « dans le nord de l'Éthiopie ».

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any objections to this paragraph 4? Please undelete the number 4. Okay. Are there any objections to this paragraph? If we proceed.

I see Rwanda. You have the floor.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci.

Nous voulons que notre pays soit également associé. Merci.

The Chairperson:

Okay. Thank you.

I see there are no further requests.

We go to the next, the old para 5, which has been cancelled. Are there any objections to the cancellation of the old para 5?

Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Chair.

I will suggest another wording for this para, "also note that previous concerns of threats on the property remains, unless resolved, resolution demonstrated by updated information. The submittal of detailed damage assessment of the archaeological and built attributes of the property could allow the better determine the degree of threats."

The Chairperson:

I give the floor to the Rapporteur.

Le Rapporteur :

Puis-je demander aux États parties de parler plus doucement pour les rédacteurs puisse noter dans la forme désirée.

Merci beaucoup.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Also notes that previous concern of threats on the property remains unless resolution demonstrated by updated information. The submittal. The submittal of damage assessment.

Le Président :

Lentement. Lentement.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Of the archaeological and built attributes of the property could allow to better determine the degree of threats the property is facing.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Would "demonstration" be replaced by the word "demonstrated"? Is that right?

Lebanon, you had said the word "demonstrated"?

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Yes. Demonstrated, please.

The Chairperson:

Okay. The Rapporteur, is it okay in both the versions?

The Rapporteur:

It's still work in progress, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Kenya, are you okay with it?

The Delegation of Kenya:

Chair, we have difficulties accepting this paragraph. Sorry.

As we had mentioned, the State Party, in the March 2024 SOC report, added further details, updated information that caters to all that was mentioned in the Riyadh, which is the last Committee session 45 COM decision. And at this point, before, again, before stating in what condition the site finds itself, it would be good to undertake that reactive monitoring mission. And so far, the State Party's current SOC report deals with everything, most items at least, that were mentioned in the last Committee decision. So, we really have difficulties understanding the basis for this particular paragraph. It's difficult to accept. I'm sorry.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Lebanon, they have difficulties in understanding the basis for this paragraph. Would you be kind enough to explain to them the basis so that perhaps they could understand and then take a call? Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you. Chair.

The basis is we don't have access to this report dated March 2024. And I have been asked also the State Party to clarify. So, without this information, we remain on these threats that have not been demonstrated and resolved. So I insist to keep this part.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

At this point in time, I will invite the State Party to kindly clarify, because we need your intervention at this point in time to the queries raised by the Committee members. Ethiopia, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair. Mr Chairperson, Excellencies,

As I am taking the floor for the first time, Excellency, allow me to take this opportunity on behalf of Ethiopia to sincerely thank the Government of India for hosting the 46th World Heritage Committee meeting, and the excellent hospitality accorded to us during our stay here in India.

Excellency,

The reasons behind opening the SOC report on Aksum by the State Party relies on the fact that most of the arguments are based on the State Party's report, dating back to 2019, five years ago. Since then, there have been many changes that need to be considered. Factors affecting the property are now updated, and most of the issues raised in this report have already been addressed by the State Party report submitted in March 2024. And the State Party submitted its report on March, mainly due to the conflict in the Northern Ethiopia and the problem of access to the property. It should be noted, nevertheless, that prior notification of the situation was channelled to the concerned.

During the conflict, no damage is incurred on the property, thanks to both parties, who refrained from military engagement in and in the proximity of the property.

Currently, the conservation work, which was interrupted due to the COVID pandemic and the conflict, is about to commence. Revision of the conservation study made previously is completed. Actual work will start soon.

What should be underlined is that implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities and the Pretoria Peace Agreement helped to ensure the viability and sustainability of the World Heritage property, as well as address the challenges of the conflict with proper intervention.

The Government has also heavily invested in regional reconstruction and provision of services. With these new developments and reopening of the Aksum International Airport, the State Party is inviting a reactive monitoring mission to the property to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the state conservation of the property at an agreeable calendar starting from mid-September 2024.

To conclude, Excellency, Aksum World Heritage property has an effective management plan, an adequate legal framework to ensure that the Outstanding Universal Value is protected as per the World Heritage Convention of 1972.

Ethiopia continues to make significant efforts to managing and conserving the property, guided by the management plan thematic plan and structural plan.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Lebanon, you have heard the State Party clarify. And Kenya, you've heard Lebanon's justification, the basis.

Mr Rapporteur, would you like to take the floor?

The Rapporteur / Le Rapporteur :

Merci.

Je souhaiterai juste proposer un très léger changement mais qui permet de prendre le paragraphe davantage intelligible. Donc « prend également note que les préoccupations subsistent », à moins que « démontrer », virgule, « et que la soumission des évaluations de dommage permettraient de déterminer le degré de menace ». Est-ce que c'est ce que la Délégation du Liban souhaite ?

I would switch in English, "also notes that previous concerns remain unless demonstrated, and that the submittal of damage assessment would allow to better determine the degree of threats".

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Okay.

Kenya, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair.

Sorry. Notes that previous concerns of threats. Perhaps it might be interesting to understand exactly which of the threats we're talking about. Is it the looting? Because as we heard from the State Party, the property is not damaged. There was looting in the surrounding areas, but the property is not damaged. So maybe we need clarification on the threats exactly that we're talking to, then, so that we know what to include here and what to take out.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Lebanon, can you clarify?

The Delegation of Lebanon:

If we don't want to get into the details of the threats and avoid the wording of "looting", I will, mainly, add "the conservation threats" to be specific.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Kenya, I think it's very well worded by Lebanon, it's conservation threats. Is it okay? Can we move? Is it acceptable to you, Kenya?

The Delegation of Kenya:

Okay. Thank you, Chair. Sorry. No, it's a previous. Okay, so perhaps we could say, "Also notes that previous concerns of conservation threats on the property could be assessed through the submittal of" or "could be evaluated through the submittal of damage assessment of the archaeological and built attributes of the property to allow to better determine the condition of the property".

The Chairperson:

Mr Rapporteur, can you please help?

The Rapporteur:

I could read both versions in English. Maybe it will help the Assembly.

"Also notes that previous concerns of conservation threats on the property could be evaluated through the submittal of damage assessment of the archaeological and built attributes of the property to allow to better determine the condition of the property".

"Also notes that previous concerns of conservation threats on the property remain unless resolution demonstrated by updated information and the submittal of damage assessment of the archaeological and built attributes of the property would allow to better determine the degree of threats the property is facing".

The Chairperson:

Can we reduce the number of words which are being repeated, please? Words and phrases to try to concise as much as possible?

Mr Rapporteur, can you help reduce the number of words which are being repeated?

Le Rapporteur :

Effectivement, on peut remplacer plusieurs répétitions dans les deux propositions, notamment sur le mot "property".

The Chairperson:

So, it reads, "Also notes that previous concerns of conservation threats on the property could be evaluated through the submittal of damage assessment of the archaeological and built attributes of the property to allow to better determine the condition of the property" is one aspect. "Remains unless resolution demonstrated by updated information and the submittal". So, the phrase "the submittal of damage assessment of the archaeological and built attributes of the property", that phrase, just put it in brackets, please. Yes, a bracket. Yes. Up to the point where the repetition. Yes. So, the phrase "the submittal of damage assessment of the archaeological and built-up attributes of the property". Yes. This is the phrase which is being repeated. So, remain unless.

So, Lebanon, can you accept what the Kenyan Delegation has suggested? Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Chair.

It can be accepted, but I will add one word, "to determine the current condition of the property". Please.

The Chairperson:

"Better determine the current condition of the property". Okay. The remaining part after the two. I think, yes, just strike them out. Okay. Also notes the previous condition, the previous concerns. All right.

Kenya, is that okay with you? Perfect.

Lebanon is okay. Kenya is okay. Are there any further objections? I see none.

Let's move on to the next para 6. Para 6. Are there any objections to that? Any comments? I see none.

We go to the next para 7, in which the word "as soon as the security situation allows" has been struck out. Are there any objections to this? I see none.

We go to para 8. Are there any objections to para 8 and para 9? I see none.

Can we go to adoption of this entire decision as a whole?

We have seen the amendments. Is there objection for the adoption of this entire decision as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 7B.21** adopted as amended. *[gave]*

Thank you very much. I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property. I see none.

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Let's proceed then.

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Africa region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following three properties for which reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Forts and Castles, Volta, Greater Accra, Central and Western Regions, Ghana;
- Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Nigeria; and
- Stone Town of Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on the state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out adopted. *[gave]*

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion.

I see Ghana? You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Ghana:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Since this is the first time Ghana is taking the floor, we would like to commend the Host Country and UNESCO for co-organizing this session of the World Heritage Committee. We also wish to thank the World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies for all the support they've provided Ghana to effectively manage its World Heritage properties.

Mr Chairman,

It's important to mention that the recommendations of the 2019 and 2020 advisory and reactive monitoring missions have become a matter of national concern. Hence, the President of the Republic of Ghana Resource and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, with \$12 million and a little more to address the emergency conservation issues at the properties and/or also implement their management plan developed for the properties.

Recognizing the international relevance of the forts and castles, and further recalling the Committee's earlier request for increased mobilization of International Committee to support the conservation of Forts and Castles, Ghana intends to work with the World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies to launch an international campaign for the properties as prescribed in the draft decision.

To conclude. Mr Chairman, we assure you that Ghana is committed to implementing the World Heritage Convention and its *Operational Guidelines*.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your comments.

I see that there are no further requests. Let's proceed then.

ARAB STATES // ÉTATS ARABES

7B.29 Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe (Sudan) // Sites archéologiques de l'île de Méroé (Soudan)

The Chairperson:

Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe, Sudan. I now would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Lebanon to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe, Sudan.

Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Chair. Dear Chair, dear Distinguished Delegates,

The cultural property of Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe, inscribed in 2011, a semi-desert landscape between the Nile and Atbara rivers was the heartland of the Kingdom of Kush, a major power from the eighth century BC to the fourth century AD. The property consists of several components the royal city of the Kushite kings at Meroe, the nearby religious site of Naqa, and the Musawwarat es-Sufra. It was the seat of the rulers who occupied Egypt for close to a century and features, among other vestiges, pyramids, temples and domestic buildings, as well as major installations connected to water management.

Since the nomination in 2011 and after reactive monitoring mission in 2019, the very first SOC shared by the State Party was just recently submitted in 2024. Sand dunes and flooding have been identified among the main decay factors. Pressure in claiming land for settlement or farming is increasing and is creating a direct threat in the absence of governance and sufficient protection measures. There are threats of illegal activities. The property is facing several threats and new challenges, with the armed conflict that erupted in April to 2023 and the ensuing instability, which has impacted communities and all sectors of societies, have been estimated as potential threats affecting the management capabilities at the property. Alarming information retrieved from the 2024 SOC, I quote: "Sites surrounded by landmines. Presence of armed forces. Robbery at the Archaeological Missions House in Naqa and evacuation of tourist police prior to combat in the area are reported. Massive displacement of population escaping from war zone resulted in court side visitation posing a threat to monuments like graffiti, falling stone and etc. and increased housing construction within the buffer zone".

In view of all this alarming information, our question is raised to the State Party for clarification on the current situation, in particular for potential risk level evaluation.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Since your question is directed to the State Party and there are no further requests for intervention, I will give the floor to the State Party of Sudan to kindly respond to your query. Sudan, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Sudan:

Thank you. Thank you, Chair, for giving the floor.

And since it's the first time we are taking the floor, I would like first to express my appreciation for India, for the hospitality and generosity shown by hosting this successful session.

Regarding the current situation in Sudan and in the site, and the question raised by the Distinguished Representative of Lebanon, I wish to assert that Sudan has been committed to UNESCO and remained fully engaged in all its activities related to the conservation of World Heritage existing in Sudan in different states of the country and this site.

Furthermore, and based on the continuous liaison and follow-up with the directors of the World Heritage site in Sudan and the relevant National Security Authorities and National Committee for the UNESCO, I wish to inform that Sudan is satisfied with what has been already highlighted in the site management report of the Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe's report that was submitted to the Organization in last February 2024. And to further update the information provided in the report, there is no additional threats in the result of the ongoing situation and circumstances caused by the rebellion through the past 15 months since April 2023, and what has been mentioned or then what has been mentioned in the report.

Chair, the Government of Sudan is exerting huge efforts and tangible efforts to conserve the site and keep it safe and secure, especially in light of this ongoing situation.

Finally, we wish to underscore that the information highlighted in the report, in addition to this intervention, confirm that the Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe in Sudan are safe and protected, and Sudan looks forward with appreciation to the UNESCO invaluable efforts in conserving these sites.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for that clarification.

I will now give the floor to the Secretariat and request you to kindly concise your presentation, because there are no draft amendments to this decision. So, I can straight away go to the draft decision, and we can adopt it and move on to the next decision. But can you quickly summarize it so we can? You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Indeed, the State Party report that was submitted in February 2024 provided information about the situation on the ground in relation to the three component sites of the property, and it also included their efforts, that are being made by the State Party, to ensure protection, monitoring and assessment of its current condition. The State Party has outlined also priority actions needed for adequate conservation of the property.

In the framework of the project, funded by the UNESCO Heritage Emergency Fund, capacity-building on crisis response, damage and risk assessment and mitigation, as well as first aid for Sudan's heritage has been provided, in addition to support to the monitoring of cultural heritage in Sudan.

In addition, UNESCO has been following up closely with the State Party and partners in order to monitor and ensure updated information, as well as coordinate efforts as necessary. The property is facing several threats and new challenges, and hence it has been recommended to closely monitor the situation and to request an updated state of conservation report by 1st February 2025 for examination at the 47th session of the Committee, considering that the urgent conservation needs of this property require a broad mobilisation to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

ICOMOS.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

The Distinguished Delegate from Lebanon has already outlined the conservation issues at the property, so ICOMOS will not add anything at this point in time. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any further comments? I see none. Let's proceed then.

I will now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.29** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he had received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendements concernant ce dossier, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

You have the draft decision in front of you. There are no amendments received. Is there any objection for the adoption of **46 COM 7B.29** as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.29** as adopted. [gavel]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property? I see none. Let us proceed then.

7B.30 Gebel Barkal and the Sites of the Napatan Region (Sudan) // Gebel Barkal et les sites de la région napatéenne (Soudan)

The Chairperson:

The next is Gebel Barkal and the Sites of the Napatan Region, Sudan.

I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Lebanon to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of, excuse me, of Gebel Barkal and the Sites of the Napatan Region, Sudan. Lebanon, I guess your queries will be similar to the last one.

So, I can directly give the floor to the Sudanese Delegate to respond.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

You can if you want.

The Chairperson:

And I guess the Sudanese Delegate would be responding similarly. What they responded last time.

Sudan, would I be correct in my evaluation?

The Observer Delegation of Sudan:

Yes, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. And then I will give the floor to the Secretariat. And then the Secretariat will also be saying something similar to what they said regarding Sudan, as you mentioned last time. Is that correct? All right.

And then I'll give the floor to ICOMOS. And then ICOMOS will also be saying something similar. So, and I will ask whether there are any comments and there will be no comments.

So then I will give the floor to the Rapporteur. And the Rapporteur will say that there are no further amendments received. Am I correct?

And then I will go straight to the draft decision, and I will say whether there are any objections to this draft decision, and there would be none.

So, I will say I therefore draft Decision **46 COM 7B.30** adopted. [gavel] [applause] Thank you very much.

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property.

I see none, let's proceed then.

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Arab States region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following four properties for which reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Tipasa, Algeria;
- Historic Cairo, Egypt;
- Ksar of Ait-Ben-Haddou, Morocco; and
- Medina of Marrakesh, Morocco.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of Conservation report, I declare the decisions read out as adopted. ^[gave/]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision, without discussion. I see none.

Let us proceed then.

ASIA-PACIFIC // ASIE-PACIFIQUE

7B.34 Town of Luang Prabang (Lao People's Democratic Republic) // Ville de Luang Prabang (République démocratique populaire lao)

The Chairperson:

The Town of Luang Prabang, Lao People's Democratic Republic. Moving on to the Asia Pacific region.

I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Viet Nam to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the town of Luang Prabang, Lao People's Democratic Republic. Excellency, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Mr. Chair,

We highly appreciate the commitment and efforts by the State Party to safeguard the OUV of Town of Luang Prabang site, especially the progress made with the update of the management framework of the Luang Prabang Conservation Plan, including the use of GIS monitoring, research on ecological and intangible values and the thematic policy development relating to its intangible values, sustainability and development goals and historic urban landscape. In this regard, we appreciate the assistance of the World Heritage Fund and other international partners to the State Party.

Furthermore, we welcome the preparation of a new HIA for the Luang Prabang Hydropower Project and its increased attention regarding scientific data collection concerning the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers, their riverbanks and associated environmental parameters, which would enable the long-term monitoring of possible changes in environmental settings and values, in particular with regards to the dams and hydropower constructions upstream and downstream of the property.

Having said that, we believe that some of the language in the draft decision submitted to the Committee are no longer relevant. The State Party has tried every effort to implement many recommendations of the 2022 reactive monitoring mission, but not all the recommendations. For example, not the recommendation concerning the suspension or relocation of the Luang Prabang Hydropower Project. Last year, the Committee already had a lengthy discussion on this recommendation and agreed not asking the State Party to suspend or relocate the project, after

considering the importance to find a balance between national economic development goals and preservation of World Heritage property. Furthermore, some languages in the draft, such as the words "requests" and "operational autonomy", are not consistent with the decision that the Committee adopted last year. That's why we would like to propose some amendments to the decision, and kindly request the Committee members to extend their support to those amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now invite Ms. Nao Hayashi, Programme Specialist at the Asia and Pacific Unit of the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, to provide their comments. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. Distinguished Committee members,

The State of Conservation of the Town of Luang Prabang has been subject to the Committee's study since 2021, focusing on how to sustain its Outstanding Universal Value, which embraces not only its remarkable townscape but also its surrounding environment, the ecological values related to the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers associated with living religious and cultural practices of local communities. In this sense, the paragraph 7 of the draft decision duly recognizes the State Party's efforts in implementing the recommendations of the 2020 joint World Heritage Centre ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission and previous Committee's decision.

Actually, the initial draft's paragraph 11 suggests maintaining operational autonomy of the Luang Prabang World Heritage Management Division because a robust and well-resourced management authority is an important condition for sustaining the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties.

Dear Committee members, this management division has been performing remarkably over years, staying close to the inhabitants, monitoring all changes in the town and communicating the values of the World Heritage property. There seems no need to change a winning team. Instead, it should be encouraged and supported to cope with greater challenges.

Now, with your permission, Mr. Chairperson, ICOMOS can be invited to provide further explanation on the draft decision on this property.

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

ICOMOS concurs with the World Heritage Centre Secretariat that the World Heritage Management Division responsible for the property should be both well-resourced and autonomous, consistent with the request of the Committee at its last session. The joint 2022 World Heritage Centre ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission provided important recommendations, and it is appropriate to acknowledge the efforts of the State Party to implement those recommendations.

It is also important to continue to highlight the recommendations that are yet to be implemented, hence the proposed wording of the original draft decision before the Committee. In addition to the matters previously considered by the Committee and the 2022 Advisory Mission, there are now significant tourism and infrastructure projects, including a proposed new Mekong Bridge, the Riverside Tourism Development Project, the Hillside Tourism Development, the Mekong Footpath Project, the airport upgrade, and these individually and especially in combination, involve major change.

So, the proposed reactive monitoring mission is warranted and this mission should of course, evaluate progress with the implementation of the Committee's previous decisions and the recommendations of the 2022 advisory mission.

The new Heritage Impact Assessment for the Luang Prabang Hydropower Project has improved the understanding of the implications for the property of this very major infrastructure project, but still requires further review to address potential impact on attributes that support the property's Outstanding Universal Value, and should therefore also be considered by the proposed reactive monitoring mission.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for this presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments. I see none. Let's proceed then.

Sorry. Korea, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Republic of Korea appreciates the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre for their constructive recommendations for this invaluable property. We also commend the State Party's ongoing efforts to implement these recommendations. We also take note of its commitment to balancing sustainable development with the conservation of the property's OUV.

In this context, the Republic of Korea is co-sponsoring the amendment submitted by the Viet Nameese Delegation. We acknowledge the original recommendations made by the World Heritage Centre. However, through a series of discussions with Laos, we were informed of their continued efforts to meet those recommendations by the Advisory Body and the Centre. As we understand, the amendment by Viet Nam was made to allow the State Party to fulfil its conservation responsibilities for the OUV in a more long-term based and flexible manner. Importantly, the State Party has expressed its willingness to invite the reactive monitoring mission and to provide updates on the PSMV and the tourism management plan.

We recognize the State Party's ongoing efforts in safeguarding the site, and further encourage the State Party and the World Heritage Centre to maintain close cooperation in order to conserve the OUV of the Luang Prabang. In this regard, we welcome the heritage impact assessment submitted in January 2024 and expect the State Party to continue its close consultation with the Advisory Body, including inviting a new reactive monitoring mission.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving India the floor.

My team of experts examined the state of conservation report submitted by the State Party of the Lao PDR, as well as the report of the Secretariat and the Advisory Body. India believes that the Lao PDR has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to safeguarding the Outstanding Universal Value of the town of Luang Prabang. They have made significant updates to the Luang Prabang conservation plan, integrating GIS monitoring to enhance conservation planning. Moreover, the State Party has also engaged in collaborative partnerships with UNESCO and ICOMOS and is actively implementing the recommendations from the 2022 joint World Heritage Centre ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission report.

We appreciate the State Party's initiative to revise the January 2024 HIA in accordance with the findings and recommendations of the ICOMOS technical review and the comments of the World Heritage Centre, demonstrating their commitment to best practices. The State Party's proactive approach to safeguarding the OUV of the property by preparing a new Heritage Impact Assessment report for the Luang Prabang Hydropower Project, is highly commendable. The State Party has also proactively addressed infrastructure challenges and prioritize the restoration of the deteriorated buildings. For projects like the Nam Khan River bridge, the State Party is exploring alternate approaches to ensure minimal impact on the heritage of the property.

Despite facing challenges, Mr. Chair, efforts to strengthen the management capacity of the World Heritage Management Division in Luang Prabang are commendable. We should encourage their continuing efforts. And we also align with Secretariat's report that also appreciated the efforts being made by the State Party.

Moving forward, Mr. Chair, we encourage Lao PDR to continue its proactive efforts in heritage conservation, and also we request them to give us an updated state of conservation report for its examination next year.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Türkiye to be followed by Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We extend our congratulations to the State Party for their efforts in revising the management framework of the conservation plan aimed at safeguarding the Outstanding Universal Value of the site.

It would be advisable to consider a new reactive monitoring mission for the proposed projects. This would ensure that all projects are planned, assessed and executed in a way that promotes sustainable social and economic benefits while safeguarding the Outstanding Universal Value.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Bulgaria to be followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We thank the Advisory Body for their thorough report and engagement with the protection of the Town of Luang Prabang World Heritage site. We commend the State Party for their continuous efforts in the implementation of the recommendations of the previous World Heritage Committee decisions, especially its commitment in preserving the OUV of the property while supporting its economic development.

One of our experts had visited the site two months ago, and we welcome the increased attention to intangible values, pond and wetland restoration, and the commitment to improving the protection of the Nam Khan Riverbank and the park projects. We encourage the State Party to continue the close collaboration with the Advisory Bodies and to invite a reactive monitoring mission.

For this reason, we have supported the proposed amendments that are minimal and in line with previous Committee's decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We acknowledge the State Party, Lao People's Democratic Republic, of their firm commitment to preserving the OUV of Luang Prabang while balancing the socio-economic needs of its community.

We believe that the language of the draft decision should remain consistent with the one used in Riyadh. Therefore, we support the amendment proposal made by the Delegation of Viet Nam.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see that there are no more requests for the floor. So, I now invite you to adopt the.

There were no questions asked of the State Party, so I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.34** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci M. le Président,

Comme cela a été annoncé durant les discussions, nous avons effectivement reçu un amendement soumis par le Viet Nam, coécrit par la République de Corée, la Bulgarie et le Japon, et avec des soutiens supplémentaires qui viennent d'être exprimés en salle de la part de l'Inde et de la Türkiye et du Qatar, amendements qui se présentent comme tels.

Au paragraphe 3, remplace « demande » par « recommande » que les éléments actualisés soient soumis au Centre du patrimoine mondial « en fonction des invitations » et non plus des « demandes spécifiques » formulées dans la Décision **45 COM**.

Paragraphe 7, « reconnaît également que les efforts de l'État partie pour prendre en considération ses décisions antérieures et mettre en œuvre un certain nombre des recommandations, et dans ce contexte, invite l'État partie à », avec des modifications mineures de compréhension dans la version française pour l'énumération des points suivants.

Paragraphe 11, « réitère sa précédente invitation à la Division de la gestion du patrimoine mondial à Luang Prabang de rester une entité technique unifiée », avec la suppression de la mention en fin de paragraphe « et d'une autonomie opérationnelle ».

Enfin, paragraphe suivant, paragraphe 12, « recommande à l'État partie », et non plus « demande », « d'inviter une nouvelle mission conjointe de suivi réactif dans la mise en œuvre des décisions précédentes du Comité et des recommandations pertinentes ». Ajout de la mention « pertinente ».

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The State Party of Zambia, after having listened to the various interventions on the floor by the Committee members, we are not ashamed to also request that our name be added to the countries that are appearing on the screen.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We will now go to the draft decision.

Are there any objections to para 1 and 2? I see none.

We go to para 3. Are there any objections to para 3?

Lebanon, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Liban :

Merci, M. le Président.

On ne peut pas recommander que les éléments du PSMV soit soumis au Centre. C'est une obligation. Lorsqu'on, lorsqu'un État partie ratifie une Convention, il est obligé de soumettre au Centre tous les éléments relatifs à la conservation. Donc, on ne peut pas recommander à l'État partie s'il le veut, s'il ne le veut pas d'envoyer les éléments actualisés du PSMV. C'est une demande. Je suis désolé, mais c'est.

The Chairperson:

Viet Nam, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Viet Nam :

Merci, M. le Président.

Alors, ce que nous proposons, c'est exactement le langage de l'année dernière de la décision de l'année dernière du Comité, que. Je pense que le Comité doit être consistant dans sa décision concernant cette question. Et puis ce nouvel, cet amendement reflète mieux l'esprit de coopération et d'accompagnement des États membres, parties.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Mr. Rapporteur, I have seen the word "recommends" has been striked out. Can you please clarify?

Le Rapporteur :

De ce que j'ai compris, le Liban suggère de garder le verbe « demande » tandis que l'amendement suggère de le remplacer par « recommande ».

The Chairperson:

Which has been supported by at least eight Committee members. So, you would go with whom? Right? Please do not strike out any word. Yes.

And Viet Nam has clarified that this is a continuation of a previous decision, the terminology that was used.

Lebanon, after listening to Viet Nam's clarification? You have the floor.

La Délégation du Liban :

M. le Président, bon, puisque la majorité le demande, mais le problème c'est qu'on est en train de faire un précédent. Dorénavant, on ne peut plus demander aux États parties ni d'envoyer des rapports de conservation, ni d'envoyer des projets de, quand un État partie veut faire un projet, on ne peut plus lui demander d'envoyer ce projet pour examen par le Centre et par le. C'est contraire au. On va faire des choses qui sont contraires aux *Operational Guidelines*. Les *Operational Guidelines* demandent aux États parties de le faire. Il ne le recommande pas. Si on dit maintenant recommande, c'est vrai que le Comité l'année passée a dit recommande, mais je veux dire, c'est contraire au *Operational Guidelines*. Je suis désolé.

Ceci dit, je n'insiste pas. Mais que ce ne soit pas un précédent, s'il vous plaît, que ce ne soit pas un précédent. C'est tout à fait contraire aux *Operational Guidelines*. Les *Operational Guidelines* exigent des États parties d'envoyer chaque fois qu'ils ont des projets, chaque fois qu'ils ont des plans, chaque fois qu'ils ont, de les envoyer au Centre et aux organes consultatifs. Sinon, ça ne sert à rien.

The Chairperson:

Okay, you can remove Lebanon's name from that. After listening to this, they will not come in the way of the majority.

We go next. So, there are no further objections to para 3, I guess.

We move on to para 4. I see no objections to para 4.

We move on to para 5. No objections to para 5.

We go to para 6. No objections to para 6.

We go to para 7. The beginning part of para 7. I don't see any objections to the beginning part of para 7.

I see Lebanon, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Liban :

Oui, merci, M. le Président.

Je ne sais pas si c'était exactement aussi l'année passée, mais quand on envoie une mission conjointe de suivi réactif et on recommande à l'État de prendre en compte un certain nombre de recommandations, à quoi ça sert d'envoyer des missions de service de suivi réactif si les recommandations de la mission ne sont pas prises en compte et qu'on dit à l'État partie, vous pouvez choisir ce que vous avez besoin ? Ça ne sert à rien d'envoyer une mission de suivi réactif. Ceci dit, bon, donc, moi je propose d'enlever « un certain nombre » et de revenir à « les recommandations de la mission de réactif ». Ceci dit, après...

The Chairperson:

Yes, I understand. Viet Nam, are you okay with the deletion of the word "a number of"?

La Délégation du Viet Nam :

Non, désolée. Parce que, voilà, comme ce qui a été expliqué dans mon intervention préliminaire, donc, parmi les recommandations de la mission, il y a une concernant la suspension ou relocalisation du projet hydroélectrique de Luang Prabang. Et l'année dernière, le Comité a eu une longue discussion sur cette question et le Comité a décidé de ne pas prendre, ne pas demander à l'État partie de suspendre ou bien de relocaliser ce projet. Et en réalité, l'État partie a fait beaucoup d'efforts pour mettre en œuvre beaucoup d'autres recommandations de la mission. Et c'est pour ça, nous avons proposé ce langage pour inclure une recommandation qui n'a pas été approuvée par le Comité l'année dernière.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Lebanon, you've heard the clarification by Viet Nam. Can I ask you to accept that and remove your name from here so that we can move ahead?

The Delegation of Lebanon / La Délégation du Liban :

Je suis désolé, M. le Président, non. Moi, je reste dans mon "implement the recommendation".

I mean, we cannot leave the possibility for State Party to say we want to choose those that we want to recommend and those of us we don't want to recommend.

The Chairperson:

The monitoring mission was of 2022. This was discussed in length in the last Committee meeting in Riyadh in 2023, and there was one particular recommendation among these number of recommendations, as the Viet Nameese Delegation has responded. There's one particular recommendation, you know, if we accept, if they accept what you are suggesting, it means that the entire discussion that happened last year would be, in a way, overlooked. Now, I see that this particular decision on Luang Prabang is a sort of a continuation of last year. And the Viet Nameese Delegation has given the rationale that a number of recommendations are being accepted, but they cannot accept the entirety of that. But they are not saying that, but "a number of recommendations" is a way forward.

But you are sticking to the position it's either my way or the highway. So may I request you that there can be a nice way also to this, and, in a nice way you can, we can move forward and have a wonderful, nice lunch.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

I have a solution, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Please.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

I propose to remove the whole beginning of the recommendation of the item 7 and start immediately with "invites the State Party to". In that case, we do not refer to the recommendation of the 2022, neither totally nor by some of them. We start immediately by inviting the State Party to, and we put what we are inviting the State Party to do.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Viet Nam are you okay with that?

La Délégation du Viet Nam :

Oui, Monsieur.

The Chairperson:

All right. Thank you.

Please strike out the beginning of para 7 and you start para 7 from "invites". Thank you, Lebanon.

We move on to para. I see there are no further objections.

Move on to 7 a). Are there any objections to para 7 a)? I don't see. From b), c), d), are there any objections? Objections to b), c), d)? I see none.

Go to 7 e), f), g), okay. Are there any objections to those sub-paras? I see none.

We go to para 8, para 9. Are there any objections to paras 8 and 9? I see none.

Para 10. Are there any objections? I see none.

Para 11.

Lebanon. Yes, but this again would be a similar objection raised earlier. And that was resolved when Lebanon said that, I don't want to come in the way of a majority. So, your objections, your views, your learned views are noted, but I'll still give you the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

No, I was, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to ask the. If there have been another precedents where we recommend the State Party to invite or we request the State Party. As I know, usually we request, this is the usual vocabulary. I don't know if there have been other occasions or other precedents when we recommend the State Party to invite. I don't know.

The Chairperson:

There are many things I also don't know, but I don't push my desires so much. So, can we move on? If the invitation.

Viet Nam, you want to respond to that?

La Délégation du Viet Nam :

Oui, M. le Président.

Alors, c'est en fait exactement le langage du paragraphe 7 a) de la décision de l'année dernière du Comité.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. It's exactly the same thing as decision last year. So, we continue.

Para 11 is okay.

We go to para 12. And there also the request/recommends, the same objection would be there here. The Secretariat would like to intervene. You have the floor, Mr. Director, but please, may I remind you that you are standing between a thousand delegates and their lunch?

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

C'est juste très rapide pour expliquer à la Distinguée, à Madame l'Ambassadrice du Viet Nam que pour les missions de suivi réactif, le Comité doit prendre une décision, mais pour les missions conseils, le Comité souvent recommande. Il s'agit ici d'une mission de suivi réactif et le mot le mieux approprié est une décision du Comité, donc de demander à l'État partie pour que la mission de suivi réactif ait lieu. Si vous êtes d'accord, merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Viet Nam, the Secretariat wants the word "requests" instead of "recommends", and that's the explanation. I think Lebanon would have also suggested the same thing. Viet Nam, is it okay with you if the word "request" is there?

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Yes, with a view to find a consensus on this issue. So, we agree to keep the word "requests".

The Chairperson:

Okay. Are there any objections to para 12? I see none.

We go to para 13. Are there any objections to para 13? I see none.

We now are going to adopt the whole decision as a whole. Are there any objections for the adoption of the decision as amended? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 7B.34** adopted as amended. ^[gave]

Thank you very much. I would now like to ask whether any Observer delegation would like to express themselves about this property.

Lao PDR, would you like to say something? You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic:

Yes, of course. Thank you, Mr President.

Taking the floor for the first time, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to India for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the meeting, and in particular to you, Mr President, for your able leadership in guiding the deliberations of the meeting towards the resounding success. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the World Heritage Centre and all the State members for their continuous support and.

Notamment mes amis francophones comme la Belgique pour son soutien inlassable à notre cause légitime.

And in conclusion, you can rest assured that the Lao PDR remains committed to working hand in hand with all stakeholders involved in preserving the property. I have no doubt that no nations in the world would cherish and love the town of Luang Prabang more than the Lao people themselves.

I thank you, Mr President.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your passionate response. We appreciate and respect your views.

I see that there are no further requests for intervention, so let's proceed then. We are now going to break for lunch, and we are going to reconvene at 3:00 pm. This meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 1:16 pm. // La séance a été levée à 13h16.

FOURTH DAY
Thursday, 25 July 2024
EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING
3:24 pm – 6:31 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

QUATRIÈME JOUR
Jeudi 25 juillet 2024
HUITIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h24 – 18h31
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

Before we start the meeting, I had received a request from the US to take the floor for 30 seconds. Anybody there from the Delegation of the United States of America? There was a request from Ambassador Manes to take the floor for 30 seconds. Before I commence this meeting, would you like to? Do you know about that request? And if you would like to take the floor.

The Host Country, India would like to make some housekeeping announcements. You have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair, for giving us the floor.

We just wanted to make a couple of small announcements.

One, on behalf of the Ministry of Culture, the Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India has just, you know, approved a matter wherein for all the delegates of the World Heritage Committee who are present here, the monuments which are under the protection of the ASI, and there are 3,697 of them, the entry to all these monuments is free for the Delegates till 10th of August. So, I thought we will make this announcement for the Distinguished Delegates who are present here. ^[applause]

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

How many monuments are under your protection? Can you just tell the number slowly and clearly for my ears?

The Delegation of India:

Three thousand six hundred and ninety-seven, out of which 25 are the World Heritage Properties.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. All right.

With your permission now, let's resume our session. I hope you had a pleasant lunch break and had a further opportunity to enjoy Indian cuisine.

7B. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES (Ct'd) // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE CULTUREL (suite)

ASIA-PACIFIC (Ct'd) // ASIE-PACIFIQUE (suite)

7B.37 Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha (Nepal) // Lumbini, lieu de naissance du Bouddha (Népal)

The Chairperson:

We are now going to resume the examination of our Agenda Item 7B.

As you may have noticed, we are a bit behind schedule and still have a dense agenda to go through this afternoon. I would therefore urge you to kindly be concise in your interventions so that we can examine all remaining state of

conservation reports and close Agenda Item 7B this afternoon as planned, before starting with the nomination items tomorrow morning.

We now go to the properties proposed for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger for the Asia Pacific region. Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha, Nepal.

I now invite Ms Himalchuli Gurung, Chief of the Asia and Pacific Unit of the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, to present the next report on the state of conservation of the cultural properties located in this region and open for discussion. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chair, good afternoon.

This summary of conservation issues for this property is available in Working Document WHC/24/46.COM/7B on pages 76 to 80 of the English version, and on pages 79 to 84 of the French version.

The World Heritage Committee is examining the state of conservation of Lumbini, the Birthplace of Lord Buddha, for the 19th time since 1999. In Decision **45 COM 7B.46**, adopted in Riyadh in September 2023, the Committee considered that Lumbini's urgent conservation needs require a broad mobilization to preserve its Outstanding Universal Value, including its possible inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and therefore decided to review its state of conservation at this session.

The joint World Heritage Centre ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission, conducted in March 2022, expressed its concerns over the deteriorating state of the property and specific projects such as the Maya Devi Temple shelter and the newly constructed Buddhist Meditation Hall, having a capacity of 5,000 people. On 19th February 2024, the World Heritage Centre requested information from the State Party in line with paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines*, following third party reports about new development projects in the vicinity of this property. However, to date, the State Party is yet to respond to this request.

Three consultation meetings between the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and the State Party of Nepal were organized prior to this session to discuss the state of conservation of Lumbini and the proposal to add this property to the List of World Heritage in Danger. Following these consultations, Nepal submitted three additional documents on 23rd June 2024 as follows: a hydrological assessment of the Maya Devi shelter dated 2022; a technical report on conservation at the Sacred Garden and Maya Devi Shelter dated April 2023; and a proposal for the long-term conservation of the Lumbini Archaeological Monuments dated April 2024.

Now, with your permission, Mr Chairperson, ICOMOS could provide further comments on the state of conservation of the property and the rationale behind the proposal to inscribe Lumbini, the Birthplace of Lord Buddha, on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha, is under significant threat and in need of urgent support, not only from the relevant State Party authorities but also from the wider global community. ICOMOS acknowledges progress with important management initiatives, including the declaration of the protected monument zone and the creation of the Lumbini World Heritage Coordination Unit.

However, significant discrepancies exist between the capacity of the Lumbini Development Trust, which acts as site manager, and the nature and scale of the required conservation efforts. The integrated management framework can only achieve its intended aims if sufficient financial and other resources are allocated, and therefore the proposed action plan is required.

It is appropriate for the Committee to record that new developments have occurred in the Sacred Garden, without either impact assessment or referral to the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, despite the fact that the World Heritage Convention and its *Operational Guidelines* recognise impact assessment as a vital tool to support the conservation of the property's Outstanding Universal Value. For example, the old Lumbini Village archaeological site in the buffer zone, identified as the most important site on the Lumbini Sacred Garden archaeological risk map, was damaged by heavy machinery early in 2022, arising from an infrastructure project without prior impact assessment. Halting the Lumbini World Peace City project has removed its immediate potential impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, but this project highlights that timely heritage impact assessment and referral, in accordance with paragraph 172 of the *Operational Guidelines* are essential, and also demonstrates why current projects, such as those arising from the review of the Kenzo Tange Master Plan and the visitor management plan, need comprehensive heritage assessments. To enable such assessments, the guidelines for heritage impact assessment in Nepal, which predate the 2022 Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage context, do require amendment and they need to align with this important guidance developed through the World Heritage Leadership Programme.

The condition of the Sacred Garden and the Maya Devi Temple shelter and their highly significant ruins is of grave concern. While many documents dating back decades have been submitted by the State Party, they reveal that interventions to date have not remedied the serious physical deterioration and degraded conditions. Regrettably, the need for urgent conservation efforts has been identified by the November 2022 interdisciplinary technical meeting for the conservation of archaeological remains, by the 2022 reactive monitoring mission, by the International Scientific Committee in 2023, and by information and reports submitted by the State Party in June 2024, including confirmation by the State Party's own consultants. Important recommendations from the 2022 reactive monitoring mission and the 2023 International Scientific Committee meeting are yet to be addressed.

The state of conservation of Lumbini requires immediate conservation measures within the Maya Devi Temple shelter, plus long-term protection goals, including best available technologies. Regrettably, the perilous state and deteriorating condition of the remains within the Sacred Garden and the Maya Devi Temple shelter, and the lack of progress with mitigation measures constitute an ascertained threat to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property within the meaning of paragraph 179 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

Therefore, the original draft decision put before the Committee proposes that the property be inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in order to galvanize more effective conservation efforts and international support, and to provide a framework for the State Party to work closely with the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies to establish a set of corrective measures as a roadmap to recovery.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would like to know if there are any comments from Member States.

India, you have the floor, followed by Lebanon.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving India the floor.

The property Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha, is quite close to India's heart. This is one example of what we may consider is the shared heritage between India and the concerned State Party. India has examined the documents submitted by the State Party, as well as read and heard the reports of the Secretariat and the Advisory Body. The ICOMOS has made these observations mainly on the basis of the implementation of the 2022 reactive monitoring mission and 2023 International Scientific Committee meetings.

The state of conservation report, submitted by the State Party that has just been presented by the Secretariat and ICOMOS, indicates to us, apart from the issues that they have raised, significant progress that has been made by the State Party in implementing these recommendations, such as the Declaration of Lumbini as the protected monument zone, implementation of an integrated management framework, formation of the World Heritage Coordination Unit in the Lumbini Development Trust and the preparation of initial sector strategies, documents, amongst others. Recently, after the submission of the state of conservation report, the State Party has submitted further three new documents related to the Sacred Garden and the Maya Devi Temple shelter for the evaluation, which have been, you know, informed by the Secretariat, which includes one hydrological assessment report of the Maya Devi Temple shelter, the technical report on the conservation of cultural heritage within the Sacred Garden, and the proposal for the long-term conservation of the Lumbini archaeological monuments. So, we are in the acknowledgement of the receipt of this report.

Now, the State Party has committed to undertake a comprehensive heritage impact assessment before carrying out any further work within the property or adjoining areas as having potential archaeological significance. Also, the State Party will submit a detailed implementation plan and schedule for a full implementation, which could be reviewed by the Advisory Bodies next year.

Therefore, Mr Chair, we see that the State Party has taken a number of initiatives and measures and is committed to protecting the World Heritage property and its Outstanding Universal Values, following the guidelines and recommendations made by the World Heritage Centre, and the experts of the Advisory Body from time to time. In view of the above, the Delegation of India would like to request the Committee to grant some more time to the State Party and by postponing the inscription of Lumbini, the Birthplace of Lord Buddha, on the List of World Heritage in Danger, and request an updated report on the state of conservation of the property to be presented in its 47th session.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Would you like to ask some question to the State Party or it's okay?

The Delegation of India:

Not at this stage, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Lebanon, followed by Belgium.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Lumbini was listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site in 1997. It's a major World Heritage site, the Birthplace of Lord Buddha, which protection is of great importance to humanity as a whole.

Since 2002, the World Heritage Committee expressed its grave concern about the state of conservation of the property, more particularly on developments within the core and the buffer zones, which affect its integrity, and which were decided and implemented without informing the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies and without Heritage Impact Assessment. In 2005, the Committee discussed the possibility of ascribing the property on the List in Danger, but the decision was postponed following a commitment by the State Party that strict limitations will be imposed to the new projects under construction, quote, "and that further measures were expected to be taken in the future", end quote. The issue was raised again in 2014, with new development projects being launched without informing the Centre and the Advisory Bodies. The Committee expressed again its grave concern in decisions taken successively in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2021. Following the 2022 joint mission, the Committee decided, as said by ICOMOS, in its 45th session, that urgent conservation needs required both mobilization, including possible inscription on the World Heritage List in Danger.

A lot has been done since 20 years to help the State Party in the conservation of the property. Since 2010, the State Party received more than US\$ 3 million from international assistance and extrabudgetary funds. Several advisory missions were sent to the property, and since 2009, UNESCO expert missions were sent almost on a yearly basis. It is clear that all these efforts are not sufficient, and that the State Party is facing huge pressures that it cannot handle, which requires a wider mobilisation of the international community in order to save the property.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Belgium, followed by Jamaica.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair. Our position is based on a thorough lecture of the documents on the WHC website dealing with Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha, without a doubt a World Heritage property of outstanding, universal and spiritual value.

We commend the State Party of Nepal for the measures implemented and the actions taken, particularly the halting of the Lumbini World Peace City project and the installation of a WH coordination unit. But we also note that additional actions are needed and, in some cases, extremely urgent. We therefore support the original draft decision and join the statement made by my colleague of Lebanon.

And we also call upon the WHC, ICOMOS and the State Party to intensify the dialogue to address these issues.

Chair, Belgium has said it already at the beginning of this session. We need to get rid of the stigma associated with danger listing. It is not a punishment. It is not putting the blame on somebody. On the contrary, maybe. We would like to remind our colleagues that as States Parties to this Convention, we signed the document that mentions in its preamble, "in view of the magnitude and gravity of the new dangers threatening cultural and natural heritage, it is incumbent on the international community as a whole to participate in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value by the granting of collective assistance, which, although not taking the place of action by the State concerned, will serve as an efficient complement thereto". In our view, this is exactly what this draft decision is all about.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Jamaica, followed by Japan.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair.

Jamaica thanks ICOMOS for their comprehensive report on this significant site of Lumbini, the Birthplace of Lord Buddha.

ICOMOS's recognition of the State Party of Nepal's actions towards the site's preservation is noted, with particular mention of the declaration of Lumbini as a protected monument zone. The formation of the Lumbini World Heritage Coordination Unit, an integrated management framework for which budget allocation is now in place for its implementation. The State Party has expressed its commitment to implement the recommendations of the 2022 reactive monitoring mission and the 2023 International Scientific Committee meeting. They have shared some of this work and asked for time to complete it, as indicated in the documents provided, and in close collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS. We would support their request for additional time along with consideration for the site not to be listed on the List of World Heritage in Danger at this time, but that we allow a report to be submitted at the designated time.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Jamaica.

I give the floor to Japan, followed by Türkiye.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Japan appreciates dedicated works of the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, as well as the State Party on Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha.

We have supported the State Party's efforts in preserving World Heritage through our JFIT funding. And so we have been closely following the situation of this file as well. Given the still ongoing efforts of the State Party to address various challenges pointed out by ICOMOS, it is premature at this stage to consider inscribing this file on the List in Danger.

On the other hand, it is true that more works need to be done by the State Party, such as more effective implementation of heritage impact assessments, as pointed out by ICOMOS. To that end, we urge the State Party, World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS to further enhance their dialogue to ensure steady implementation of ICOMOS recommendations.

So, Japan supports amendment proposed by India, which shows a good way forward in a balanced manner.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Japan.

I give the floor to Türkiye, followed by Argentina.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We appreciate the authorities of Nepal for their efforts to conservation of the Lumbini, Birthplace of the Lord Buddha Heritage Site and its Outstanding Universal Value.

It is obvious that Nepal has made significant progress to fulfil the recommendations of the reactive mission, as well as the decision of the 45th extended session of the Committee. In this regard, we believe the inscription of the property on the Danger List is not necessary and that the State Party needs more time to implement all the recommendations.

However, in the time given, we expect that Nepal fulfils its commitments and obligations regarding the recommendations of the reactive monitoring mission of 2022. Therefore, Türkiye supports the amendments submitted by India to ensure the property not be inscribed to the Danger List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Türkiye.

I now give the floor to Argentina, followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

Throughout this meeting, we've been talking about what it means to be on the World Heritage in Danger List. We agree that there shouldn't be stigma around it. The issue is how it's perceived in the rest of the world by the general population, who are not necessarily familiar with UNESCO. Being inscribed on the World Heritage List is perceived as a punishment, and we need to change that.

This is a cultural site, but above all, it's a spiritual site. Therefore, we could use a tool in order to strengthen the cultural property. But without wishing to do so, we're sending a very harsh spiritual message to a large portion of humankind who hold Lumbini and Lord Buddha as a very important spiritual leader. In order, therefore, to comply with the *Operational Guidelines* and the Rule 122, we need to ensure that our message is not misinterpreted. We need to seek the necessary resources and give Nepal the necessary time to address these issues thanks to our support. The work carried out by ICOMOS is critical and UNESCO's work is too. Just like in previous cases, we believe it's time to give the State Party the opportunity to say that they've learnt from the recommendations and that they're seeking funds. So, we would request that the State Party have some additional time to achieve these recommendations.

And here we'd like to put a specific question to Nepal. We're told that they still have not responded to the information requested in February following the reactive monitoring mission. So, we would like to know whether they are preparing that reply, whether perhaps Nepal could tell us about that.

And we will be supporting the amendments put forward by India once they are tabled.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Argentina.

We now give the floor to Qatar, to be followed by Kazakhstan.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The efforts and initiatives undertaken by Nepal to preserve and safeguard Lumbini are commendable. It is worth to note the measures and efforts undertaken by the State Party. Firstly, the implementation and adoption of the integrated management framework, which represents a structured approach towards safeguarding Lumbini.

Secondly, the declaration of the Lumbini Protected Monument Zone and the allocation of budget by the Lumbini Development Trust are significant measures. Thirdly, the formation of the interdisciplinary technical team for the conservation of archaeological remains within the Sacred Garden is a positive step.

Furthermore, the ban on carbon emitting factories mandated by the Industrial Promotion Board and the Supreme Court of Nepal is another remarkable effort by the State Party. Overall, Nepal has demonstrated a commitment to addressing the Committee's concerns and implementing substantial measures to safeguard Lumbini.

Therefore, Mr Chair and Distinguished Member State Delegates of the Committee, I propose that we grant Nepal the requested additional time to complete the remaining conservation works. It is in our collective interest to support and encourage the continuation of these efforts, ensuring that Lumbini is preserved for future generations without immediately inscribing it on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Qatar.

We now give the floor to Kazakhstan, to be followed by Viet Nam.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Thank you, Chair.

Dear colleagues, upon reviewing the meticulously prepared documents by the WHC ICOMOS mission, which clearly outlines the existing threats, it is recognized that despite some progress in implementing recommendations and reducing risks, the Government of Nepal and all concerned parties must continue their efforts to address current issues such as industrial encroachment, the preservation of archaeological remains, and the management of new land use development projects. Ensuring comprehensive heritage impact assessments for all development projects remains critically important for preserving the Outstanding Universal Value of Lumbini.

We acknowledge and support Nepal's proactive measures, including the establishment of the World Heritage Coordination Unit, the formation of an interdisciplinary technical group dedicated to preserving archaeological remains in the Sacred Garden, and the implementation of an integrated management system that guides all conservation actions and ensures that development projects do not threaten the Outstanding Universal Value of Lumbini.

In light of the complex and ambiguous situation, the seriousness of the existing problems reflected in the draft decision is clearly understood. However, in an attempt to find balance, Kazakhstan aligns with India's proposal to amend the decision, primarily concerning the need for Nepal to provide a detailed implementation plan and timeline for the full execution of the recommendations from the 2023 International Scientific Committee and the 2022 reactive monitoring mission.

We also urge the State Party of Nepal to treat any decision to be announced today as a clear signal on the need to further enhance its work to protect this unique site of great importance for many in Asia and around the world.

Additionally, like the colleagues who spoke before us in support of the amendments, there is a conviction that in the state of conservation report, which Nepal, according to the draft decision, should prepare and submit to the World Heritage Centre by February 1st, 2025, the progress achieved in addressing the currently pressing issues should be evident.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Kazakhstan.

I now give the floor to Viet Nam, followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

My Delegation notes the concerns expressed by the Advisory Bodies on this site.

However, we see that the Government of Nepal is actively implementing various recommendations from the reactive monitoring mission and the decisions adopted by the Committee last year, and the progress made are quite encouraging. However, some of the tasks are time consuming and require additional knowledge and resources, and the Committee should give more time to the State Party to implement those tasks. We also note that the State Party is ready to continue collaboration and cooperation with the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the international community on this issue, and they are also ready to provide all documentation of the preservation work and to implement the past recommendations and observations. They are also ready to welcome the joint verification mission again, as it has been almost two years since the last mission visited Nepal.

So, my Delegation and I think that is a little bit premature to put the site on the List in Danger. And that's why we would like to co-author the amendments put forward by India.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Republic of Korea, followed by Italy.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Republic of Korea takes note of the constructive recommendations made by the World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies for the preservation of the OUV of Lumbini, a remarkable common heritage of humanity.

We also recognize the efforts and safeguarding measures that the Government of Nepal is taking to protect the site, including the suspension of the Lumbini World Peace City project. We understand that the Government of Nepal is undertaking measures requested by the Advisory Body, such as the hydrological assessment and requested conference centre guidelines. Additionally, during our informal discussion, the State Party, the Delegation of Nepal, confirmed that they will conduct the HIA before any further work is done on the site.

For these reasons, the Republic of Korea considers it appropriate to allow the State Party to act on its intentions, while also encouraging, continued close cooperation with the Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Italy, followed by Mexico.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to follow up on the remarks by the Distinguished Delegate from Argentina. This is just not a normal site. This is a site which has a significant, very special value across the world for Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. So, it might indeed give the wrong impression across the world that the site is inscribed in the World Heritage List in Danger. And combined with the fact that we acknowledge the efforts deployed by the Government of Nepal for a better upkeeping of the site. We would like to align ourselves with the amendments proposed by India.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

I'll be very brief. We've heard lots of comments already. From the viewpoint of the institution I represent, as well as my country, which is a pioneer and critical in protecting World Heritage. Having such a World Heritage site, which is complying with measures to carry out an HIA, an integrated management plan for the monuments, as well as an integrated disaster and risk management plan, as well as plans for ensuring the well-being of communities and sustainable development for environmental, local development and archaeological measures, as well as an action plan, and a site which has been subjected to technical reviews. It's a true luxury and pleasure to read about this site. It's not the case for all sites on the List.

And we'd like to appreciate the Nepalese State Party for providing more information when requested. And we support the draft amendment proposed by India for this site, which will move us forward in the spirit of peace as fostered by UNESCO.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Now that the States Parties have taken the floor, I will give the floor to Nepal to answer certain questions that were posed. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Nepal:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

As I am taking the floor for the first time, I would like to congratulate your chairmanship, and excellent arrangement and hospitality extended to us by the Government of India.

I would like to express our full commitment, for the full implementation of 2022 reactive monitoring mission and International Scientific Committee. This is one of the clarifications I want to give. This is regarding the 6-19 February third party notice. Actually, these, the information sought from the third party are not within the property site and in the buffer zone, where the greater Lumbini area. But there are two information sought by the third party, and that has already been addressed by the competent authorities in Nepal. There are no more in operation now. These are the one cowshed, and one is the sculpted stones statue of Buddha that has both have been halted by the instruction from the Department of Archaeology.

Similarly, there is one information sought about the lampshade lamp in the Lumbini area, at the buffer zone that is primarily constructed on the assumption that it would stop the pilgrim's management and, but we are subject to HIA and my experts are already here, the HIA is ready. We will submit that to the Centre and go by the advice of review of the Advisory Bodies, including ICOMOS. And there is one information sought is the master plan for Greater Lumbini area. There is no master plan so far. And we will discuss the master plan with the Advisory Bodies and the Centre, and we will implement it.

Similarly, the Lumbini Peace City is the conceptual plan, and it is not in the operation so far. So, whenever there is any kind of operation, we will share the HIA with the Advisory Bodies. Similarly, the Meditation plan, the HIA has already been submitted and it has been concluded by the authority that there is no negative effect, and the site is far away from the property site.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson, and ready to clarify other issues if anything arises later on. I thank you again.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see that there is no request for further questions or taking the floor.

I will now go to the draft decision. I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.37** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M le Président.

Effectivement et tel qu'annoncé par la Délégation Indienne en début de discussion, nous avons bien reçu un amendement soumis par l'Inde et soutenu en salle par la Jamaïque, le Japon, la Türkiye, l'Argentine, le Qatar, le Kazakhstan, le Viet Nam, l'Italie et le Mexique, si notre équipe pourrait également ajouter le Mexique. Amendement qui se présente de telle sorte.

Troisième paragraphe, remplacement du plan d'action du CGI par « prie instamment l'État partie de faciliter la mise en œuvre rapide du cadre de gestion intégré pour le bien et de soumettre les stratégies sectorielles associées et le plan d'action intégré au Centre du patrimoine mondial pour examen ».

Paragraphe 7, supprime la mention « avec inquiétude » sur la note concernant l'état du Jardin sacré.

Paragraphe 11, remplace « exprime son profond regret que de nombreuses recommandations de la réunion de 2023 » par « demande à l'État partie de soumettre un plan et un calendrier détaillé pour la mise en œuvre des recommandations de la réunion de 2023 du Comité scientifique international et de la mission de suivi réactif de 2022 qui n'ont pas encore été suivies d'effets. »

Nous avons également fait un petit changement d'ordre mineur dans les deux versions concernant le terme « mise en œuvre », "implementation".

Paragraphe suivant, propose la suppression des paragraphes 12, 13 et 14, pour arriver au dernier paragraphe, « demande enfin à l'État partie de soumettre au Centre du patrimoine mondial d'ici le 1^{er} février 2025 un rapport actualisé sur l'état de conservation du bien et sur la mise en œuvre des points ci-dessus mentionnés pour examen par le Comité du patrimoine mondial à sa 47^e session, considérant que les besoins urgents de ce bien en matière de conservation nécessitent une large mobilisation pour préserver sa valeur universelle exceptionnelle, y compris une possible inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril ».

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Can we go to the first para?

And I have seen that three Member States have raised the plate. First, India, Jamaica, Japan, Türkiye, Argentina, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Viet Nam, Italy, Mexico, Republic of Korea. So, 11 Member States are in support of this. And two Member States, Belgium and Lebanon, want to keep the original decision.

But I see three Member States have raised their plate. I'll give the floor to Bulgaria, followed by Greece.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Bulgaria also supports the amendments submitted by India. So, could you please add Bulgaria among the States Parties supporting the amendment? Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Greece, followed by Rwanda.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We would like to also be added among the countries that support the amendments proposed by India. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Rwanda, followed by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to support the amendment proposed by India.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, followed by Senegal.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Yes. We would also like to support the amendment.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Senegal, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci M. le Président.

Le Sénégal soutient l'amendement de l'Inde et souhaite que son nom soit ajouté.

The Chairperson:

We have 16 Member States who are supporting it, which is more than two thirds majority.

Lebanon, will you want your name to be removed in lieu of a two thirds majority supporting the amendment? You have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

No, Mr President, I'm sorry. We keep our, it's a question of principle. We keep our name.

The Chairperson:

Okay.

Belgium, will you want your name to be removed?

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes. Mr Chair, you can remove our name, in view of the support from the room. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Okay. As the Chair.

Ukraine, you take the floor.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Yes. Thank you.

We would like our name would be inscribed.

The Chairperson:

Okay.

Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Yes, Mr Chairman.

We would also want to be added on the list.

The Chairperson:

Nineteen out of 21 members are supporting it, and Lebanon is not supporting it. We have an overwhelming majority. The mood of the Committee is very clear. The Chair has the right, I could have called for a show of hands, but the names are very clear. So, we will be accepting this amendment.

We go to para 4. Are there any objections to para 4? I see none.

We go to the next para. Paras 5 and 6. Are there any objections to paras 5 and 6? I see none.

Para 7. Please replace the names of the countries. Copy paste them from the top. Yes. Any objections to para 7? I see none.

Para 8, 9 and 10. I see no objections.

Para 11. Please copy paste the same. No requests for the floor.

Para 12. No requests for floor.

Para 13. Para 14. There is no request.

Yes, Lebanon.

The Delegation of Lebanon / La Délégation du Liban :

Thank you.

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Liban considère que, puisque ce dossier, ça fait 20 ans que le Comité est inquiet des problèmes qui se posent sur ce site, que pendant 20 ans, il y a eu toutes les tentatives possibles pour essayer d'aider l'État partie sans que ces tentatives n'aient réellement permis de pouvoir, de permettre que le site sorte des problèmes et des dangers qu'il est en train de, qui sont en train de. Nous pensons que c'est important de garder l'inscription du site, comme demandé dans la déclaration, dans le projet de décision d'origine, d'inscrire le site sur la Liste du patrimoine en danger. Puisque c'est le moyen, il semble que ça va être le seul moyen de permettre de pouvoir augmenter l'appui et l'aide de la communauté internationale à l'État partie pour pouvoir résoudre tous les problèmes qui se posent. Ça fait 20 ans que le Comité essaye et ça ne donne rien.

Voilà, Merci.

The Chairperson:

There is no point in repeating the same thing two times. You were given the floor for three minutes, as every other Member State was given, and you mentioned that point, and now you are repeating the same points. So, I please request Member States if there is nothing further new to add, we continue.

Is there any objection to para 13 that appears like this? I see none.

We go to para 14.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

This was for para 14, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

We go. Is there any objection to para 14?

Lebanon, is your plate up or down? Yes, Lebanon, is there anything new to say?

The Delegation of Lebanon:

I'm sorry. The para 14 is related to inscription of the site on the List in Danger. That's all.

This was *[mic cuts out]*. And Lebanon is alone. It's okay. But I mean, it's a question of principle.

The Chairperson:

You stand for your principles, and each and every one of the sovereign Member States also stands for principle. We are all very principled Member States here. And we continue.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Mr President, we understand this very well. I mean, it's not a problem. I, we respect totally the decision of all Member States, but.

The Chairperson:

You have not been granted the floor to speak. The last time I checked was that the Chair was here.

We go to para 14. Cancel. Is there any objection to this cancelling? I see none.

We go next. Para 12. Is there any objection to para 12? I see none.

We go up. There is one change that the Secretariat has requested. I will therefore give the Secretariat that floor. They have raised a question, and I will ask the Director of the World Heritage Centre to kindly take the floor. You have the floor, sir.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

It was on paragraph 3, indeed. And it was just to make sure that we understand clearly the amendments so that it will be easy for the Secretariat to follow up its implementation with the State Party. So here at the beginning, of course, the whole idea of the paragraph was, of course, on the need to implement the integrated management framework. So, if I understand, here the idea was more to be precise on, because you have the management plan and there is a plan of action. So, what we want is of course to understand, you know, the timeline, the actions and everything. So, is it exactly what the Delegation of India wanted to make clear here? So that it will be easy for us not only to help, to assist the Delegation of, the State Party of Nepal to follow up. We do understand the integrated plan of actions. Of course, this is very clear. So, what we were not clear on is the sector strategy. So maybe this could be clarified, so that we can follow up this clearly.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

India, would you like to respond to the Director of the WHC? You have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

I think what we are trying to say here is, you know, if we read it, if you allow us to read it. "Urges the State Party to facilitate rapid implementation", which means that we would want that this plan, that integrated management framework plan is implemented, you know, at the earliest for the property. And therefore, what we struck off was something which was which was repeating, you know, repeating above. And then we, of course, when we say, "related sector strategies", what usually happens is that these integrated management plans or frameworks usually have the sub-sectoral plans. And therefore, that is where we said that if that the related sector strategies basically emanate from that. But now that the Director World Heritage Centre has raised this question, perhaps we can request the State Party concerned here to clarify if they wish to do so.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Okay.

The State Party of Nepal, would you like to clarify? You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Nepal:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The idea was the State Party has submitted some sector strategy. So, we are submitting full set of sector strategies that has been prepared. And this will lead to the integrated plan of action. So, the schedule plan and implementation plan will come up with integrated framework, IMF, then sector strategies and integrated plan of action. I think I make it clear, Mr Chairperson.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Secretariat is okay with that. Thank you for the clarification and thank you. Now that we have gone through all the paragraphs, I would be adopting this decision as a whole. But before I do that, I will make one request to the Lebanese colleague.

Excellency, you are, you know, I had mentioned yesterday that we are all in love with Lebanese cuisine and we appreciate Lebanese wisdom. But today you made a sentence that, I may be alone, so it touched my heart. And let

me tell you, Lebanon is never alone. And you know, we love Lebanon, and we really look forward to your wisdom. And you are never alone till an Indian is here, Excellency. But may I request you that? Would you be considerate enough to look at this beautiful para again and see that, why the beautiful tree of Lebanon is standing by itself? Your Excellency, could you have it removed?

The Delegation of Lebanon:

No problem. I agree with you totally, dear Chair.

The Chairperson:

You can have the word Lebanon removed from there, please. Thank you.

I think this is the beauty of the World Heritage Convention, you know, how Member States are, you know, they come together, how they discuss, how they decide, and whether they oppose or they propose, let me assure you that at the heart of every Delegate of the Committee, their intention is to safeguard the heritage. It may be in any country, but it belongs to all of humanity and that is why it is World Heritage. I think this is the importance of UNESCO. UNESCO is perhaps one of the only subsidiary bodies of the United Nations system that is successful in bringing the whole world together, to work together as a team for the safeguarding of these heritage properties.

And with this, we are willing to adopt the decision as a whole. I see there are no objections.

So draft Decision **46 COM 7B.37** is adopted with amendments. *[gave]*

I would like now to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property.

And I see my brothers from Nepal are very pleased and they are raising their hands and raising their plate. I see even the monk from the monastery at Lumbini, he is also willing to take the floor. So, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Nepal:

Thank you very much.

Yes. This Decision is not only in favour of Nepal, but this decision in favour of world peace. Congratulations to all the members. Mr Chairperson, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Your Excellency for your exemplary leadership and the outstanding chairmanship. I also wish to commend the Government of India for the exceptional arrangements made for this 46th session of the World Heritage Committee meeting.

On behalf of the Nepalese Delegation, I extend our best wishes for the success of this important gathering. We extend our deepest gratitude to the Committee for the special consideration, the Birthplace of Lord Buddha, Lumbini, a symbol of world peace, for deciding not to inscribe it on the List of World Heritage in Danger. We express our sincere thanks to the Delegation of India for the instrumental role in submitting the amendment, and all the Committee members for their thoughtful deliberations and support to Nepal.

We are firmly committed to implement the recommendations of the joint reactive monitoring mission 2022 and 2023 International Scientific Committee meeting. We also wish to convey our profound appreciation to the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and other Advisory Bodies for their invaluable observations, which have significantly contributed to our efforts. I wish to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to safeguarding and managing this sacred site. We highly value the understanding and cooperation of the Committee members and earnestly seek the continued support of the international community. Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Nepal.

We proceed now further.

MIXED HERITAGE PROPERTIES // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MIXTE

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Item 7B, mixed properties, Europe and North America.

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Europe and North America region, for which all the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following two properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid region, Albania, North Macedonia ; and
- Laponian Area, Sweden.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

I request the technical team, please, do not mute the Chairperson. Whoever is in control of the operations here, if you mute me again, I will ask you to leave the venue.

Thank you, Mr Director.

If there is no objection from the Committee, on this state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out, as adopted. ^[gave]

The Chairperson:

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion.

I see the Observer State Party of Sweden would like to take the floor. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Sweden:

Thank you, Chair, for giving Sweden the floor.

Let us first congratulate you on your appointment and express our gratitude to India for the generous hosting of this meeting.

Sweden welcomes the Committee's decision regarding the Laponian Area, a mixed property consisting of a spectacular landscape connected to the traditional practice of reindeer husbandry by the Sámi people. In 2022, the Swedish Government granted an exploitation concession for the right to extraction and utilisation of iron some 30 kilometres to the south of the property. The concession gained legal force last month following a ruling by the Supreme Administrative Court. We would like to reassure the Committee that while the concession determines who has the right to extract the minerals, it does not give a right to start operations. This requires a permit under the Swedish Environmental Code following rigorous impact assessments.

We thank the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies, ICOMOS and IUCN for a successful collaboration on the reinforced monitoring mission that took place in May of this year. We are grateful for their high level of professionalism and strong commitment, and fully respect their advice as a fundamental part of the World Heritage system. The cost of the mission had predominantly been covered by the Swedish National Heritage Board to avoid straining the World Heritage Fund.

To conclude, Mr Chair, we affirm our continued commitment to the World Heritage Convention and to the conservation of the Laponian Area. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Any other Observer State Party would like to take the floor?

Which country? Observer State Party. You're not a State Party to the 1972 Convention.

Any Observer State Party would like to take the floor? I see none.

I now give the floor to International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage

NGO The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum (Observer):

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I am speaking on behalf of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage. The UNESCO World Heritage Laponian Area may be impacted by the Kallak mining concession, if it is approved in the future. The local Indigenous Peoples will most certainly be affected if this occurs.

Firstly, we would like to commend the State Party on their continual engagement with the Sámi people regarding this matter. However, we would like to point out that granting the Kallak mining concession before conducting properly detailed and robust consultations with the Sámi people to gain their free, prior and informed consent has resulted in a denial of their human rights. This could have been avoided and shows an obvious lack of recognition of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We commend the State Party for agreeing to the reactive monitoring mission. We are confident that they will ensure that the mission members are provided unrestricted access to the Sámi representatives, ensuring their concerns are fully considered in the reactive monitoring mission report. We look forward to continued dialogue at the 47th World Heritage Committee meeting.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for taking the trouble in coming here. We really respect your views and your comments, and this is the importance of NGOs in World Heritage. Thank you.

Are there any further requests? I see none. Let us proceed then.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÏBES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

We go to 7B, mixed, Latin America and the Caribbean.

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the mixed properties inscribed on the World Heritage List located in the Latin America and Caribbean region for which all the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. You have the floor, Mr Director.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

The property for which the report is proposed for adoption without discussion is Ancient Maya City and Protected Tropical Forests of Calakmul, Campeche, Mexico.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out adopted. ^[gave]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion.

Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

^[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

I wish to make a brief comment on this type of inscription, which is very important. Throughout the process of listing sites in danger, there seems to be a difference in opinions with regard to the Advisory Bodies who assess us and assist us. We have had discussions with some States who seem to view it as a confrontation, but the issue is that the matter is not really in our hands. It should be dealt with at the Conference of Parties. The stigma continues to exist regarding the perception that in danger is a punishment, and the Advisory Bodies need to carry on providing specific information, assisting us and assessing us, and we need to not see it as a confrontation, but rather something that should be dealt with at the Conference of Parties which is beyond our competences here.

We are very pleased with the way in which you've been leading these deliberations, and we hope that this will serve to guide us in the future in our work.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I had forgotten to express my thanks, during the Lumbini discussion, you had mentioned a wonderful connection that, you know, the List of World Heritage, list of properties on the List of World Heritage in Danger. A Delegate had very correctly said it should not be seen as a stigma, and I supported that. That is a logical view. But then you had

also mentioned an idealistic position and a real position, because in a real world, people may take it very differently. And I think the view that you expressed was very wise.

And the Delegate of Italy had also mentioned it very nicely. So, I thank both of you for that analysis. Thank you.

I now see that there are no further requests for the floor.

So, we will be proceeding then.

AFRICA // AFRIQUE

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of mixed properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, located in the Africa region and for which all the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. Mr Director, you have the floor.

Thank you.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

The following two properties. The following two properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Ennedi Massif: Natural and Cultural Landscape, Chad; and
- Ngorongoro Conservation Area, United Republic of Tanzania.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on the state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out as adopted. ^[gave]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision, without discussion. Tanzania, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Tanzania:

Dear Chairperson, Committee members,

The government of the United Republic of Tanzania thanks the State Party of India for the well-organized 46th session of World Heritage Committee meeting here in New Delhi, India. My Delegation has received highest level of hospitality, since landing in your beautiful city to this date. I'd like also to take this opportunity to thank you and the Committee for the good manner and high level of integrity and professionalism you have exemplified in conducting sessions of this Committee meeting. The State Party of the United Republic of Tanzania has accepted all decisions made for the best interest of our World Heritage sites, and we commend the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies for their efforts to make this meeting a success on World Heritage protection and conservation. The government of the United Republic of Tanzania wishes to state on record that we refute the notion of claims of forced eviction of our citizens and indeed we are concerned by the level of the ongoing misinformation campaign and unfounded allegations aimed at undermining our national efforts to balance heritage conservation, human rights, socioeconomic development and livelihoods of our citizens in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. To put things into context, after the failed multiple Land Use Model due to escalating human-wildlife conflicts, overpopulation of humans and livestock wide spreading zoonotic diseases, shrinking wildlife corridor and grazing land, lack of safe water sources and poor sanitation and the quest for socioeconomic development of its citizens. Consensus was reached through participatory and transparent process for a voluntary eviction programme. The government of the United Republic of Tanzania reiterates its position that there are no specific Indigenous Peoples in the United Republic of Tanzania. The government recognizes their communities with specific needs such as the Hadzabe and ensures that their civil-political, socioeconomic and cultural rights are promoted and respected. The government of the United Republic of Tanzania, guided by rule of law and the fundamental principles of good governance has placed human rights at the forefront, while addressing challenges in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. The government has invited the Advisory Mission from Ngorongoro Conservation Area in February 2024 and its report is under finalisation. The State Party commits to work closely with the Centre and other State Parties in addressing challenges facing its citizens in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. The government of the United

Republic of Tanzania is committed to observing human rights, heritage conservation and social-economic development. I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out as adopted. ^[gave]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision, without discussion. I see none. Let's proceed.

The Indigenous. International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage, you have the floor.

NGO The International Indigenous Peoples' Forum (Observer):

Okay. Thank you, Mr Chair. This is a statement of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on World Heritage regarding the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania, contained in Document 7B.4/Add.4.

We note that according to the Decision **7B 48**, a report with preliminary observations of the Advisory Mission is currently being completed. We have been informed that no information about the visit was given to the Indigenous Peoples, and that all stakeholder meetings were arranged in exclusion of Masai traditional leaders, elected local government leaders and Masai civil society organizations. We welcome the proposal to conduct a new mission to ensure the voices of the affected communities can be heard. We wish to request that the objective of such a mission be expanded beyond conservation to account for all three founding foundations of the Ngorongoro Conservation Areas as outlined in the 1959 NCA Act: conservation, tourism and the livelihoods of the Masai residents of the NCA.

We recommend that any future mission have the objective to examine not only the overall state of conservation of the property, but also the state of realization of the human rights of the peoples included, including those refusing relocation, as well as the carrying capacity of tourism as currently conducted and anticipated. These three elements are at the heart of the Multiple Land Use Plan and should not be separated in any assessment of the situation of the property.

Finally, we demand that any future mission should be conducted in line with international human rights standards and should ensure that consultations comply with the rights of Indigenous Peoples to free, prior and informed consent and meaning and effective participation both before and during the mission. This means that Indigenous Peoples should be involved in the elaboration of the objectives of the mission, as well as the development of a clear methodology to effectively consult affected people. Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

ARAB STATES // ÉTATS ARABES

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

Let us proceed then. I'll have to go for a meeting, but I'll ask the Vice-Chair Kenya to officiate in my absence. The item now is 7B, mixed Arab States.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Let me start by expressing my gratitude to the substantive Chair of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee. And while he's away, I'll hold brief.

And as he just mentioned, we are now on mixed properties from Arab States. I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the mixed properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, located in the Arab States region, for which all the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, and welcome.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

The following property for which the report is proposed for adoption without discussion is

- The Ahwar of Southern Iraq: Refuge of Biodiversity and the Relict Landscape of the Mesopotamian Cities, Iraq.

Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chairperson:

If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out adopted. ^[gave!]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion. I see none. Let's proceed then.

We now transition to nature properties in Africa.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES // BIENS DU PATRIMOINE NATUREL

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

7B.52 Lake Baikal (Russian Federation) // Lac Baïkal (Fédération de Russie)

The Vice-Chairperson:

Sorry, there was a typographical error. We are on item number 52. Lake Baikal, the Russian Federation, concerning the Europe and North America region.

I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Belgium to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the Lake Baikal, Russian Federation. Excellency, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair, for opening this item.

We requested to do so because we would like to ask a few questions to the Centre, Advisory Body and State Party that relate to last year's decision. You will remember that at that time, the Russian Federation was still a member of this Body.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you. I now invite Mr Guy Debonnet, Chief of the Natural Heritage Unit of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to provide their comments. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The 2003 reactive monitoring mission to this property concluded that its OUV is facing significant and ascertained threats and that the ecological condition is deteriorating, notably due to the long-term degradation of the water quality of the lake, the decline of endemic species, and the increasing anthropogenic pressures as a result of pollution, land use pressures and the weakening of the regulatory framework. Mr Chair, I haven't heard the question from Belgium, so if there are any questions, we would be happy to respond.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you.

We now invite IUCN to make their comments.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Perhaps, at our indulgence, perhaps, if the State Party of Belgium could pose their question. And then we will be pleased, very pleased to respond.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Are there any questions?

We give the floor to Belgium to ask any questions that they could be having.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair, and apologies. I was of the understanding that first the Centre and IUCN would present and then I could ask the questions. The questions are twofold.

The first relates to paragraph 3 of last year's decision, which stated that the State Party may not take any legislative initiatives that interfere with the maximum allowable variation in water level, and now I quote, "until the impacts of all existing water use and management regulations on the OUV are fully assessed and the requirements for its protection are set", end quote. The State Party was therefore in the decision asked to provide the impact study. And we would like to know, and this is maybe a question to the Centre and IUCN, whether they have already received the study and been able to examine it thoroughly. And also, what the water level variation is that this study proposes for Lake Baikal, in the case that they have received the study.

The second question relates to paragraph 5 of last year's decision, which referred to a study that analyses and reviews the impact of legislative initiatives on the World Heritage property. And the Committee specifically requested that the results of this study be used to strengthen the protection of Lake Baikal, including from a legislative point of view. So, we would like to have an update from the Russian Federation in this regard. Have they been able to or have they taken any initiative to translate the desired water level range into legislation?

Thank you, Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium.

Let's pass it to IUCN.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair. I will respond to the first question from Belgium.

So in response to the question on the impact study on the water level variations, the reactive monitoring mission that visited the property in December 2023 was informed that the State Party has conducted a three-stage scientific study to assess the impacts of the change in the water level of the lake on the state of conservation of the aquatic and coastal ecosystems, and the damage suffered by the coastal socio-economic infrastructures in connection with the management of the Irkutsk Hydropower Dam located downstream from the property. The summary results of this study were presented to the mission and indicate that the optimal range of Lake Baikal water level variation would be 1 metre, except for years with extreme water availability, confirming the validity of the legal regulations established by the State Party in 2001 that limit the water level variations to this one metre. However, from 2016 onwards, consecutive legal derogations have allowed much larger water level variations of up to 2.3 metres in Lake Baikal. The World Heritage Centre and IUCN welcomed the development of the scientific study, as it is expected to lead a way out of the current practice of derogations. However, neither the full scientific study nor the proposals for the updated legal framework on the water level regulation of Lake Baikal have yet been submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN, a request of which is reflected in the draft decision that we submitted to the Committee.

The World Heritage Centre and IUCN therefore confirmed the continued relevance of the Committee's last decision from September 2003, by which the Committee urged the State Party to refrain from renewing legislative amendments, which will allow extending the water level variation beyond one metre until the impacts of all existing water use and the management regulations on the OUV are fully assessed, and the results shared with the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN and the requirements for the protection of the property's OUV are set.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Vice-Chairperson:

I would like to know whether there are any comments. I see none.

Let's proceed then. I now invite you.

I'm being reminded that there was a question posed to Russia. Please, Russia, would you respond to Belgium?

The Observer Delegation of the Russian Federation:

[interpretation from Russian] Mr Chairman, dear colleagues,

As has been said, the mission from the Centre and the IUCN were given information that it was still temporary, and we now have the final and definitive information about the monitoring of the lake. Unfortunately, it is still only in Russian. And as soon as the translation will be finalised, it will be transmitted and shared with the World Heritage Centre.

The Vice-Chairperson:

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.52** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

The Rapporteur / Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président. J'ai reçu il y a quelques instants les amendements proposés par la Belgique, dont la traduction française est en cours de finition. Je vais dès lors.

Therefore, I will present them in English, since they were submitted in English very recently.

The amendments start para 5. I will read the whole paragraph, if you may. "Welcomes the development of the study to assess the environmental and socio-economic impacts of the water level regime of Lake Baikal. Requests the State Party to submit the study to the World Heritage Centre and to make it available on the Lake Baikal Ecological Portal, and also urges the State Party to elaborate, by the end of 2024, detailed proposals to develop water level regulations of Lake Baikal to be compatible with the protection of the property's OUV, and to submit these proposals to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN". Adding this part "reminding the State Party to refrain from using any legislative amendments which allow extending the water level variation beyond 1 meter due to potential negative impact on the property and its OUV". I think we can directly say OUV. "Until the before mentioned study and the legislative proposals of all water use and management regulations on the OUV is reviewed by IUCN and the requirement for its protection are set".

After that, we can go to the last para. "Finally, requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1st February 2025 an updated report on the state of conservation of the property, reflecting progress on the implementation of the above, including the recommendations of the 2023 reactive monitoring mission for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session". Therefore, I would also like maybe from Belgium to clarify if they meant to change 48th to 47th? Yes. Okay. 47th session. So, 2025.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you.

Ukraine has requested for the floor.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

It is well known that Lake Baikal is a unique natural object of universal importance. Let me remind you that this is the deepest lake on our planet. There are huge reserves of fresh water are concentrated, which is becoming even more valuable and important resource every year. In addition, this lake is known for its rich biodiversity, which includes a significant number of endemic species. But the active economic activity within the property has led to numerous problems that threaten the OUV. However, a significant number of critical problems still occur. This is particularly noted in the report of the joint reactive monitoring mission of the World Heritage Centre, and the IUCN, which took place in December 2023. Let me quote briefly "based on the finding of the 2023 reactive monitoring mission, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN concludes that OUV of the property faces significant ascertained and potential threats. The environmental condition of the property is deteriorating, notably due to the long-term degradation of the water quality of Lake Baikal, illustrated by the development of unprecedented algal blooms and bacterial pollution. The presence of polluting chemical substances in the water, and increasing plastic pollution and the decline of certain endemic species that are bioindicators of the health of the lake".

Taking into account all of the above, it is necessary to intensify action to preserve the unique natural heritage. In particular, we propose to amend paragraph 11 and 12 and propose to organise a reactive monitoring mission to the site in the summer of 2025 and to submit the relevant report to the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session. We support proposal the proposal of Belgium.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you.

Let's now examine the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.52** paragraph by paragraph.

For paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4, there are no amendments. So, we adopt.

We go to paragraph 5. So, paragraph 5. No objection.

And because of that we move to we consider paragraphs 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, 11 too, over the page.

On paragraph 11, the Rapporteur wants to take the floor. Please, Rapporteur, you have the floor.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je souhaiterais que soit reflété à l'écran l'amendement Ukrainien soumis à l'instant qui suggère que la mission de suivi sur le bien en 2026 pendant la saison estivale soit remplacé par « sur le bien en 2025 pendant la saison estivale ».

Je vous remercie.

The Vice-Chairperson:

There is a correction there. Is there any objection for these amendments? There is none.

We move to paragraph 12. We are now in paragraph 12.

We have Viet Nam, followed by Ukraine.

La Délégation du Viet Nam :

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

J'aimerais avoir l'avis du Secrétariat ou des Organes consultatifs sur la nécessité et la faisabilité de déployer une mission en 2025 au lieu de 2026.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Secretariat, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I want to point out that the mission just visited the property in December 2023, and the mission did recognize that there was a need for a new mission to follow up on some of the points, which is proposed in the draft decision for 2026. I think we also need to give the State Party the time to be able to respond to some of the recommendations of the 2023 mission, and therefore, I think a mission in 2025 might not be the best solution. It might be better to keep the mission at 2026, to allow for the State Party to implement some of the recommendations that were established by the 2023 mission. But of course, if the Committee decides otherwise, we will definitely see how we can do that.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you.

I wish to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre on the same.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

It is in the same, just to confirm exactly what my colleagues have said. I think we really need to give the State Party the time to implement the 2023 recommendations of the mission. So, I think in our view it is important to keep the mission in 2026, in order for the mission really to be able to assess the implementation of the recommendations by the State Party. So, I hope the Delegation of Ukraine would agree with us in terms of the methodology and the time and the efficiency of a satisfactory monitoring of the reactive monitoring mission on the site.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Director.

We now move to paragraph.

Ukraine, are you agreeable to retaining 2026 on paragraph 11?

The Delegation of Ukraine:

No.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Members of the Committee, what is your say on that?

Viet Nam, please, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Mr Chair, I think that Ukraine has raised their flag before me.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Back to Ukraine, please.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

I will discuss on Point 11.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Yes, we are still on Point 11.

Ukraine has dropped. Let's go back to Viet Nam.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I thank the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for their explanation, which are very useful. That's why we would like to propose to keep the recommendations for the 2026 mission. And thus, in the same vein, we would like on paragraph 12 to have the Committee examine this issue at the 48th session, as recommended by the Advisory Bodies.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Having heard the Secretariat, we also think that we should stick with 2026. And I'm still considering whether we should go for the 47th or the 48th session. If we ask a report by 1st February of next year, there's no sense in leaving it on the shelf for a year and a half. So, it's probably better to already have maybe an intermediate look at it next year. And then in two years' time, look at the results of the mission.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Ukraine, we want to pose a question to you so that you can be able to find a way of sorting out paragraph 11. Are you okay with reverting back to 2026?

The Delegation of Ukraine:

No.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Saint Vincent, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr Chair, after listening to the Secretariat, to the Director, maybe it's more logical to keep 2026. This was a clear explanation.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

I give the floor to Lebanon.

La Délégation du Liban :

Merci, M. le Président.

À partir du moment où le Directeur du Centre et les Organes consultatifs préconisent la date de 2026, je veux dire, il n'y a aucun sens de demander, à notre avis, de changer cette date. Il vaut mieux rester sur 2026, bien évidemment.

The Vice-Chairperson:

We are back to Ukraine. We wouldn't want to get stuck. But in the spirit of consensus, and having heard the different opinions from the Secretariat and our esteemed Committee members, would you then accept to work with 2026?

The Delegation of Ukraine:

No.

The Vice-Chairperson:

We are compelled to open the floor for other Committee members to contribute to the current debate.

Our esteemed Committee members Viet Nam, Belgium, Saint Vincent, and Lebanon are all in favour of 2026. And in view of that, we settle the matter because the majority have the say and we've given opportunity to the rest of the Committee members to contribute to this and I've received guidance from the Secretariat accordingly.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Allow me to make perhaps a clarification that may help the Committee to take this decision. The fact that the Centre and IUCN consider the right time to do reactive monitoring mission in 2026 would not prevent the Committee for requesting a state of conservation report by 1st February to be brought to the attention of the next Committee session. So, I just want to make that clarification. The fact that the reactive monitoring mission does not happen in 2025 does not mean that the Committee cannot request a state of conservation for examination at its next session, so I hope this helps.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you for the clarification.

Ukraine, we've had more clarification from the Secretariat and the experts.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Okay. Thank you very much. For the sake of consensus, yes.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you very much.

We now move to paragraph 12. We are on paragraph 12, the last paragraph.

Objections? Any objection from any member? There is no objection. And we now, I believe, are ready to.

Ukraine, you have the floor.

La Délégation de l'Ukraine :

Merci, Monsieur.

Nous voudrions que notre nom soit inscrit avec l'amendement Belge. Merci.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Well noted.

I want to give the floor to the Secretariat for some clarification. Sorry, we are not moving as fast. I should have put an "L", if you come from a country or an "A" if you come from France.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

No, I think, the 2025, 1st February 2025 is, of course, corresponding to the 47th session. So I think it should be, I hope the Viet Nam Ambassador is in agreement with it so that it's. I just wanted to clarify.

The Vice-Chairperson:

We are now ready to adopt the whole decision. Okay.

Rapporteur, you have the floor. As we consider the whole.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Avant de voter, enfin avant de se prononcer sur l'ensemble de la décision, je voulais m'assurer que nous parlons bien, pour le dernier paragraphe, d'un rapport soumis pour le 1^{er} février 2025 pour examen au Comité lors de sa 47^e session en 2025 également. Merci.

The Vice-Chairperson:

I give the floor to Viet Nam, as you seek to clarify.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Yes. Thank you, Mr Chair.

So, is it the initial recommendation by the Advisory Bodies that the report will be submitted in 2025 for the examination at the 47th session? Right? Okay. So, we can go along with that.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Viet Nam. Thank you all.

Therefore, we are ready to adopt the entire decision.

And I therefore declare the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.52** adopted as amended. *[gave]*

Thank you very much. I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property. I see none. Let's proceed then.

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Vice-Chairperson:

Moving on to Natural World Heritage properties, I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the natural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, located in the Europe and North America region, for which all the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following four properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Białowieża Forest, Belarus, Poland;
- Wadden Sea, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands;
- Volcanoes of Kamchatka, Russian Federation;
- Western Caucasus, Russian Federation.

Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chairperson:

If there is no objection from the Committee on these state of conservation reports, I declare the decisions read out adopted. *[gave]*

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion.

State Party of Belarus, you have the floor.

The Observe Delegation of the Republic of Belarus:

[interpretation from Russian] Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Committee, Distinguished Delegates,

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On behalf of the Delegation of Belarus, allow me to express my appreciation for giving me the floor. The Forest of Białowieża is the last forest in Europe where you can still observe nature in its almost initial state. We are concerned by the construction of artificial fences by Poland around this site. This is an infringement of the hydrological and ecological system. There are also invasive plants and species appearing, which prevent the free circulation of animals in their natural environment. This represents a threat to the conservation of populations and wildlife.

We wish to thank the World Heritage Centre for having organised in March a reactive monitoring mission in the Białowieża Forest. We thank the experts for this mission. The findings of this mission are reflected in the decision of the Committee, and we wish to draw your attention to the need to adopt specific and urgent measures in order to mitigate the negative impact throughout the site, in coordination between the three concerned parties. And this will assist us in improving the state of conservation.

Since January 2022, there's been a lack of response from the Polish authorities to our requests. The reactive monitoring mission highlighted the importance of transboundary cooperation, at least when it comes to the extent of technical information. Belarus wishes to ask the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to work as an intermediary between Belarus and Poland in order to renew transboundary cooperation between our countries in order to effectively implement the recommendation.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Belarus, please conclude.

The Observer Delegation of the Republic of Belarus:

[interpretation from Russian] We are wrapping up. This will serve to mitigate the negative impacts in the Białowieża Forest. We wish to have this reflected in the report of this meeting. Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Belarus.

Poland has the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Poland:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, first of all, let me seize this opportunity to thank the World Heritage Centre and IUCN for the work on the World Heritage site, Białowieża Forest, and for an excellent cooperation and understanding we have had with them in this regard.

Mr Chair, our state border remains under increased pressure due to illegal crossings. This situation has been provoked, planned and is consistently implemented by the Belarusian authorities. These actions by Belarus have a detrimental impact on Białowieża Forest, the World Heritage site. The continuous, long-lasting character of a border crisis became apparent, and all our efforts to settle this situation by diplomatic means had not brought any unexpected results. Therefore, Poland decided that it was necessary to build a barrier along the state border with Belarus to ensure our safety and security.

However, a set of measures aimed at preventing, limiting or compensating for environmental impacts of the barrier has been implemented. One of the major tasks has been to reduce the possible barrier effect on wild animals. At the same time, it should be emphasized that despite the determination of the Polish nature conservation services to keep the border unobstructed for wild animals, the border is not and will not be unobstructed due to the Belarusian barrier existing for a long time, the so-called "Sistema". In many places we start engineering installation along the entire border of Belarus, which runs closely adjacent to the border with Poland, which in fact prevents animals from crossing the border.

Mr Chair, Poland is open for the dialogue with the Belarusian authorities once they cease to conduct hostile actions in the Polish part of the World Heritage site, Białowieża Forest.

Mr Chair, in conclusion, Poland remains open for a constructive dialogue and discussion with regard to the World Heritage site, Białowieża Forest, and stands ready to welcome again IUCN and the WHC reactive monitoring mission in 2027.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Poland.

Russian Federation, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the Russian Federation:

[interpretation from Russian] Chairperson, thank you for giving me the floor.

The Russian Federation wishes to support the Republic of Belarus in its efforts to conserve this unique site, the Białowieża Forest.

Since 1945, Belarus and the Russian Federation have been carrying out a project in order to preserve the population of bison, and we are currently seeing a drop in the numbers of these animals due to the construction of artificial and, in our view, pointless fences along our territory, borders. We are open to a constructive dialogue between Poland, Belarus and the Russian Federation in order to establish corridors for the circulation of these animals, which are unique in this forest and worldwide.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you for your comments. It's now my pleasure to invite back the substantive Chair. Your Excellency.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÏBES**Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat****The Chairperson:**

Thank you very much. Thank you.

7B nature, Latin America and the Caribbean. I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the natural properties for which all the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Maybe before starting, let me again thank the Distinguished Ambassador of Kenya for his chairmanship. Thank you very much.

The following property for which the report is proposed for adoption without discussion is

El Pinacate and Gran Desierto de Altar Biosphere Reserve, Mexico.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. If there is no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the decision read out as adopted. *[gave]*

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision, without discussion. I see none.

Let's proceed then.

AFRICA // AFRIQUE**7B.57 Ivindo National Park (Gabon) // Parc national de l'Ivindo (Gabon)****The Chairperson:**

Yes. 7B, Natural Properties Africa, Ivindo National Park, Gabon.

Concerning the Africa region, I would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Kenya to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of Ivindu National Park, Gabon. Kenya, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Hello. Thank you, Chair.

Actually, it's Senegal. Senegal and Rwanda that are on the form. Thank you, Chair. We submitted it as Vice-chair of the group on behalf of the whole group. But Senegal and Rwanda have the submission.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

That's what you are saying. But my scenario is saying differently. So, I'll ask the Secretariat to clarify.

Sorry for that, Senegal, there was some typo out here. The S, it was, instead of Senegal, it was written as Kenya. So, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Senegal / La Délégation du Sénégal :

Yes. Thank you, Mr Chair.

This is draft decision that actually completes and clarifies the decision taken at the 44th session, and which requested the State Party to submit a report before the 1st December 2025. This includes the property management plan delayed due to COVID-19.

Donc, M. le Président. Il y a simplement des changements techniques au projet de décision. Pour l'essentiel, nous sommes d'accord avec l'État partie. Il y a un petit changement qui est intervenu. Et le changement, au lieu de dire crise politique-militaire ici, nous allons apporter quelques changements, et sur le Point 3, notamment. Et donc il s'agit de changements mineurs qui ne devraient poser aucun problème et je voudrais proposer qu'on passe à son adoption.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now invite Mr Guy Debonnet, Chief of the Natural Heritage Unit of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, to provide their comments. You have the floor.

Le Secrétariat :

Merci, M. le Président.

Comme le Sénégal n'a pas posé des questions, je ne pense pas que c'est nécessaire de notre part d'intervenir. S'il y a une question, nous sommes prêts à répondre.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would like to know whether there are any comments from any States Parties. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.57** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Effectivement, comme annoncé par la Délégation Sénégalaise, nous avons bien reçu des propositions d'amendement soumises par le Sénégal et co-écrites par le Rwanda.

Elles commencent au paragraphe 3 de la décision, « notant le retard accumulé dans le processus d'actualisation du plan de gestion du bien en raison de la pandémie de COVID-19 et du changement politique intervenu le 20 août 2023 », à la place de « la crise politico-militaire ». Avant ça, je souhaiterais peut-être demander à la Délégation du Sénégal s'ils veulent supprimer la motion de la pandémie de COVID-19, suite à ce que vous venez d'expliquer ou si vous souhaitez le maintenir dans le texte.

Sous-point a) du même paragraphe 3, un ajout. « tient compte de la protection de la valeur universelle du bien, y compris dans le cadre d'inventaire de biodiversité et d'un plan de suivi pour la biodiversité de ses eaux douces et de ses forêts, ainsi que le renforcement des capacités de suivi phénologique basé sur la fructification et la floraison des arbres, tel que recommandé dans leur rapport de conservation du bien de 2024 ».

Et je remercie d'ailleurs la Délégation Sénégalaise de m'avoir appris le mot « phénologique ». Merci.

The Chairperson:

Senegal, it's all your day. Yesterday, today, it's all your day. But there is a request by the Rapporteur that, could you delete the reference to the COVID-19 pandemic, if I heard that right? Senegal, you have the floor. Is it okay if the Rapporteur removes it? Please unmute, Senegal. Technical team. Can someone please come and have a look at

the mic of the Senegalese Delegation, please? We will wait. Can I request somebody from the technical side to come and look at the mic of the Senegalese Delegation?

I think your mic is now working. You can return back to your country.

The Delegation of Senegal:

Thank you. Now I'm back to my country. So, to move, yes, we keep « de la pandémie de COVID-19 et du changement politique intervenu le 20 août 2023 ». Thank you, Chair. We keep « en raison de la pandémie de COVID-19 ».

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Mr Rapporteur? All right.

We go para by para.

Go to para 1. Are there any objections to paras 1 and 2. I see none.

We go to para 3. Are there any objections to the suggestion by Senegal and Rwanda? I see none.

We go to para 3 a). I see no plates.

We go to para 3 b). c). I see no objections.

We go to para 4, para 5.

We go to para 6, para 7, para 8. I see no objections.

Are there any objections to adopting this decision as a whole? I see none. This decision is adopted without amendments, ^[gavel] **46 COM 7B.57**. Thank you very much.

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property. I see no plates. Let's proceed then.

7B.60 Mosi-oa-Tunya / Victoria Falls (Zambia, Zimbabwe) // Mosi-oa-Tunya / Chutes Victoria (Zambie, Zimbabwe)

The Chairperson:

We go to Mosi-oa-Tunya / Victoria Falls, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

I now would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Kenya to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of Mosi-oa-Tunya / Victoria Falls, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Kenya, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair.

We wish to open the draft decision for amendment, as it includes certain elements that were dealt with in the 45th session in Riyadh, and yet they appear again in the current DR, and we wish to therefore amend the DR. Also, we were informed of a recent meeting actually was held yesterday between the two States Parties concerned, Zambia and Zimbabwe and the IUCN, and an agreement reached and therefore certain amendments have also been proposed to integrate some of the elements from the meeting.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

And no questions have been asked from the Secretariat. So, I assume you would be saying the same thing, or would you like to take the floor?

The Secretariat:

We would like to briefly take the floor if possible.

The Chairperson:

Yes.

The Secretariat:

Thank you.

The World Heritage Centre and IUCN remain very concerned about the tourism infrastructure development in this property, which is an increasing pressure on the Outstanding Universal Value. Already, certain tourism infrastructure, such as the Mosi-oa-Tunya Livingstone Resort Hotel, were constructed despite the Committee's request to halt further activities. Other infrastructure projects seem to be planned in the areas recognised as highly sensitive zones, according to the previous joint integrated management plan. It is therefore important that the ongoing update of the joint integrated management plan incorporates necessary safeguards and thresholds to mitigate against the development pressures, as well as a clear zonation of the property with well prescribed limits of use and permissible activities in line with the objectives of protecting the OUV and in line with past Committee decisions.

We note the information provided by the State Party that the finalization of the joint management plan has been delayed for the purposes of alignment with other respective national documents. However, we stress the urgency of putting in place the mentioned safeguards and consider that no further developments should be permitted unless these are in place.

Mr Chair, IUCN also has a complement to make.

Thank you.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The World Heritage Centre and IUCN would like to thank the States Parties of Zambia and Zimbabwe for the constructive discussions that were made possible in the meeting between the two States Parties, the World Heritage Centre and IUCN yesterday, which was just raised, which allowed for an open and constructive exchange regarding the draft decision wording and the proposed amendments that were tabled today.

As has been outlined by the World Heritage Centre, overall, we continue to remain concerned about tourism development projects and their pressure on the OUV of the property, and it remains critical that a strategic approach to tourism planning and management is undertaken, including through the finalization of the joint integrated management plan for the property, as well as environmental impact assessments, so as to ensure that tourism development is appropriately planned, assessed and managed in relation to the property and its OUV.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments. I see none. I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.60** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous avons effectivement reçu un amendement du Kenya pour cette décision sur Mosi-oa-Tunya / Chutes Victoria, Zambie, Zimbabwe.

Amendement qui débute au paragraphe 4 avec un remplacement de toutes les recommandations par « des recommandations de la mission de suivi réactive de 2022 » et la suppression de la fin du paragraphe.

Nouveau paragraphe 5, « rappelant également sa préoccupation concernant la pression croissante des infrastructures touristiques à l'intérieur et autour du bien exacerbée par une mise en œuvre insuffisante de la planification stratégique, reconnais que la révision du plan de gestion intégré commun PGIC », JIMP en anglais, « pour le bien a été retardé afin de l'aligner avec d'autres documents nationaux pertinents, et demande aux États parties de finaliser le PGIC dès que possible et de s'assurer qu'il comprenne les garanties et seuils nécessaires pour atténuer les pressions du développement afin de protéger la VUE du bien, ainsi qu'un zonage du bien comprenant des limites clairement déterminées concernant l'utilisation et les activités autorisées, y compris les infrastructures, conformément aux objectifs de protection de la VUE et aux précédentes décisions du Comité, fixer les limites précises du bien et de sa zone tampon en vue de conclure l'inventaire rétrospectif du bien, rendre compte de l'harmonisation des différents plans et documents politiques nationaux et transfrontaliers ». Plans de politique, si c'est "policy" en anglais. « Soumettre le PGIC au Centre du patrimoine mondiale avant le 30 juin 2025 pour examen par IUCN avant qu'il ne soit adopté ».

Paragraphe suivant, légère modification, « pour éviter l'impact sur la VUE du bien » au lieu « d'impact sur le bien ».

Proposition de suppression de l'ancien paragraphe 8.

Et c'est tout pour cet amendement, M. le Président.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any objections to paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4? 1, 2, 3, I see none.

We go to para 4, the amendments. Are there any observations to paragraph 4?

Republic of Korea, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Republic of Korea, first of all, greatly appreciate the continued cooperation between the States Parties of Zambia and Zimbabwe and their partners to improve the state of conservation of the Mosi-oa-Tunya / Victoria Falls. And we take note of the improvement efforts made by the States Parties such as the ongoing research, monitoring and management activities.

And regarding the amendment submitted by Kenya and regarding the para 4, we agree that if this deleted phrase means that it can be integrated into the scheduled revised joint integrated management plan, then we agree that this phrase can be deleted.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see Rwanda. You have the floor.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci. M. le Président.

Le Rwanda se joint au Kenya pour l'amendement proposé aux points 4 et suivant. Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We go to paragraph 5.

Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The paragraph 5 is, because the JIMP, joint integrated management plan revision has been delayed. So, the proposed new paragraph 5 includes the. Okay.

The Chairperson:

We could hear you loud and clear.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Okay. Yes. Proposed new paragraph 5 includes a reason for the delay, and contains all requests presented in paragraph 8 of the draft decision, indicating the new deadline for JIMP submission to the World Heritage Centre by end of June 2025. Therefore, we agreed to the new paragraph 5 and the deletion of the paragraph 8.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Republic of Korea, you have agreed to this paragraph 5. And the second part was deletion of paragraph 8. Okay, because you agreed to that. Thank you.

So, we go back to para 5 quickly. All right, para 5 as amended, and along with its subsections a) to a), b), c), d). Are there any objections to this? I see none.

We go to para 6. I see no objections to this.

Para 7. No objections.

Para 8. No objections.

Deletion of the old para 8. I see no objections.

We go to para 9 and para 10. I see no objections.

Now we go for adoption of this entire draft decision, as amended as a whole. Are there any objections? I see none.

I therefore declare the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.60** adopted as amended. ^[gavel]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property. I don't see any Observer States Parties here. This is for Observer States Parties.

Zimbabwe.

The Observer Delegation of Zimbabwe:

Mr Chair, since Zimbabwe is taking the floor for the first time, we would like to thank you for the excellent steering of the deliberations so far. We would like also, we would also like to express our gratitude to the Government of India for graciously hosting us, as well as extending our appreciation to UNESCO World Heritage Centre for excellent organization of the session. We also appreciate the work and expert advice offered by AWHF and IUCN in reviewing the draft resolution.

Mr Chair, we would like to reinforce what has already been presented by Kenya and supported by the Republic of Korea and Rwanda, with particular reference to paragraph 5, the issue of blueprint is discussed and settled in Saudi Arabia during the 45th session of the HWC during Decision **45 COM 7B.10**. We therefore note that the same issue is recurring in the current draft resolution, yet it is a settled matter that needs no further intervention. Therefore, this should be struck off from the draft resolution. Both States Parties of Zambia, of Zimbabwe and Zambia commit to meet the joint integrated management plan to IUCN for review on or before the 30 June 2025.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Any other State Party, Observer State Party would like to take the floor? I see none. Let us proceed then.

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the natural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, located in the Africa region for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion. Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following three properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- W-Arly-Pendjari Complex, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger;
- Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary, Senegal; and
- Serengeti National Park, United Republic of Tanzania.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there is no objection from the Committee on the state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out adopted. ^[gavel]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion. I see none. Let us proceed then.

7B.61 Socotra Archipelago (Yemen) // Archipel de Socotra (Yémen)

The Chairperson:

This is now related to Socotra Archipelago, Yemen.

I now would like to give the floor to the Delegation of Belgium to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the Socotra Archipelago, Yemen. Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Socotra Archipelago, inscribed on the World Heritage List on 2008 based on Criterion (x), is globally important for the biodiversity conservation because of its exceptionally rich and distinct flora and fauna. Thirty seven percent (37%) of Socotra's plant species, 90% of its reptile species, and 95% of its land snail species do not occur anywhere else in the world. Socotra is particularly important to the Horn of Africa's biodiversity hotspot, as one of the most biodiverse, rich and distinct islands in the world. And that is, Chair, why this island has been termed the Galapagos of the Indian Ocean.

Belgium has studied the dossier in detail and has proposed to open the discussion on this magnificent site in order to highlight the important concerns regarding the conservation status of the Socotra Archipelago. Based on our information and the analysis of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN, identified and potential threats include climate change, overfishing, impacting coral reefs, infrastructure development, water management challenges, urbanization leading to cultural shifts away from traditional land use practices, and overgrazing.

Although there have been some very valuable initiatives on the ground, and I would like to emphasize that, regarding habitat restoration, we also feel that insufficient progress has been made in addressing some critical conservation issues. In addition, the State Party has not been able to submit a state of conservation report for 2024. Given the complex geopolitical dynamics in the region, these challenges demand urgent attention and concerted international cooperation.

And therefore, Belgium proposes an amendment to the draft decision to underscore the urgency of several conservation measures and to enhance international collaboration for safeguarding of the unique biodiversity of Socotra Archipelago.

We would also like to refer to the very constructive dialogue we had with the Honourable Delegation of Yemen over the past few days, which has highlighted their willingness to address these issues and their openness to receive the reactive monitoring mission as soon as possible. And in this regard, I would like to ask the State Party of Yemen to share their perspective regarding the SOC and the reactive monitoring mission.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Mr Guy Debonnet, would you like to take the floor?

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The World Heritage Centre and IUCN remain concerned that the property remains threatened by pressures such as infrastructure development, invasive species, as well as limited funding and the management capacity resulting from the conflict in Yemen. While the State Party has invited the reactive monitoring mission to the property, its organization has been difficult because of different logistical issues. However, it is a priority for the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to organise this mission as soon as possible. The mission will assess the state of conservation of the property and look into the different threats to the OUV mentioned by Belgium.

Regarding the collection of marine resources, which is also one of the amendments proposed by Belgium, we note that the State Party in 2019 mentioned that fishing remains seasonal and traditional, and that fishing activities have decreased due to the public sector employment, resulting in reduced pressure on the marine environment. They also reported that the reopened fish factory has not led to an increase in fishing, and that local authorities have stopped illegal sea cucumber harvesting by non-Socotra investors. IUCN also has a small comment to make on this side.

Thank you.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

As outlined by the World Heritage Centre, in the absence of a State Party report this year, it is difficult to confirm the current state of conservation of the property and hence the World Heritage Centre and IUCN have recommended that the Committee reiterate the majority of its request from its last 45th session, and we continue to remain in active planning with the State Party for the aforementioned reactive monitoring mission, which is hoped to be undertaken in the coming months. This mission will be an important opportunity to ascertain the situation on the ground and the state of conservation of the property, and to propose effective technical recommendations for the property moving forward.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments. I see.

Yes, Qatar, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

We support the Belgian proposal for amendment as it addresses several missing points regarding the recommendation for the conservation of Socotra Archipelago. Additionally, it highlights and supports the efforts made by the State Party, Yemen.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Viet Nam.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair. We have two points to make.

First, given the complex current situation in the State Party and the region, it would be very helpful for the international community to continue to support the government to implement the programmes of safeguarding and protection of the site.

And secondly, we welcome the willingness of the State Party to receive the reactive monitoring mission. And we also welcome the announcement that the Secretariat has mentioned that the mission will be taken very soon. And this will be very useful, so that we can have a better understanding about the state of conservation of the property.

And in this regard, we wish to support the amendment proposed by Belgium.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see no more further requests.

I will now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.61** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Vous l'aurez compris, M. le Président, nous avons reçu un amendement de la part de la Belgique soutenu à l'instant par le Qatar et le Viet Nam.

Amendement qui débute avec le paragraphe 5 de la décision, « demande que le PZC, le plan de zonage de conservation, soit finalisé en priorité et soumis au Centre du patrimoine mondial et rappelle à l'État partie que tout projet de développement planifié au sein du bien, de sa zone tampon ou de son cadre élargi devrait être sujet à une évaluation spécifique de ces impacts potentiels sur la VUE du bien conformément aux guide et boîte à outil pour les évaluations d'impact dans un contexte de patrimoine mondial avant des décisions difficilement réversibles ne soient prises ».

Ajout d'un paragraphe 7, « rappelant également que selon de précédents rapports, la pêche et la récolte de ressources aquatiques dans le cœur de la zone marine et des zones tampon représentent des menaces importantes, demande à l'État partie d'évaluer les menaces potentielles pesant sur la faune marine en raison de la surpêche et de la récolte des ressources aquatiques ».

Ajout d'un paragraphe 10, « note avec satisfaction les efforts de l'État partie pour assurer la coordination avec les organisations et projets internationaux afin de protéger la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du site, y compris les actions visant à conserver les zones humides Ramsar, la restauration de l'habitat par la reforestation, et la diffusion d'activités telles que le Projet SSC/FCC de l'UICN, la deuxième phase du Projet Franklinia sur les arbres en péril, les Amis de Socotra, et encourage l'État partie à poursuivre et élargir ses initiatives en y incluant des projets de sensibilisation sociale et de renforcement des capacités ».

Plus loin, au paragraphe 14, remplace « réitère sa demande » par « note les efforts de l'État partie pour inviter une mission conjointe de suivi réactif, une mission de suivi réactif conjointe Centre du patrimoine mondial UICN sur le bien et demande à nouveau qu'elle soit effectuée dans les meilleurs délais afin d'évaluer si le bien remplit les conditions pour une inscription sur la Liste de patrimoine mondial en péril, et de formuler des recommandations pour assurer la préservation de la VUE du bien ».

Suppression de la dernière partie de l'amendement 14 et fin de l'amendement sur l'Archipel de Socotra.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Let's go paragraph by paragraph, quickly.

We go to para 1. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Yes.

Para 1 to 4. Are there any objections for adopting paras 1 to 4? I see none.

We go to para 5.

I see Japan. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

We don't have any objections to the contents of the proposal. However, it seems to us that this addition is similar to paragraph 8A. So, we would like to ask Belgium the difference between two sentences.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Belgium, you have the floor to respond to that specific question. The difference between the two sentences. One is obviously para 8 a). Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

So, the para 5 refers to the development projects. While, was that old para 8?

The Chairperson:

7 a), old para.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Yes. Okay. Sorry. Yes, I think it's effectively right that there is an overlap. It refers also to the development projects.

The Chairperson:

Would you like to delete something from para 5?

The Delegation of Belgium:

It might be a suggestion to delete 8 a).

The Chairperson:

Can we go to 8 a); ~~strikeout 8 a)~~.

All right. We go back to para 5.

Republic of Korea, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Actually, we had the same question about the overlapping between 5 and 8 a) and we agree to amendment in principle.

And the main difference between two paras will be the comprehensiveness of the proposed amendment in para 5 mentioning the property, not only property but also buffer zones and its wider setting. So, if the amendment intends to give more, stronger comprehensive action, then we can, the Belgium amendment can be in 8 a), including property areas and also buffer zones and wider setting. In that direction, I think the amendment will be improved.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

8 a) has already been struck out by Belgium.

So, I see there are no further objections to this para 5.

We continue to para 6. Are there any objections to para 6? I see none.

Para 7. Are there any objections to para 7? I see none.

We go to the new para 8, and 8 a) has been struck out by Belgium and we go to the new para 8 a), b), are there any objections to that? We see none.

We go to new para 9. Any objections? I see none.

We go to para 10. Are there any comments for para 10? I see none.

We go to paras 11, 12, 13. Are there any objections? I see none.

We go to para 14. Are there any objections? I see none.

We go to para 15. Para 15 please. Are there any objections? I see none.

We will now adopt the entire para as a whole. Are there any objections for adoption of this para as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 7B.61** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Thank you. I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property. I see none. Let's proceed then.

Yemen, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Yemen:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair, and congratulations for your election. I also commend India for hosting the Committee sessions and hospitality. I also commend the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

Yemen is strongly committed to the World Heritage Convention and in protecting and safeguarding all its cultural and natural sites. Despite the difficult situation in the country, the protection of our heritage remains our priority.

I want to reiterate the following regarding the exceptional Socotra Archipelago World Heritage site. Yemen is coordinating with various international partners and projects to help mitigate specific threats, and we are fully committed to continue this work. Yemen is also committed to limit urban development zones and regulate such activities in the site. The revision of the management of the protected areas in the site is a priority. The government has collaborated with UNESCO and IUCN in 2023 to effectively clean specific coastal sites and Socotra. We do not think that the site at this stage needs to be included at the in Danger List, and we wish to emphasise that we have requested a reactive monitoring session, sorry, a reactive monitoring mission a few years ago to, and we repeat this request to be met as soon as possible. Yemen is also committed to submit to the World Heritage Centre next year an updated report on the state of conservation of the property without delay.

Yemen calls on UNESCO and the international community to support the government during these challenging, difficult times and to help ensure the effective protection and management of this exceptional property.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

We now proceed.

ASIA-PACIFIC // ASIE-PACIFIQUE

7B.66 Phoenix Islands Protected Area (Kiribati) // Aire protégée des îles Phoenix (Kiribati)

The Chairperson:

We go to Phoenix Islands Protected Area, Kiribati. I have been made to understand that the Delegation of Belgium would like to go directly to the draft decision.

It's the Secretariat that will skip its presentation. So, I would now like to give the floor to the Delegation of Belgium to present to the Committee the reason it requested to open the state of conservation of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area, Kiribati. Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

The Phoenix Islands Protected Area, or PIPA, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2010 based on Criterion (vii) and (ix), is the largest designated marine protected area in the world. The property encompasses the Phoenix Island Group, one of the three island groups in Kiribati, and conserves one of the most largest intact oceanic coral archipelago ecosystem.

Belgium has looked at the documents in front of us with a lot of attention, and we propose to open a discussion on this spectacular World Heritage property in order to highlight important concerns regarding the state of conservation of the PIPA. We regret the absence of a state of conservation report and the lack of response from the State Party to the requested reactive monitoring mission during the 45th session. This has hindered us in our ability to assess and address emerging challenges effectively. Furthermore, we are concerned that there has been no official communication from the State Party in response to inquiries, including correspondence from the World Heritage Centre in 2021.

The recent resumption of commercial fisheries within the property raises immediate concerns regarding its ecological integrity. In 2021, the State Party introduced the Marine Spatial Planning Programme, aimed at balancing natural resource use to benefit of Kiribati's livelihood while safeguarding the property's properties OUV. However there remains a need for more detailed information on clarity on the MSP programme, including comprehensive maps and specific conservation measures being implemented.

Even though the danger listing is not part of the amendment proposed, Belgium believes that a discussion on the potential danger listing of PIPA would be appropriate. As has been stated before during the Committee, this is not to be perceived to reprimand the State Party, but to highlight the grave concerns regarding the site and make available international assistance.

The amendments we propose emphasise the urgency of obtaining updated and comprehensive information from the State Party regarding the raised issues, and encourage the State Party to address the potential threats. We invite the Committee members to have a constructive debate on this matter, in order to support the State Party in safeguarding the Outstanding Universal Value of the magnificent Phoenix Islands Protected Area.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I think the Secretariat will skip its presentation. Are there any further comments from Member States?

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks Belgium for opening the discussion on the report of the state of conservation of Kiribati Phoenix Islands Protected Area.

We note in the document that the last amounts granted to the property date from 2008 from UNESCO, as part of the stakeholder workshop for the Phoenix Islands candidacy organized by the UNESCO office in Apia, with funding from France UNESCO Cooperation and the UNESCO Italy Funds in Trust to support the finalization of the application nomination file at that time. As the State Party is not present to explain how and why certain measures were or were not taken, we understand that some issues are beyond the control of the State Party, such as the threats of climate change and the economic and environmental vulnerability of the island. And we recall that an unsustainable fishing is not from Kiribati's one fishing fleet, but the bottom trawling or of commercial boats.

At the 45th session, the Committee reiterated its call upon the international community to refrain from any unsustainable fishing practices that could negatively impact on the OUV of the property, and to assist the State Party with the necessary financial and technical support to assess the implications of removing the no-take protection statutes.

We would like to know from the Centre what is the status of the implementation of this paragraph in the decision taken at the 45th session? What financial and technical assistance has been allocated to the State Party since the decision was adopted?

Having said that, this is one of the capacity-building activities to be offered to SIDS in terms of conservation and protection, and we recall that World Heritage site does not only belong to the State Party, but to all humanity.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your very specific questions.

I see the State Party of Kazakhstan would like to take the floor.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Thank you, Mr Chair, thank you, Your Excellency. Distinguished Delegates,

The Republic of Kazakhstan welcomes the amendments proposed by the States Party of Belgium. In doing so, we would also like to draw attention of the Committee members that it is difficult to take decisions in the absence of the information and communication from the State Party concerned. Moreover, since there was no state of conservation report submitted and no follow-up communication, the implementation of the recommendations taken at this session is also a certain worry.

In this respect, we consider it crucial to foster the collaboration between the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Body, and the State Party for the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of Phoenix Islands Protected Area.

And for this, we would kindly ask the UNESCO Regional Office to actively engage in the communication with the States Party of Kiribati.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I give the floor back to you.

The Chairperson:

That's very kind of you. I am very happy to receive the floor back.

I see that there are no further requests to take the floor, so let's proceed.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.66** concerning this property. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Yes. Mr Rapporteur, I will ask you to just hold on, and request that the Secretariat responds to the questions asked by the Distinguished Representative of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I can confirm that the Centre has done quite a lot of effort to engage with the State Party, either directly or through the regional office in Apia, and we have had certain online meetings, but it has been quite difficult since apparently there have been changes in the management of the property which make direct communication very difficult. But we still continue to engage, to try through the regional office in Apia to engage with the State Party. In terms of financial assistance, we have not received any requests for financial assistance under the World Heritage Fund from Kiribati at this stage.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

As there are no further questions, Mr Rapporteur, you have the floor.

The Rapporteur:

Sorry, Mr Chair, we are currently receiving amendments at the very last minute, so we needed some extra preparation.

The Chairperson:

And just, I've seen the State Party of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has raised her plate again. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I think I am sorry to say, but maybe some Observers would like to take the floor on this issue.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

The Observer States Parties will be given after the adoption of the decision. Not at this point in time.

Mr Rapporteur, you have the floor.

The Rapporteur / Le Rapporteur :

M. le Président, nous avons reçu deux amendements concernant les îles Phoenix dans les îles Kiribati. Un amendement soumis par la Belgique et soutenu en salle par le Kazakhstan et des amendements de la part de Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines, soumis il y a peu et qui n'ont pas eus le temps d'être circulés parmi les délégations.

I will switch in English.

I'll start with paragraph 5, with the Belgian amendments, "recalling the importance of the Outstanding Universal Value of this property of maintaining sufficiently large no-take zones and emphasizing the importance of commitments from other States Parties to the World Heritage Convention to establish sufficiently large no-take zones".

Then there is an additional para 6 from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, "reiterates its call upon the international community to refrain from any unsustainable fishing practices that could negatively impact on the OUV of the property and to assist the State Party with the necessary financial and technical support to assess the implications of removing the no-take protection status."

Si vous le voulez bien, M. le Président, je vais poursuivre uniquement avec les amendements que j'ai reçus de la Belgique, car pour être honnête je n'ai pas eu le temps de prendre connaissance du reste des amendements Saint Vincent. Il sera peut-être intéressant que la Déléguée de Saint Vincent puisse les présenter elle-même oralement.

Paragraphe 7, toujours sur l'amendement reçu par la Belgique, "also reiterates serious concern" à la place de "reiterates".

Ajout d'un paragraphe 9, "requests the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to closely follow up the state of conservation of this property and continue their efforts to engage with the State Party, including through their offices in the region".

Fin du premier amendement, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We'll go to the first para. When the para comes, I'll request the Distinguished Delegate of Saint Vincent to present the amendment orally. But we go para by para.

Paras 1, 2, 3, 4. I don't see any amendments there. Would anyone like to take the floor for 1, 2, 3, 4? I see no request.

We go to para 5. Are there any amendments to para 5? In addition to this, any further comments? I see none. I see one. Remove the N from the none and you get one.

Republic of Korea, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Okay, it's working. Yes. We from Korea echo the concerns expressed by the IUCN and many, several Member States regarding the conservation status of this property, and especially also the no response from the member country and difficulties that the country has, the State Party has at the moment.

So, we agree to all the amendments proposed by Belgium and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. And there is, I propose to make them so, yes, so I want to express our sincere thanks to raise these amendments to the Belgium and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Para 5. I don't see any further amendments to para 5.

We go to para 6, as suggested by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Are there any suggestions, objections to para 6? I see none.

We go to para 7. Any amendments to para 7? I see none.

We go to para 8, 8 a), b), c). Are there any amendments to para 8 a), b), c)? I see none.

Go to para 9. No changes.

We go to para 10. Are there any amendments to para 10? I see none.

Go to para 11 and 12. Sorry.

Go to para 10 again.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr Chair,

We see here a new paragraph. I mean, it was changed because it was "request the World Heritage Centre and UNESCO to provide more thorough follow up of the property". And I would like to add the "to closely follow up and support" or, no, "to provide adequate support". "To provide adequate support to the conservation of this property", maybe.

Because, Mr Chair, I heard the answer of IUCN, and they said that they didn't receive any request from the State Party for financial assistance. Mr Chair, I think that the Centre should also follow this kind of decision from the Committee. Nothing was, I mean, we had a decision at last year and we didn't receive any, the State Party didn't receive any support, financial or technical support. So, I think the dialogue should be established between the State Party and the Centre, at least through the regional office.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The editors, can you just. You know, the way this has been edited, it appears very complicated at this stage of the day. Okay. So, are there any objections to the addition by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines? I see none.

Mr Rapporteur, is the grammar correct?

The Rapporteur:

Okay, I would suggest "requests the World Heritage Centre and IUCN to closely follow up and provide adequate support to the conservation of this property, as well as continue their efforts to engage with the State Party, including through their regional offices in the region". Would that be okay for Saint Vincent for their addition?

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Yes, it's the World Heritage Centre that provides the support. I wonder if IUCN would also do the same, and whether this Committee has the power to ask IUCN to do something? I do not know.

But Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have asked for the floor again. You have it for the fourth time.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair, for the indulgence.

Just, I want to ask, through UNESCO office, UNESCO field office in the region. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Through the UNESCO field office in the region. Okay.

Is there any further comment on this para 10? I see none.

You go down to paras 11 and 12. Are there any objections to 11 and 12? I see none.

We go for adoption of the whole decision as a whole, as amended. Are there any objections? I see none.

I therefore declare the draft Decision **46 COM 7B.66** adopted as amended. *[gavel]*

Thank you. I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about this property. Grenada, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Grenada:

Thank you, Mr Chairman, for giving me the floor.

Grenada as a SIDS would like to thank the Committee members for their decision, in particular calling for adequate support for Kiribati. Kiribati is a Small Island Developing State and a least developed country. As mentioned by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, it has benefited of financial support in 2008 for the preparation and finalisation of its nomination dossier, and we commend the donors. Nevertheless, Kiribati has submitted in 2019 a request for international assistance of US\$ 30,000 for conservation and management in the Phoenix Islands Protected Area, and this request was not approved. Therefore, since inscription, the State Party has not benefited from any international assistance. This is a good example that illustrates what we also underlined during the discussions of the Open-ended Working Group, is that it is not sufficient to support a State Party which needs it for the preparation of the nomination file, but that support after inscription for management and conservation of the site is equally of utmost importance and should prevent such situation.

I thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Barbados.

The Observer Delegation of Barbados:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, it's with a great deal of concern and sadness that I speak. I do think it was an important moment for Belgium to have proposed that this particular state of conservation report be opened and given close consideration.

I do think, however, that the tenor of the discussion leading up to this and the result is not really adequate in terms of a demonstration of international assistance and support to the state of conservation of this site. I am deeply proud of our colleagues from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for the investigation they launched in terms of understanding how this site has benefited or not from the requisite support that is desired, and which our other colleague from Grenada has now documented as to where the money was not received from, where the level of support was necessary.

So I do think that while it is important that we have this discussion and this decision on the table, that the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the members of the Committee and the non-members of the Committee who are resident in this region and are knowledgeable about their sworn duty to support this conservation of this site, should give deeper consideration as to how and in what way we can offer the necessary support and assistance and guidance to help this State Party achieve the goals that we have all agreed to set.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

As there are no further requests, we shall proceed now.

Decisions adopted without debate // Décisions adoptées sans débat

The Chairperson:

I now invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to read the list of the World Heritage located in the Asia Pacific region for which the reports are adopted without discussion, but once, let me announce, once this agenda is over, I'll give the floor to the State Party, the Host Country India, to make an announcement. Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following five properties for which the reports are proposed for adoption without discussion are:

- Great Barrier Reef, Australia;
- Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, India;
- Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, India;
- Lorentz National Park, Indonesia; and
- Ha Long Bay - Cat Ba Archipelago, Viet Nam.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

If there's no objection from the Committee on this state of conservation report, I declare the decisions read out as adopted. ^[gave]

I would now like to ask whether any Observer Delegation would like to express themselves about one of the properties for which we have adopted the decision without discussion. I see no one has raised the plate. Let's proceed then.

I now give the floor to the Host Country India to make some announcements.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair, for giving India the floor.

We would like to inform the invitees to the dinner hosted by the Governor of Delhi at Purana Qila tonight at 7:00 pm. The transportation for the invitees has been arranged at both Bharat Mandapam, from the parking area, and also the hotels where the invitees are staying. And we would request all the invitees to reach the venue by 7:15 pm.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I now give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. This is just to inform you about the two side events that will take place. The first side event is organized by Bulgaria, and it's entitled "One Land and Under Water: Bulgarian Contribution in the Study and Preservation of the Cultural Heritage", and exhibition following the side event will be installed from tomorrow on this topic and this is taking place in room MR15 now.

The second event called "Heritage in Hands: Conserving the creativity of Craft Making Sites" is organised by ICOMOS and Chinese National Administration of Cultural Heritage and it's taking place in room MR 19.

Mr Chairperson, thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

I would like to thank the interpreters for having been with us even after 6:00 pm and let me tell you that the Committee adopted 56 decisions today on state of conservation. So, everybody requires congratulations. You did a great job today. And with this, I would like to adjourn the meeting till tomorrow morning 10:00 am. ^[gave]

The meeting rose at 6:31 pm. // La séance a été levée à 18h31.

FIFTH DAY
Friday, 26 July 2024
NINTH PLENARY MEETING
10:03 am – 1:09 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

CINQUIÈME JOUR
Vendredi 26 juillet 2024
NEUVIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h03 – 13h09
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues, we have been waiting for the past five minutes for you to please take your seats. We have to begin.

Dear colleagues, *Namaste*.

I hope you all had a wonderful, enjoyable evening last night. You enjoyed the cultural event, the wonderful cuisine, the ambience of the Purana Qila, the old fort, and we are very grateful to His Excellency, the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi for having hosted us.

Dear colleagues,

Before we resume our session, I would like to inform you of the outcomes of the fifth meeting of the Bureau. The Bureau recommends to the plenary that Agenda general Item 8, related to the nomination process, be only the general discussion on Document 45.COM/8, which will remain open until 29th July for the adoption of the draft decision. This does not concern the examination of the individual nomination files under Item 8B, which will start this morning as scheduled. The Committee will then continue with the examination of Item 8A on Tentative Lists. Regarding Item 8B on nominations that will follow, please note that considering the withdrawals received, we have 27 nominations to examine between today and Monday morning, as well as 13 minor boundary modification proposals. I hope we will strictly apply the foreseen schedule.

As you know, we have received a nomination dossier to examine on an emergency basis. For this specific case, the Bureau recommends that, after hearing the presentation by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies, the floor will be given to the author to present the amendment submitted and circulated to you a few days ago, which has garnered large support. Once the draft decision is adopted and if the site is inscribed, I will then give the floor to the State Party concerned for a statement up to four minutes on its nomination. I will subsequently grant the floor to Committee members only. To this extent I will ask for the cooperation of all.

Furthermore, the Bureau heard from the State Party of Japan that an agreement has been reached on its nomination with the State Party of the Republic of Korea. In this regard, and considering the nature of this nomination, the Bureau agreed to grant up to four minutes each to the States Parties for their statements, which means up to four minutes to Japan to make its statement, and up to four minutes to the Republic of Korea to make their statement. The Bureau agreed that this should not set a precedent for future nominations. Thank you.

Please also be informed that for some of the nominations of cultural sites recommended for inscription, the presentation by ICOMOS will be delivered through pre-recorded videos. I also wish to remind you that, as announced yesterday, the Secretariat has uploaded on the session's web page a provisional daily timetable concerning nominations.

Last but not the least, the Bureau also heard a report from Miss Chiara Franco, Chairperson of the working group on the budget on the advancement of work of the group, which held its first meeting yesterday. The group will meet again today from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm in the Bureau meeting room. Thank you very much.

8. NOMINATION PROCESS [Opening of the item] // PROCESSUS DE PROPOSITION D'INSCRIPTION [Ouverture du point]

The Chairperson:

We start with our Agenda Item 8, devoted to the nomination process and to the draft Decision **46 COM 8**.

I invite Mr Alessandro Balsamo, Head of the Nominations Unit of the World Heritage Centre, to briefly present Document 46.COM/8. Mr Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

Document 8 presents overall topics concerning the nomination process for inscription on the World Heritage List. And this year is divided in four main topics.

The first part concerns the relationship between the Preliminary Assessment and the Upstream Process for a specific site. Both mechanisms, despite different *modi operandi*, imply guidance at an early stage and capacity-building of States Parties in developing high quality nominations and establishing the feasibility of a potential nomination. Therefore, in order to avoid unnecessary redundancy in the nomination process, it is proposed that the nomination of sites that have been subjected to an Upstream Process on a specific site be exempted from the Preliminary Assessment. In order to align the two processes, the Upstream Process report for a specific site will be relevant for up to five years. The draft decision presents the proposed changes to the *Operational Guidelines* that are necessary to take this action into account.

Part two of the document presents the Preliminary Assessment request received by 15th September 2023, and this was the first deadline of submission of requests since the inclusion of the new procedure in the *Operational Guidelines*, and was only on a fully voluntary basis. A total of 14 requests coming from all five regions were received during the, including from States Parties that have not submitted nomination for a long time, and all 14 requests were considered complete. The list of the Preliminary Assessment requests received, along with their state of completeness, is presented in Annex 1 of Document 8. The Preliminary Assessment reports prepared by the Advisory Bodies will be transmitted to the concerned States Parties on 1st October 2024. Each report will include an indication of whether the site may have potential to justify Outstanding Universal Value. If so, specific guidance and advice will be provided in the form of recommendation to assist the States Parties in the development of the related nomination dossier.

The third part concerns maps showing the location of the nominated property within the State Party, as currently required in Section 1.E.2 of the nomination format. In order to simplify and try and avoid the potential issues of bilateral concern, it is proposed to remove this requirement from the nomination format, with the exception of some specific cases, such as serial nominations and with specific guidance, which may be provided by the Secretariat. The draft decision also presents the proposed amendments to the *Operational Guidelines* to take into account this change.

Part four of the Document 8 deals with two nominations that are in the pipeline, but were not evaluated either due to the COVID-19 pandemic or security reasons. The nominations are the Lake Chad Cultural Landscape by Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria submitted in 2020, and Mount Kumgang Diamond, Mountain from the Sea, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, submitted in 2021. Should the health or security situation allow their evaluation, these nominations will be presented for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 47th session, without impinging on national and overall quota of nomination to be examined. The evaluation process will be undertaken in accordance with the timeframe foreseen in paragraph 168 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

And as the Item 8 is open until all the subpoints of this item are closed, we will only deal with the draft decision then.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo, for your presentation.

Dear colleagues,

I would like to inform you that this item will remain open to take into account the debates and our comments held under Agenda Items 8A, B, C, D and E. The draft Decision **46 COM 8** will be adopted on Monday 29th July once we have completed the examination of Items 8A to 8E. I would like to know whether there are any comments on this agenda item.

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr Chair, for giving India the floor. And a very good morning to all the Delegates present here in this hall.

We would also like to thank the Secretariat for this presentation that they have just given.

Mr Chair, I think I'd like to first make my remarks with respect to the proposed amendment to the para 121 of the *Operational Guidelines*. We're struggling to understand what exactly are we trying to achieve? We have been, time and again, articulated our position before the Committee and the Secretariat that the time has come for a serious reflection on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

Mr Chair, just to put things in perspective, I'm inclined to delve into the world of statistics. If we examine the history of the *Operational Guidelines*, we find that the *Operational Guidelines* have been revised 28 times since 1977. The paras have been increased from 28 to 290, and even those have sub-paras and sub-paras. Earlier there was no limit to submitting nomination and then a limit was imposed to one a year in 2000. Then it turned to two a year in 2004. And then in 2018, it was decided, due to some extraordinary circumstances, to reduce it to further to one a year. And despite the fact that it was supposed to be reviewed in 2023, it was not, and we are still continuing with that figure.

Then, Mr Chair, we adopted the Preliminary Assessment in 2022 during 44 COM and have made it mandatory from 2027 onwards without working out the financial burden it puts on the States Parties as well as Advisory Bodies. And now this amendment that is being proposed, wherein the Preliminary Assessment and Upstream Process are being in a way interlinked as an either/or condition, and we are yet not aware of the cost implications or the burden it will further put on the Advisory Bodies as well as the States parties.

Effectively, therefore, what I am trying to say is that it is another attempt to revise this para in haste. I am talking about para 121. Perhaps it is not going to solve problems but create more issues because it doesn't consider the implications on the majority of States Parties who are still struggling to get their first site inscribed because of lack of capacity or resource. And we are putting even more burden on them.

Mr Chair, we have the Open-ended Working Group that is still debating and discussing the reflections on the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, and that discussion is yet inconclusive. The Preliminary Assessment or Upstream Process as a precursor to the final nomination should first be discussed in that Open-ended Working Group, so that its technical and financial nuances are fully understood by all States Parties. India feels that we should wait for the outcome of that report, which will be presented during the 47 COM, and then we take this issue forward.

And another point, which I think I'd like to ask the Secretariat for. We were just informed that 14 requests came from the States Parties, which are all complete. We wanted to understand what is the financial implication of that, because yesterday in the budget group, we were given a certain figures wherein, you know, there is a serious deficiency of voluntary and the, you know, mandatory contributions. And then we have this. So, what, how, what is the pressure on the States Parties or the Advisory Bodies for this?

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any further requests for the floor? I see none.

Any Observer State Party would like to take the floor? I see none.

I will ask the Secretariat to answer your questions. The Secretariat, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

And thank you for the question to the Distinguished Delegate of India.

On the financial pressure that, let us say, the Preliminary Assessment is putting on the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies. Well, this is something that, I think it has been under discussion, at least in the ad-hoc working group since two years. So, it is actually difficult to give an answer as the matter is also in the mandate of the Open-ended Working Group that is still going on, as you know.

And at this stage, what we can say is that, of course, when we consider the Preliminary Assessment, we thought, along with the Advisory Bodies, that there will be, the benefit of this process will actually make saving money to the whole system, because by having better shape and better prepared nomination, all this circle of issues that may be created by nomination that are not recommended or that are incomplete, will be improved with the inclusion and by the use of the Upstream Process and Preliminary Assessment. So, to this extent, maybe there are different answers on the short-term, on the medium-term and on the longer term. But for the time being, maybe it's too early to say something as we are just in the, at the end of the first voluntary cycle with just 14 files that have been dealt with.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentation. Are there any more questions or comments?

I'll now give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre. You have the floor, sir.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I really would like to thank the Distinguished Delegate of India for this very important question.

And I think what the Distinguished Delegate of India is raising is definitely an issue that the Open-ended Working Group, of course, will be discussing, because it's part of its mandate. And the Distinguished Delegate of India is absolutely right to say that this needs to continue to be discussed in the Open-ended Working Group, and it will continue.

What I just want to say here is that when it comes to the whole issue of the funds and, you know, we are still in a period of voluntary submission of a request for Preliminary Assessment before it becomes mandatory. And of course, at this stage, as I clearly explained in the budget group yesterday, of course, at this stage we have been able to cope with the current demands. But it doesn't mean that as we go in the future, this is going to be the same case. And that's why the budget group of course, has discussed yesterday this particular issue and will continue to discuss this under our chair of the working group.

And we also will be able to know about the next number of Preliminary Assessments later this year. As you know, because of the deadline for submission of Preliminary Assessment. And of course, it will help and inform. It will help and inform the group, the Open-ended Working Group on this issue. But I do agree with the important reflection that the Distinguished Delegate of India has put forward.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any further questions or comments from any Committee member?

Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[speaks in Spanish]

The Chairperson:

Can I ask you to pause?

The technical team, my friend is speaking beautiful Spanish. But I don't understand those beautiful words because you have stopped the English translation for some reason. Yes.

We were able to hear you at the beginning of the conversation, the Statement that the Argentinian Ambassador was making. And suddenly you went blank. And now, because of which we had to intervene and stop the Argentinian Ambassador's presentation, for which I apologize. I'm very sorry. And now we have got the English interpretation again. Excellency, may I ask you to restart your statement?

Thank you.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you. Mr Chairman, I shall be very brief.

Yes, our Convention is a victim of its own success, not failure. We need more resources, more staff, more activities as we go forward. And this, I think, is, I think, just attests to the importance of our work here. Inscription is seen as being of vital importance, and UNESCO has to keep working on this until we get the appropriate mechanisms that we need. What we need to do is offer a contribution to this process and keep deliberating on this. It's going to, and also more training, which is going to require even more human and financial resources. And this isn't a crisis. This issue is, I think, something that attests to our own success. Everybody around the world is looking to this Convention and that is surely a success.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Saint Vincent. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

For us, the Preliminary Assessment is a very good experience. Just, I want to ask the Secretariat, as we have now 14 requests for Preliminary Assessment, when can we have the first evaluation of this exercise?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Any further questions? I see none.

I'll now give the floor to the Secretariat.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

Just concerning this batch of, let's say, Preliminary Assessment requests that will be delivered by the Advisory Bodies on the 1st of October. The nomination can be put forward for the deadline of the 1st February 2026, and therefore, there will be then an evaluation between 2026 and 2027 for an examination in 2027.

But, Chair, maybe the Advisory Bodies would like to add on this.

Thank you.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Just to briefly address the general remarks from India and Argentina on the issue that we're dealing with. I think firstly, to fully support, and I think the Centre's given the context and we support that, that there's a need to look at the whole of the system and look for systemic changes to the financing. And that also is true for the monitoring processes as well.

But in terms of the proposal that's made in the present document by the Centre, I do think it is a very immediate thing that can be done to eliminate an obvious duplication of process that could occur if there's been an Upstream Process. It sort of doesn't make sense to have a Preliminary Assessment at the same time. That would mean the same work would be funded twice, once from the World Heritage Fund, once from the State Party. So, I think that is something that can be sort of eliminated now in advance of the need for a more systemic look. And I think it from the perspective of the Advisory Bodies, it doesn't pose a problem. Upstream Process is also funded by States Parties, so in a way it is also enabling those States Parties that have either the means or can support other States Parties to have the means to have access outside of the Preliminary Assessment process.

So, in those senses, Chair, we would support the proposals that have been made by the Secretariat in this case.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

ICOMOS.

ICOMOS :

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

Et pour faire écho à ce que disait mon collègue de l'IUCN, la proposition tend plutôt à une simplification dans le sens d'éviter une duplication des processus. Donc c'était l'objectif en fait de cette proposition concernant l'analyse préliminaire ainsi que les processus en amont.

Et peut-être pour faire écho à une autre remarque de l'honorable Délégué de Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines, nous réfléchirons avec l'IUCN à une façon aussi d'apporter un retour d'expérience sur cette première expérience, disons, d'analyse des demandes préliminaires. Donc, une fois que nos rapports seront remis aux États parties, enfin au Centre et aux États parties concernées, on réfléchira avec l'IUCN sur une façon de faire un retour d'expérience un petit peu plus général sur ce premier test concernant les analyses préliminaires.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see that there are no more questions or comments.

But India, your question, does your specific questions on what are the financial implications? Has it been answered?

The Delegation of India:

No, Mr Chair. No.

The Chairperson:

Would the Secretariat like to answer that question?

Well, what is going to be the financial implications for the, you know, regarding the same. If you have an answer at this point in time, or if there is not an answer, then we can move ahead.

All right. So, this is an ongoing conversation. And there is no answer right now. They can reply later as well. All right.

I remind you that this item remains open. And then the draft Decision **46 COM 8** will be examined at a later stage of our session. We can now proceed to our next agenda item.

8A. TENTATIVE LISTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES AS OF 15 APRIL 2024 // LISTES INDICATIVES DES ÉTATS PARTIES SOUMISES AU 15 AVRIL 2024

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues, we will proceed with our next Agenda Item 8A devoted to the Tentative Lists. The relevant document is Document 46.COM/8A.

I invite Mr Alessandro Balsamo to present briefly Document 8A. Mr Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Document 8A presents the Tentative Lists of all States Parties submitted in conformity with the *Operational Guidelines* as of 15th April. In particular, Appendix 1 presents a list of all States Parties indicating the date of the most recent Tentative List submission. Annex 2 of the document presents the new Tentative List or additions to existing Tentative List, which have been submitted by the States Parties since the last session of the World Heritage Committee. And Annex 3 presents a list of all sites included on the Tentative List received from States Parties in alphabetical and regional order.

As of 15th April 2024, out of the 195 States Parties which have ratified the convention, 189 have submitted a Tentative List in accordance with the requirements specified in the *Operational Guidelines*. Six States Parties have not yet submitted any Tentative List. All the nominations submitted for examination in 2024 are included on the Tentative List of the States Parties concerned. Between 16th April 2020 and until 15th April 2024, 34 States Parties have submitted new Tentative Lists or have modified their existing list. The number of new sites added to the existing Tentative List is now 107, and currently there are 1,773 sites on the Tentative List. The draft decision is included on page 2 of both the English and French version of the document.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo, for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments on this agenda item. I see none.

Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair. Thank you.

My comment is just to underscore all of the major progress that has been made, thanks to our work with the World Heritage Centre concerning these lists. For numerous years, these lists were just a huge pile of lists that never got revised. But thanks to the World Heritage Centre's efforts, we've seen a huge change. And now these Tentative Lists really do reflect the priorities of each of the States. And they don't just stay there as a static list. I think this has been an incredibly important body of work and we see that the quality is increasingly growing. We have now had taken the time to look at these lists, and we've seen that it's really clear where the priorities lay.

So, thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. I see that there are no more questions and comments.

I therefore invite you to proceed with the adoption of the draft Decision **46 COM 8A**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Bonjour, M. le Président. Bonjour à tous.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendements concernant le Point 8A.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. I see no amendments.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8A** adopted. *[gave]*

Thank you. I now declare Agenda Item 8A closed.

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

It's now time for us to consider nominations of properties to the World Heritage List. I would like to recall that the relevant working documents concerning nominations are 8A, 8B.Add and 8B.Add.2. The Advisory Bodies' evaluations can be found in the nomination documents ICOMOS INF.8B.1 and INF.8B.1.Add, IUCN INF.8B.2 and INF.8B.2.Add. The ICOMOS notification relating to the nominations submitted on an emergency basis can be found in the nomination Document INF.8B.1.Add.2.

Let me also recall that Document INF.8B.3 presents the list of all nominations received by 1st February 2024, with the indication of those which were deemed complete. These nominations will not be discussed during our debates here, as they are foreseen to be examined at our next Committee session in 2025. Document INF.8B.4 presents factual errors identified by States Parties in the Advisory Body evaluations and it will be distributed to you on Monday, the first day of the Committee session.

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 Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Document 46.COM.INF.8B.4 concerns the text of the evaluation and present factual errors notification by States Parties and the related Advisory Bodies' replies. The document was dispatched on 22 July last, and I will now read out the list of nominations for which factual errors notification concerning the related evaluation have been received.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vjetrenica Cave, Ravno
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, The Flow Country
- France, Te Henua Enata – Les îles Marquises
- China, Beijing Central Axis: A Building Ensemble Exhibiting the Ideal Order of the Chinese Capital
- Germany, Schwerin Residence Ensemble
- Germany, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Moravian Church Settlements
- India, Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty
- Iran (Islamic Republic of), Hegmataneh and Historical Centre of Hamedan
- Japan, Sado Island Gold Mines
- Jordan, Umm Al-Jimāl
- Panama, The Colonial Transisthmian Route of Panamá
- Romania, Brâncusi Monumental Ensemble of Târgu Jiu
- Romania, Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Dacia
- Russian Federation, Testament of Kenezero Lake
- South Africa, The Emergence of Modern Humans: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa
- Thailand, The Phu Phrabat Historical Park

Before the presentation of the concerned nominations by the Advisory Bodies, the Secretariat will announce the related factual error notification received. If the notification of factual errors has an impact on the proposed statement of OUV the consequent amendment, is already included in the text of the related draft decision. And just to recall that only notifications received by the statutory deadline and submitted in the appropriate form of Annex 12 of the *Operational Guidelines* have been made available in the Document INF.8, before.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, Mr Balsamo.

Are there any comments? I see none. Let's proceed then.

CHANGES TO NAMES OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST // CHANGEMENTS DE NOMS DE BIENS INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Let's now move to the first draft Decision of Document 8B concerning proposed changes to names of properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List.

I invite Mr Balsamo to present the proposed name change.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

The proposed name change of the name of properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List are included in Document 8B, and this year we only have one, the request of the Spanish authorities.

The Committee is asked to approve a change to the English and French name of the property, Prehistoric Sites of Talayotic Menorca, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2023. The name of the property becomes Talayotic Menorca in English and Minorque talayotique in French.

draft Decision **46 COM 8B.1** on page 1 of both the English and French version of Document 8B.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo.

Are there any objections? I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt draft Decision **46 COM 8B.1**. But before doing so, I will ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendment on the draft Decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendements, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.1** adopted. ^[gavel]

NOMINATIONS WITHDRAWN AT THE REQUEST OF THE STATES PARTIES // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION RETIRÉES À LA DEMANDE DES ÉTATS PARTIES

The Chairperson:

This point deals with nominations that were scheduled to be examined by the Committee at this session but were withdrawn at the request of the concerned State Party.

I invite Mr Balsamo to read out the list of withdrawn nominations.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair. The three nominations that have been withdrawn prior to this session at the request of the concerned States Parties are:

- Portugal, Levadas da Madeira
- Serbia, Bač Cultural Landscape
- Türkiye, Iznik: Traces of the Transition Between Civilizations

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo.

Are there any comments?

I see none. Let's proceed then.

EXAMINATION OF NOMINATION DOSSIERS OF NATURAL, MIXED AND CULTURAL SITES TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST PROPOSED FOR EXAMINATION IN 2024 // EXAMEN DES DOSSIERS DE PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION DE SITES NATURELS, MIXTES ET CULTURELS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL PROPOSEES POUR EXAMEN EN 2024

The Chairperson:

We will now begin with the examination of nominations. I would like to take this opportunity to recall that 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 recognises 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 the relevant documents and in accordance with paragraph 153 of the *Operational Guidelines* to take its decisions. I wish to stress that for referred nominations, there is no new nomination file to be prepared and there is no evaluation mission of the relevant Advisory Body to the site.

Also, as recalled by the Committee in its Decision **42 COM 8**, "in compliance with the Convention and the *Operational Guidelines*, Outstanding Universal Value is recognized at the time of inscription of a property on the World Heritage List, and no recognition of Outstanding Universal Value is foreseen prior to this stage". I would like to appeal to you all to strictly respect these important rules during our debates and our decision making.

As you know, considering the latest withdrawals, currently we have 27 nominations to examine between today and Monday, as well as 13 minor boundary modification proposals.

The order of the examination of nominations is listed on page 5 of both the English and French versions of Document 8B. I would kindly ask you to follow this order to the extent possible. However, the Bureau already endorsed requests to reschedule the examination of a few nominations to allow participation of high-level dignitaries. Thus, following several requests concerning the order of examination of nominations, I would like to inform you that the World Heritage Centre has put online a provisional timetable by day, including requests already endorsed by the Bureau. The timetable is to be found on the web page of the 46th session. For your information, and for some of the nominations of cultural sites recommended for inscription, the presentation by ICOMOS will be delivered through pre-recorded videos.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Just before proceeding with the examination of nominations, the Advisory Bodies wish to make a brief presentation on their respective evaluation process of nominations.

I will give the floor to ICOMOS and IUCN. You have the floor, please.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair.

If I may have the first slide, please. And the next slide. Thank you.

So, thank you, Chair. Next slide please.

The IUCN evaluation process is outlined on the slide that will shortly appear and is also found in our evaluation book and in the *Operational Guidelines*, and our assessment forms and assessment guidance notes are available online.

I'd like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of the nominating States Parties for their excellent collaboration and dialogue throughout the evaluation processes. We are highly grateful to all of your colleagues, your authorities, your site managers, and your communities for the successful evaluation of all of the technical evaluation missions and the subsequent exchanges. And IUCN would also like to thank most sincerely, all of the IUCN experts that have donated a tremendous amount of volunteer time to the assessment of all the nominated sites. This represents a significant and indispensable support to this Convention, and I think represents why we are partners of this Convention beyond any individual services we provide. Next slide please.

IUCN assesses all of the nomination sites for their potential significance at global level, based on global comparative analyses. Accordingly, our review process is a global one. We engage experts from all parts of the world, and the map shows the more than 120 experts globally that have contributed to this year's cycle, including the crucial role of our field evaluators. We additionally recognize the partnership with UNEP-WCMC and the Earth Science Unions that help us to deal with a range of the dossiers.

In closing, IUCN would also just like to note, as you'll hear later on, as we come to the nature nominations, that it has been a particularly high number and proportion of nominations this year that are able to be recommended directly for inscription. It is a very encouraging sign, I think, of the dialogue that has been taking place and I hope that will continue.

Thank you, Mr Chair, and ICOMOS has a short presentation as well.

ICOMOS :

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

Je souhaite commencer cette présentation en exprimant notre gratitude à l'ensemble des experts impliqué dans le processus d'évaluation, ainsi qu'aux États parties qui ont soumis une proposition d'inscription pour les efforts fournis pour la bonne réalisation de nos travaux. Diapo suivante, s'il vous plaît.

La procédure d'évaluation de l'ICOMOS est décrite à l'Annexe 6 des Orientations. Différentes étapes la composent comme les études de documents et la mission technique d'évaluation, les réunions du panel d'experts, ainsi qu'un certain nombre de moments d'échange avec les États parties. L'ICOMOS est sensible à la représentation géographique des experts impliqués dans le processus d'évaluation et a récemment modifié les règles de composition de son panel pour mieux répondre aux problèmes du déséquilibre géographique des propositions d'inscription.

L'ICOMOS est rigoureux et scientifique et vise à être constructif dans la formulation de ses recommandations au Comité du patrimoine mondial, afin d'œuvrer pour la conservation des biens. Diapo suivante.

L'ICOMOS implique une quarantaine d'experts dans l'évaluation d'un seul dossier de proposition d'inscription, couvrant différents aspects du bien, de son importance dans le contexte géoculturel dans lequel il se place, à la façon dont il est géré et protégé. Pour vous donner à titre d'exemple, pour le cycle actuel de proposition d'inscription, ce sont plus de 300 rapports d'experts nous avons reçus.

Les recommandations de l'ICOMOS sont collégiales et institutionnelles. Le champ d'expertise de l'ICOMOS comprend la multidisciplinarité, la diversité culturelle et géographique, un large éventail de formation et d'expérience, et une large représentation institutionnelle.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentations, ICOMOS and IUCN.

Are there any comments? I see none. Let's proceed then.

Thank you. I see no more questions and comments.

CULTURAL SITES // SITES CULTURELS

ASIA-PACIFIC // ASIE-PACIFIQUE

8B.16 Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty (India) // Moidams – système de tertres funéraires de la dynastie Ahom (Inde)

The Chairperson:

We will now start with the first nomination.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr Chairman, for a job well done.

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Moidams – the Mound-Burial System of Ahom Dynasty, India.

But before, I give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chair.

Just to recall to the Committee that we received a fatal error notification concerning the evaluation of the Moidams the Mound Burial System of Ahom Dynasty, and this is to be found on page 16 of both the English and French

versions of the Document INF.8B.4. This notification has also impacts on the draft decision that we have integrated already in the text.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo.

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Moidams the Mound Burial System of Ahom Dynasty, India. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 87 of the English version, and page 83 of the French version. On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

Located at Charaideo in eastern Assam, the nominated property contains the royal necropolis of the Tai-Ahom. Moidams are the burial mounds of the Ahom and are integrated into the natural features of the landscape, creating a sacred geography. Ninety moidams of different sizes are found within the nominated property boundaries and were created over a period of 600 years. The moidams were constructed by providing an earth cover over a hollow vault constructed of brick, stone, or earth. The vaults contain the burial or cremated remains of kings and other royal individuals, together with grave goods.

The boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone are shown here. There are a number of cultural features within the buffer zone, such as moidams, ceremonial pathways, and water bodies. An inventory of these features was provided during the evaluation process.

Legal protection of the buffer zone is provided by the State of Assam, and the process of individually protecting the sites in the buffer zone is in progress.

The moidams of Charaideo contain the remains of the Tai-Ahom kings, and the tombs are set within a sculpted landscape that reflects Tai cosmologies, working with and modifying the natural topography, lakes, forests and water sources. The moidams are of different sizes and demonstrate changes in techniques and materials over time. ICOMOS considers that the nominated property is an exceptional example of an Ahom necropolis that represents funerary traditions and associated beliefs in a tangible way.

The comparative assessment was augmented during the evaluation by the State Party through exchanges with ICOMOS. Comparisons are provided with other sites in India and other Tai ethnic groups within South and Southeast Asia. Although this could have been further expanded to deepen the understanding of the context of the diversity of Thai cultures in Asia, and their funerary traditions, it is evident that the nominated property is the most significant in relation to the specific mound burial traditions of the Ahom kings. While more moidams are found throughout the Brahmaputra valley, those found within the nominated property are regarded as exceptional.

The nominated property demonstrates Criteria (iii) and (iv), although ICOMOS considered that Criterion (v) has not been demonstrated.

The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met. Local communities regard the moidams as sacred burial grounds and contribute to their protection and maintenance. Several important Tai-Ahom rituals are practised at the necropolis.

The nominated property is well maintained, and the state of conservation is generally good, although the moidams are vulnerable to the effects of heavy rainfall, flooding, soil erosion and the growth of vegetation on the mounds.

Protection and management of the nominated property is shared by the Archaeological Survey of India and the Assam Government's Directorate of Archaeology. Within the nominated property, the group of four moidams is designated as an Ancient Monument of National Importance and protected by national laws. The remainder of the property is designated by the State of Assam as an Ancient Monument of State Importance and is protected by state laws. ICOMOS considers that the protection and management are adequate, but that the effectiveness relies on the coordination between national and state heritage agencies and the involvement of local communities.

The State Party has established mechanisms to ensure coordinated management and decision making. ICOMOS has recommended that the further development of the management system should adopt a landscape approach, and include additional elements for interpretation and tourism, as well as enhanced community participation. Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Moidams the Mound Burial System of Ahom Dynasty, India, be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria (iii) and (iv), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long term conservation of the property.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS.

Another round of applause, please. [applause] Thank you, ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning the nomination.

Viet Nam, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

I thank you, Mr Chair.

I would like to express our sincere thanks to the Advisory Bodies for their information, for their evaluation. And we are fully convinced by the statement of the OUV of the site, and that's why we strongly support the inscription of the sites on the List.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Okay. We appreciate the comments from Viet Nam. Thank you.

I see no more comments and we can now proceed. I now invite you to adopt.

Our apologies. We have Zambia. Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

I would like to appreciate the role that ICOMOS is doing in evaluating the various dossiers, and in this case, Mr Chairman, specifically, I would want to appreciate the fact that ICOMOS has been very understanding, instead of emphasizing on all the criteria to be used, ICOMOS has been able to, I mean, identify the one of the criteria, I mean the criteria which is relevant to the site. And for this I would like to commend ICOMOS and maybe that is the spirit which should be, that is, encouraged.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Zambia for your kind words.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.16**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We have received no amendments, although we have duly noted Viet Nam and Zambia's support. And furthermore, as Mr Balsamo announced, the agreed factual errors have been integrated in the statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 9B.16** adopted. [gavel] [applause]

Let me congratulate India on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property. India, you have the floor for up to four minutes to offer a statement.

Thank you.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair. *Namaste*, and good morning to all the Dignitaries and Delegates of the World Heritage Committee.

I hope this meeting, since its beginning on 21st, must be going on smoothly, and all of you, despite your long working hours, are enjoying the hospitality extended to the delegates.

Dear friends, today, 26th July, is etched in the golden letters forever as India gets its 43rd property in the World Heritage List. [applause] The occasion becomes even more special for every Indian, as it is the first time since its inscription that India is hosting the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee, when this site has been inscribed.

On behalf of the 1.4 billion citizens of India and especially from the people of Assam, I would like to thank the UNESCO, the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS for acknowledging the Outstanding Universal Values and providing their unwavering support from the beginning in getting this remarkable property inscribed in the World Heritage List.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the moidams as described in the presentation by ICOMOS Mound Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty, which are the sacred necropolis of the Tai-Ahom Dynasty during 13th to 19th centuries. Moidam literally means "home for the spirit". The moidams are testament of the sacred practices carried out by the Ahom, where nature was made integral and inseparable component of the burial mounds by putting the water bodies and trees around these mounds. The unique architecture of these mound burials contains a vault where mortal remains and other goods were kept for the deceased royalties, and a shrine on the top of the vault, which symbolizes a golden ladder between Earth and the heaven. Moidams are tangible witness to the six-century-long belief and customs of the Ahom rulers, which is corroborated with their royal chronicles.

This is the third property from the State of Assam to be inscribed, but the first in the cultural category. The previous two were inscribed long back, in 1985, that is 29 years ago in the natural category. Inscription of the site and hosting of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee for the first time, is yet another example of India's increasing commitment under the able leadership of Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji, to preserve and celebrate the basic theme of the World Heritage Convention, that heritage is for entire humanity and it is our collective responsibility to safeguard this heritage, which is our bridge between past and the future.

I would also like to acknowledge close coordination between the Archaeological Survey of India and State Government of Assam, as the inscribed property is mutually being maintained by both the agencies.

Dear Delegates, this is a great gift of the people of India, and I would like to thank the Ministry of External Affairs, Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO, Ministry of Culture, the Archaeological Survey of India and the State Archaeology Department of Assam for close coordination at every step since the site getting listed in the Tentative List in 2014 to the submission of the nomination dossier of the visit of the ICOMOS experts, and a great day that is today.

Thank you very much. *[applause]*

The Vice-Chairperson:

Cheers to incredible India.

It's now my pleasure and duty to invite back the substantive Chair to continue with the agenda for the day.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

May I invite you to take your seats, please? May I just remind that greetings can be held outside the room? Please.

NOMINATION TO BE PROCESSED ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS // PROPOSITION D'INSCRIPTION DEVANT ÊTRE TRAITÉE EN URGENCE

8B.44 Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer (State of Palestine) // Monastère de Saint Hilarion/ Tell Umm Amer (État de Palestine)

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

As we are entering nominations, the 8B Agenda Item, the Secretariat reminds me to remind you that the celebrations are most welcome and are to be continued and not ended outside the plenary.

We will now go to the emergency listing of Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer, draft Decision **46 COM 8B.44**. We are now dealing with the nomination of Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer, State of Palestine, nomination to be processed on an emergency basis.

I invite the Secretariat to present some technical information regarding the processing of this information.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

On 24th June 2024, the State Party of Palestine submitted to the World Heritage Centre the nomination of Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer with the request to process it on an emergency basis. On 24th June 2024, the nomination was transmitted to ICOMOS for evaluation. On 28th June 2024, the World Heritage Centre informed all States Parties about the submission of the nomination, and added the electronic version of the nomination file in the list of those to be examined by the Committee at its 46th session. On 5th July 2024 ICOMOS requested the

information through the World Heritage Centre regarding the current and recent state of conservation of the cultural heritage in the Gaza Strip, as well as any relevant documentation concerning the provisional enhanced protection granted to the nominated property on 14th December 2023 by the UNESCO Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, within the framework of the 1954 Convention and its Second Protocol. On 8th and 12th July 2024, UNESCO addressed the replies and provided to ICOMOS the information requested above. On 15th July 2024, ICOMOS addressed a request for additional information to the State Party. On 18th July 2024, ICOMOS notified the World Heritage Centre regarding the emergency aspect and informed on steps taken to evaluate the nomination. On 24th July 2024, the State of Palestine submitted the additional information requested by ICOMOS, which was uploaded on the related webpage.

Thank you. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now invite ICOMOS to present its work on the nomination of Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer, State of Palestine. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

Donc, la procédure d'urgence, telle qu'elle est expliquée aux paragraphes 161 et 162 des Orientations, s'applique dans les cas où le bien est en péril parce qu'il a subi des dommages ou qu'il est confronté à des dangers graves et spécifiques dus à des événements naturels ou à des activités humaines, et qui nécessiterait une décision immédiate du Comité pour assurer la sauvegarde du bien. Le bien doit également justifier de manière incontestable une valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

Dans les cas d'urgence, l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS se concentre sur les qualités du bien proposées pour inscription qui peuvent justifier sa valeur universelle exceptionnelle, à savoir les critères qui sont mis en avant et les conditions d'intégrité et d'authenticité, la nature du danger et l'urgence de la décision du Comité du patrimoine mondial.

L'ICOMOS a lancé la procédure d'évaluation du bien immédiatement après la réception du dossier le 24 juin, tout en écartant l'organisation d'une mission d'évaluation technique sur le terrain en raison des conditions de sécurité actuelles. À ce stade du processus, l'ICOMOS a contacté un groupe d'experts internationaux, parmi lesquels figurent des archéologues et des historiens de l'art spécialisés dans l'art et l'architecture de l'Antiquité tardive et paléochrétien, ainsi que des universitaires reconnus pour leurs travaux de recherche sur la tradition intellectuelle de l'École monastique de Gaza, afin qu'ils fournissent leurs points de vue et leur analyse critique de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle potentielle du bien par le biais de rapports, d'études, de documents.

Par ailleurs, le 5 juillet 2024, des informations ont été demandées au Centre du patrimoine mondial sur l'état de conservation actuel ou récent du patrimoine culturel dans la bande de Gaza, en particulier pour les biens figurant sur la Liste indicative de l'État de Palestine, ainsi que toute documentation pertinente concernant la protection renforcée provisoire accordée aux biens proposés pour inscription le 14 décembre 2023 par le Comité de l'UNESCO pour la protection des biens culturels en cas de conflit armé dans le cadre de la Convention de La Haye de 1954 et de son deuxième protocole.

En outre, une lettre a été envoyée le 15 juillet à l'État partie pour demander des informations complémentaires sur la justification de l'inscription, les attributs, les limites et la zone tampon, ainsi que sur la protection juridique du bien proposé pour inscription. Ces informations ont été reçues le 24 juillet.

La Commission du patrimoine mondial de l'ICOMOS a été consultée sur le caractère urgent de la proposition d'inscription et a confirmé, le 17 juillet, que la mise en œuvre d'une procédure d'urgence est justifiée. Le délai nécessaire pour procéder à la consultation d'experts internationaux, à l'analyse des informations complémentaires reçues de la part de l'État partie et pour réunir les membres de la Commission du patrimoine mondial de l'ICOMOS afin d'examiner et de statuer sur ces informations ne permet pas à l'ICOMOS, à ce stade, de formuler une recommandation afin de déterminer si le bien proposé pour inscription est susceptible de justifier de manière incontestable une valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much for your presentation.

The procedure that I will follow will be, as I mentioned in the Bureau, I will ask the Rapporteur if we have received any amendment.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous avons reçu un amendement au projet de décision sur le site du Monastère de Saint Hilarion/ Tell Umm Amer, soumis par la Belgique, coécrit par 18 autres membres du Comité que je vais citer. Qatar, Sénégal, Liban, Türkiye, République de Corée, Mexique, Bulgarie, Grèce, Italie, Zambie, Kazakhstan, Rwanda, Viet Nam, Kenya, Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines, Jamaïque, Inde, Japon.

L'amendement débute par le paragraphe 5, « notant également que le bien proposé pour inscription a été placé sous protection renforcée provisoire par le Comité pour la protection des biens culturels en cas de conflit armé lors de sa 18^e session en décembre 2023 ».

Ajouts des paragraphes 7 à 12.

Paragraphe 7, « notant que des circonstances exceptionnelles ont empêché un processus d'évaluation exhaustif et gardant à l'esprit que la prise en considération de cette proposition d'inscription par le Comité du patrimoine mondial ne saurait en aucun cas constituer un précédent pour de futures propositions d'inscription devant être traitées en urgence ».

Paragraphe suivant, « inscrit le Monastère de Saint Hilarion/ Tell Umm Amer, État de Palestine, sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial suite à une procédure traitée en urgence sur la base des critères (ii), (iii) et (vi) ».

Paragraphes suivants, « inscrit également le Monastère de Saint Hilarion/ Tell Umm Amer, État de Palestine sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril; Prend note qu'une déclaration provisoire de valeur universelle exceptionnelle est en cours de préparation et sera soumise pour adoption à la 47^e session du Comité, si possible; Recommande que l'État partie invite une mission de suivi réactif conjointe Centre du patrimoine mondial ICOMOS dès que la situation sur place le permettra, afin d'établir un état de conservation souhaité et un programme de mesures correctives en vue du retrait du bien de la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril ».

Dernier paragraphe, « demande à l'État partie de soumettre au Centre du patrimoine mondial d'ici au 1^{er} décembre 2025 ou dès que la situation le permettra, un rapport sur l'état de conservation du bien pour examen par le Comité du patrimoine mondial à sa 48^e session ».

Je vous remercie, M le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I will now give the floor to the author of the amendment, Belgium, to take the floor.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président.

M. le Président, nous introduisons, avec le soutien d'une vaste majorité des membres du Comité, cet amendement qui vise l'inscription du Monastère de Saint Hilarion/ Tell Umm Amer sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en conformité avec l'objet et la raison d'être de notre Convention.

Le Monastère de Saint Hilarion est un site archéologique important et dans un relativement bon état de conservation. C'est sans doute l'un des sites monastiques les plus précoces et les plus significatifs du Proche-Orient, datant du IV^e siècle de notre ère. La situation du site, au croisement ou à proximité de plusieurs routes commerciales, en a fait un lieu d'accueil, de rencontres et d'échanges. Aujourd'hui, le Monastère de Saint Hilarion est un lieu d'étude, de recherche et de formation ; culture, éducation et science, les piliers du mandat de l'UNESCO. Les communautés locales sont particulièrement soucieuses de la préservation de ce site qui fait leur fierté.

Le site est inscrit sur la Liste indicative de la Palestine depuis 2012 et une proposition d'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine selon la procédure normale était en cours d'élaboration. Vu l'actualité, nous devons trouver toutefois une réponse appropriée et accélérer la procédure afin de permettre la conservation et la restauration du site dans une perspective humanitaire.

C'est cette actualité qui a amené en décembre dernier le Comité pour la protection des biens culturels en cas de conflit armé, à placer à titre provisoire le site sous protection renforcée. Par cette décision, ledit Comité reconnaît que le site de Saint Hilarion est de la plus haute importance pour l'humanité.

Lorsque nous inscrirons en urgence le site de Saint Hilarion sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial, nous l'inscrirons simultanément sur la Liste du patrimoine en péril. Cette double décision est une opportunité de définir et de mettre en œuvre des programmes permettant une conservation optimale de cet ensemble exceptionnel.

L'inscription de ce site contribuera à la crédibilité et la représentativité de la Liste du patrimoine mondial et montrera notre capacité à remplir partout dans le monde la mission que nous confie la Convention : assurer la protection et la conservation des biens les plus importants pour l'humanité.

Je vous remercie. [applaudissements]

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any objections to the draft decision being adopted as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.44** adopted. [gavel] [applause] I must say the decision as amended. Perfect.

I will now give, as agreed in the Bureau, I will now give the floor to the State Party concerned for an up to four-minute statement on its nomination. I will subsequently grant the floor to Committee members only to the regular stipulated time, up to three minutes only. To this extent, I will ask the cooperation of all the States Parties. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of the State of Palestine:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I am honoured to have this inscription taking place in the greatest democracy in the world. Thank you, India.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all Committee members for their valuable support of this inscription. My sincere thanks and gratitude go not only to the Delegation, the Government and the people of Belgium, but also to their eminent experts, Madame Gislaine Devillers and Madame Ingrid Boxus. I would like also to thank Mr Gillis Ooghe, the Deputy permanent delegate, for his excellent presentation. Merci la Belgique. I also would like to warmly thank ICOMOS and the Secretariat, Madam Director-General Audrey Azoulay, ADG Culture Mr Ernesto Ottone, and the Director of the World Heritage Centre Dr Lazare Eloundou, and their team and excellent team, very dedicated and very efficient, as well as our local and international experts who work tirelessly on the nomination file, Dr Ahmed Rjoob, Architect Marwa Adwan, Dr Raymond Bondin and the expert of the inscribed site, Mr René Elter, who worked for more than 23 years on the same site in Gaza. Special thanks for the generous support of France through the Agence Française de développement and of the UK through the British Council in Jerusalem. My appreciation as well to all NGOs who contributed in the conservation work and excavations of the site, including l'École biblique archéologique française de Jérusalem and Première Urgence Internationale, among others.

Mr Chairperson, this inscription is very important for us because it is a message of hope to our people in Gaza who are fleeing bombs with no shelters, no food, no water. Through this inscription, we tell them that we have not forgotten you and UNESCO has not forgotten you either.

When I was drafting my speech, I wondered if it was possible to talk about Gaza without mentioning the war. Nevertheless, you will notice Mr Chairperson and Distinguished members of the Committee that I will not talk about the massive destructions of schools, hospitals, universities, media centres, churches and mosques. I will not discuss the killing of innocent civilians, including children, women, elders, students, teachers, medical doctors and journalists, nor the starvation and lack of food and water. Instead, I will focus on the spirit and purpose of our Convention. A State Party must recognize that once its property is inscribed on the World Heritage List of humanity, I say of humanity, not of UNESCO, it becomes a property of all humanity. This means that all States Parties are responsible for the protection of any property on the World Heritage List.

Here, let me insist that the heritage of Saint Hilarion, who played a major role in spreading Christianity around the world, mainly in Europe, is present in many countries nowadays still, Cyprus, Italy, Croatia among others. I urge members of the Committee and all States Parties to call upon Israel, the occupying power, to refrain from targeting any cultural property in the Gaza Strip and to immediately and permanently end the ongoing destructive war in Gaza.

To conclude, I have the pleasure to invite you all to a small side event, which is a presentation on the inscribed property by our international expert, René Elter. It will take place at 2:00 pm in room MR9, not 12, as mentioned in the distributed invitation.

Thank you for your support. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Ambassador of Qatar had mentioned in the Bureau, so I'll give the floor first to him, followed by Lebanon. Qatar, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Chair.

The State of Qatar is working hard with all Member States of the World Heritage Committee to enhance the protection of heritage sites in the accordance of the World Heritage Convention. It is no secret to all of us that the world today needs more than ever, that the international community to assume its responsibilities seriously, honestly, and with respect of international conventions.

The inscription of the Tell Umm Amer Saint Hilarion site on the List in Danger today in Gaza and in the Gaza Strip, is evidence of the urgent need to protect this historical site in times of the war and military conflict. And we do hope

that the WHC puts more efforts to protect other sites in Gaza. I also would like to commend the States Parties who approved this crucial decision of the protection of this important heritage site in Palestine.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Lebanon. You have the floor, sir.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to note the dramatic conditions in which the population of Gaza is living, and the exceptional circumstances that have prevented a fully-fledged evaluation process of this property. In other emergency nominations, the Advisory Bodies were able to perform desk review within a shorter time and could even send missions in certain number of cases. The case of Saint Hilarion Monastery is different.

Situated on the coastal dunes in Nuseirat municipality, the area around the property has become a battlefield, suffering from daily bombing. ICOMOS recognized the emergency status as clearly indicated in the letter sent to the Director of the World Heritage Centre on July 18, and all independent international reports also indicate that the property is facing a situation of imminent threat, although the journalists are not allowed to enter Gaza by Israel, the occupying power, according to the International Court of Justice.

Renowned for its well-preserved example of early Byzantine monastic architecture, the property dates back to the fourth century AD and represents the oldest monastery in Palestine and one of the oldest and most important Christian monastic sites in the world. Its strategic location on a major trade and pilgrimage route and its historic layers exemplify a significant interchange of human values in architecture and religious practices, which fully justifies Criterion (ii). It provides unparalleled insights into the development and practices of early Christian monastics in the region, which fully justifies Criterion (iii) and is intimately connected to pivotal events, traditions, beliefs, as well as theological and philosophical discourse, which fully justifies Criterion (vi).

The decision we took today to inscribe Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer on the World Heritage List and the List in Danger is in full conformity with Article 11.4 of the Convention, which states that the Committee may at any time, in case of urgent need, make a new entry in the List of World Heritage in Danger and publicize such entry immediately. We hope this decision will help ensuring the safety, the safeguarding of the property for future generations.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Türkiye, followed by Senegal.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We would like to congratulate Palestine for the inscription of Saint Hilarion Monastery. We consider that the nomination file contains historical, religious, cultural, architectural, technical and artistic value and significance. The nomination dossier highlights the similarities and differences in many aspects such as architectural layout, decorations, construction techniques, urban development, thereby clearly and successfully supporting its Outstanding Universal Value.

The Cultural Heritage Properties of Palestine, inscribed in the World Heritage List, as well as the Tentative List in Palestine, have both been severely affected, and many have been partially or completely damaged due to the ongoing war.

Despite the damages caused by the war, it is believed that the site has largely retained its authenticity and integrity and meets the criteria of Outstanding Universal Value. Hence, we encourage the State Party to promptly implement necessary measures and extend an invitation for a reactive monitoring mission by the World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS when circumstances permit.

It is through the protection of cultural heritage like this one, in the midst of war, that forums like the World Heritage Committee can make a difference by drawing the attention of the international community to the destruction of culture and living culture in areas affected by war. And like my Distinguished colleague from Palestine said, this is also a testament that we have not forgotten the people of Gaza.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Senegal.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Sénégal se réjouit de la décision courageuse qui vient d'être prise. Et l'UNESCO a souvent eu à sauver l'honneur de la communauté internationale, comme cela s'est passé récemment sur les sites du génocide au Rwanda. Nous avons fait la même chose il y a quelques années pour l'Église de la Nativité en Palestine.

Le fait que l'ICOMOS n'ait pas pu faire sa mission d'évaluation en raison de l'insécurité est révélateur du drame en cours en Palestine. Et nous devons continuer à alerter pour que les biens du patrimoine mondial ou potentiellement inscriptibles sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial soient préservés.

Nous devons marquer toute notre solidarité à la Palestine et la féliciter, malgré les circonstances, à réussir à constituer des éléments pour inscrire des sites et peut-être contribuer par ce biais à une plus grande vigilance. Je voudrais enfin féliciter la Belgique pour son leadership courageux et clairvoyant.

Merci, M le Président.

The Chairperson:

The last one is Kazakhstan. And then we move ahead. Kazakhstan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Thank you, Chair.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan extends its heartfelt congratulations to the State of Palestine on the inclusion of the Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer, on the World Heritage List on an emergency basis.

This recognition underscores the significant cultural and historical value of the site, reflecting its rich heritage and enduring legacy, as the Honourable Ambassador of Palestine mentioned, important for all humanity. The inscription of Saint Hilarion Monastery/ Tell Umm Amer, is a testament to the collective efforts to preserve and celebrate the cultural treasures of Palestine, including under the current grave circumstances.

We commend the dedication and commitment shown by the UNESCO Secretariat, ICOMOS, Belgium and all other co-authors of this decision in seeking to safeguard this invaluable heritage for future generations.

Thank you, sir.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Let's proceed.

CULTURAL SITES (Ct'd) // SITES CULTURELS (suite)

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

8B.28 Moravian Church Settlements [extension of "Christiansfeld, a Moravian Church Settlement", Denmark] (Germany, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America) // Colonies de l'Église morave [extension de « Christiansfeld, une colonie de l'Église morave », Danemark] (Allemagne, Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord, États-Unis d'Amérique)

The Chairperson:

Now we go to the next agenda item. Germany, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Moravian Church Settlements. I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Moravian Church Settlements by the three States Parties as an extension of "Christiansfeld, a Moravian Church Settlement" in Denmark.

But before, I give the floor to the Secretariat, Mr Balsamo, before I give the floor to Mr Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the nomination of the Moravian Church Settlements, and this is to be found on page 14 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B.4.

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Moravian Church Settlements, Germany, United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 235 of the English version, and page 272 of the French version. On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors, and ICOMOS has acknowledged some of these errors.

Nominated as a transnational serial extension of Christiansfeld, a Moravian Church Settlement, Denmark, inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2015, the Moravian Church Settlements are in three municipalities founded in the 18th century. Herrnhut, Germany, Bethlehem, United States of America and Gracehill, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland all have distinctive Moravian buildings, including a particular type of gaming house, congregation building, church, and coffee houses, large structures designed as communal dwellings for unmarried men, unmarried women and widows. And nearby, God's acre or cemeteries. Each settlement has its own architectural character, based on an original Moravian Church civic Baroque style, but adapted to local conditions. Together they represent the transnational scope of the international Moravian community, developed from the 18th century through the founding of such settlements. There is an active congregation present today in each component part, where traditions are continued and constitute a living Moravian heritage. The development of Moravian settlements is characterized by overarching urban planning principles, guided by the ideals of the Moravian Church. The serial nominated property also represents a global network of Moravian religious settlements built to receive immigrant congregations, Herrnhut with exiles from Moravia and Bohemia, Bethlehem with immigrant 'Sea Congregations' arriving from Europe, and Gracehill with scattered diaspora in the north of Ireland.

The serial property has been nominated as an extension of Christiansfeld, for it represents the formative phase of Moravian cultural tradition and construction of ideal settlements. The nominated extension reflects systematic planning and construction, the evolution and refinement of urban design and architecture, and in-house expertise in design, constructions and craft skills. The three settlements display a coherence of style, form and appearance, together with traditionally established spatial arrangements and original building types that reflect uses, functions, traditions, and intangible associations that are attached to them.

The nomination of the Moravian Church settlements is a response to the World Heritage Committee's recommendation regarding the potential for a transnational serial extension of the World Heritage property, Christiansfeld and Moravian Church Settlement at the time the property was described in 2015. The comparative analysis justified consideration of the nominated extension for the World Heritage List. It reinforces the justification for Criteria (iii) and (iv) of the property already inscribed on the List. Herrnhut, Bethlehem and Gracehill bring additional attributes of the Moravian Church settlement phenomenon and fully express the significance of the Moravian Church Settlements during the formative years of the 18th and early 19th centuries. ICOMOS also considers that the serial nomination should be kept open for possible extensions in the future, to allow any equally qualified settlement to be nominated if agreed to by the relevant States Parties.

The condition of integrity and authenticity are met, and the boundaries of the component parts and their buffer zones, as modified by the States Parties in February 2024, are adequate. The key attributes of the nominated extensions are all within the boundaries and are coherent with the attributes that were determined for the Christiansfeld settlement. Visual and functional connections between individual buildings and the surrounding landscape are also included.

ICOMOS considers that the three component parts have an adequate level of protection under the applicable laws. International management plan will establish a coordination mechanism for the nominated extension together with the already inscribed property, while individual local management plans will orient the management of individual component parts at the local and national levels. These management plans will need to be formally adopted and implemented. Conservation issues to be addressed by the relevant State Party has also been noted. Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the extension of Christiansfeld and Moravian Church settlement, Denmark to include Herrnhut, Germany, Gracehill, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Bethlehem, United States of America, be approved and become the Moravian Church Settlements, Denmark, Germany, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria (iii) and (iv). ICOMOS has included further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination. I see none.

I now go to the Rapporteur, and I invite you to adopt draft Decision **46 COM 8B.28**. And I ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

M. le Président, nous avons reçu un amendement soumis par la Grèce qui a pour objet une légère modification selon une erreur factuelle vue et agréée préalablement par ICOMOS. L'amendement porte sur le paragraphe 4A, avec la modification suivante : « Recommande que les États parties prennent en considération les points suivants : améliorer la présentation des attributs qui soutiennent la valeur universelle exceptionnelle, et en particulier la présentation de la Maison des pèlerins ».

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none. Are there any objections for this draft decision presented as amendment from being adopted as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.28** adopted as amended. [gave!] [applause]

Let me congratulate Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. Let me congratulate Germany, *herzliche glückwünsche*, on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property, as an extension of the property already inscribed in Denmark.

Representatives of the three States Parties, you have the floor for a combined time of four minutes. Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of the United States of America:

[first speaker] Thank you, Mr Chair. Members of the World Heritage Committee, representatives of the World Heritage Centre and expert Advisory Bodies in UNESCO, fellow Observer States Parties and Distinguished guests,

I can think of no better way to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the United States return to UNESCO, and I want to express our deep appreciation for the inscription of the Moravian Church Settlements. These settlements in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, represent the very best of the United States. This is the United States' first transnational inscription, and we are honoured to join our friends from Denmark, Germany, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In this inscription, I'd also like to recognize the mayor of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, William Reynolds, and the entire Distinguished Delegation from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. They've invested years working to develop this nomination, and we are all grateful for your effort. And so next time you are in the United States, visit Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Mayor, the floor is yours.

[second speaker] I would like to echo the thanks to all as just expressed by US Deputy Representative to UNESCO, Jean Maynes, on behalf of my Delegation, including Bryon Grigsby, president of the Moravian University, and Bishop Chris Giesler of the Moravian Church. The late Bishop Hopeton Clennon was instrumental in the development of this nomination, we are honoured to have his widow, Mrs Shelia Clennon, with us today as well. I also want to recognize the leadership of our respective countries, and especially the US National Park Service and the countries of Denmark, the United Kingdom and Germany and their respective officials. We certainly also commend and thank the local communities for their support, coordination and cooperation, and for the leaders in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Gracehill, Northern Ireland, UK, Herrnhut, Saxony, Germany and Christiansfeld, Denmark.

As a proud native of Bethlehem, I know I speak on behalf of all those who call Bethlehem home and saying how much we look forward to welcoming visitors to this new World Heritage site. As has been emphasized by the Chair and other Committee members, World Heritage belongs not to a single town or city, or even a nation, but to the entire world, and we look forward to sharing this site, its values, and its traditions with the world.

And now, Mr Chair, I would like to pass the floor to Saxon State Minister Conrad Clemens from Germany.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Wir warten auf Ihnen, bitte schnell.

The Observer Delegation of Germany:

Dear Chairperson, members of the Committee, hosts from India. *Namaste* and thank you very much, on behalf of Herrnhut, the Oberlausitz, the Moravian Church, Berthelsdorf and the Free State of Saxony.

The settlements of the Moravian Church from all over the world are connected by their unique architecture. They are places of open mindedness, productive cooperation and social equality. They are builded communities and being a Herrnhut myself, I know that these towns are not museums, but they are lively places with young families, civic engagement and global understanding.

I am very thankful to the United States, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and Christiansfeld in Denmark for initiating this process, and I pass the floor over to our friends from Northern Ireland, David Johnston.

The Observer Delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I will not repeat what has already been said, but I do want to sincerely thank incredible India for hosting us all so well, and also the World Heritage Committee for approving this nomination.

I also wish to pay tribute to our wonderful international partners. Everyone has worked hard, but there has also been great friendship and fun. Gracehill, Northern Ireland, with its Moravian ethos, has long been known as a place of reconciliation and tolerance. Two hundred years ago, in the midst of conflict, it was seen as a place of sanctuary. A diary entry from that time records the following words, "When our place appeared to all around as the only spot of safety, many retired to it as to a city of refuge, and we fed and watered them without making a distinction of their being our friends or our foes. The hearts of many who hated us and even designed our destruction were turned." Historic words, but still as relevant and important in our world today.

Mr Chairperson, thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Hearty congratulations.

We move on to the next agenda item.

ARAB STATES // ÉTATS ARABES**8B.13 Umm Al-Jimāl (Jordan) // Umm Al-Jimāl (Jordanie)****The Vice-Chairperson:**

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Umm Al-Jimāl, Jordan.

But before, I give the floor to the Secretariat, Mr Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chair.

We received a notification of factual error concerning the evaluation of the nomination of Umm Al-Jimāl. And this is to be found on page 29 of both the English and French version of the Document INF.8B.4. Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo.

ICOMOS, have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Umm Al-Jimāl Jordan. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 51 of the English version, and page 161 of the French version. On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors. Next slide.

Located in present day northern Jordan, within the Hauran plateau that spreads from southern Syria to northern Jordan, Umm Al-Jimāl is a rural settlement that developed organically on the site of an earlier Roman settlement between the fifth and eighth centuries CE. It preserves the architectural vestiges of mostly domestic and religious character that represent the local style architecture of the Hauran region, from the Byzantine and early Islamic periods. The nominated property has an area of 52,584 hectares, and a buffer zone of 258,722 hectares. The boundaries run mostly parallel to the wall constructed around the ancient town, and include a small portion of

agricultural fields, thus evoking the agricultural identity of Umm Al-Jimāl. The buffer zone includes the area of the early village, which marks earlier developments in the area, and some of the Roman and Byzantine cemeteries located outside the town's wall, which are not visible anymore today. Next slide.

Composed of clusters of multi-story houses with courtyards arranged in three neighbourhoods, the Byzantine and early Islamic town of Umm Al-Jimāl included 16 churches of different types and a complex water catchment system that ensured irrigation of the nearby fields. The basaltic architecture of Umm Al-Jimāl reflects local Iranian building styles and designs rooted in pragmatism, cost effectiveness and durability. The settlement, which formed part of a broader agricultural landscape, included also Roman imperial structures of military, administrative, or religious use that were repurposed and integrated into the structure of the town. Some of these structures are still visible today. Next slide.

The comparative analysis has demonstrated that the well-preserved vestiges of the nominated property showcase the distinctive Hauranian basalt architecture and are one of the most representative examples of a Hauranian rural town. They epitomize the Hauranian culture with its agro-pastoral identity and demonstrate key aspects of the cultural traditions and social values of the Hauranian people.

The nominated property has been nominated on the basis of Criteria (iii), (iv) and (v), but ICOMOS considers that only Criterion (iii) has been demonstrated.

The conditions of integrity of the nominated property have been demonstrated. However, the property remains vulnerable due to a lack of maintenance of the large part of the preserved structures that left some of the attributes in a fragile state. Moreover, the agricultural landscape that once supported the existence of the settlement has been transformed, while the wider rehabilitation project and some modern structures, both within the buffer zone, compromise the visual integrity of the nominated property. Mitigation measures should be implemented to address these issues.

The conditions of authenticity have been met as the nominated property remains authentic in its form, design and materials. Only a few of more than 170 structures in Umm Al-Jimāl have been investigated archaeologically. However, the wider context of the nominated property has been compromised by contemporary urban pressures.

The legal protection and the management system are adequate to ensure protection of the nominated property, even though the Umm Al-Jimāl site management plan is yet to be approved. It presents a five-year vision for the future management of the site and formalization of processes geared towards protection of the nominated property. Heritage impact assessment and disaster risk management plan and provisions to ensure the safety of tourists should be prepared, and the baseline documentation and assessment of conservation requirements should be finalised. The preparation of a comprehensive conservation plan, including a maintenance programme for the site, is recommended. Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Umm Al-Jimāl, Jordan be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of Criterion (iii) and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property.

Thank you. [applause]

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination. I see none. Let's proceed.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.13**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le dossier d'Umm Al-Jimāl, M. le Président, et les erreurs factuelles ont déjà été intégrées dans le projet de décision.

Je vous remercie.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? No, I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.13** adopted. [gavel] [applause]

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate Jordan on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property. Jordan, you have the floor for a four-minute statement.

Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of Jordan:

Thank you, Mr Chair. Mr Chairman, dear colleagues, Distinguished guests,

Today we not only celebrate the inscription of this magnificent black oasis of Umm Al-Jimāl on the World Heritage List of UNESCO, we also celebrate decades of this unbreakable partnership between my country, Jordan, and your esteemed, vital and most needed at all times Organization. On behalf of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Kingdom of Time, we extend our thanks to the World Heritage Committee for the recognition of the Outstanding Universal Value of Umm Al-Jimāl. Umm Al-Jimāl, which is an extension of the Nabataean rule to the north, a stronghold of the First Arab Jordanian Empire on its trade routes, proudly joins six other Jordanian sites in the honour of being on this List. It also joins Petra and Um er-Rasas the third Nabataean city inscribed.

Umm Al-Jimāl is the largest and best preserved ancient rural settlement in the southern Hauran plain. The extraordinary basaltic remains tell the story of a proud nation. It also bears a unique testimony to a clever and sustainable settlement established in a water scarce environment. This showcases the resilience of local culture and community that demonstrates itself until today.

We in Jordan believe in what UNESCO stands for, its mission, its philosophy, and its values. Especially in these days, humanity needs to be reminded of these values. Inscribing Umm Al-Jimāl is our gift to the world, our message of togetherness. Another jewel from the Kingdom of Time.

Let me conclude by sincerely thanking the mayor of Umm Al-Jimāl, who is present with us here today, and his team, and also thank the able Director of the Department of Antiquities and his team for the great work they have exerted for the success of this file. Jenna, the spirit of your father is around the room. We are confident that with the able leadership of the Mayor of Umm Al-Jimāl and his team, and the Director of the department, we will all work on the implementation of the management plan for the years to come.

On behalf of the Kingdom of Time, on behalf of the gatekeepers of history, I thank you. [applause]

The Vice-Chairperson:

Cheers to the honourable Minister and the people of Jordan.

We will now start the examination of natural sites.

NATURAL SITES // SITES NATURELS

ASIA-PACIFIC // ASIE-PACIFIQUE

8B.2 Badain Jaran Desert - Towers of Sand and Lakes (China) // Désert de Badain Jaran – Tours de sable et lacs (Chine)

The Vice-Chairperson:

We will examine sites, natural nominations.

I now invite IUCN to present the nomination of Badain Jaran Desert - Towers of Sand and Lakes, China. IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

IUCN evaluation can be found on the pages indicated on the slide. IUCN recommends the Committee to inscribe Badain Jaran Desert - Towers of Sand and Lakes on the World Heritage List under Natural Criterion (vii) and (viii).

The present nomination, as amended to supplementary information, consists of one component part spanning an area of more than 700,000 hectares, with a buffer zone of nearly 900,000 hectares. Next slide please. The nominated area is subject to a hyper-arid temperate climate and hosts a diverse area of desert landscape, including mega dunes, interdunal lakes, shifting sand dunes and other aeolian features such as erosion formation and ripple effect.

The application of Criterion (vii) is justified as the nominated property stands out at the global level with its wide variety of spectacular desert landforms ranging from smaller crescent shaped and pyramidal dunes to mega dunes. This contrasts with expected, unexpected interdunal lakes, and give rise to the aesthetic appeal of the nominated property and microbial communities and different levels of salinity colours the 144 interdunal lakes, adding to the aesthetic appeal of the nominated property. The dynamic of shifting sand creates an ever-changing visual environment.

Criterion (viii) is also justified thanks to the nominated property's remarkable geodiversity. It hosts a dense collection of stabilised mega dunes globally, including the world's tallest stabilised sand mega dunes, with a relative relief of 460 metres. The nominated properties stand out with the highest concentration of interdunal lakes found anywhere on Earth. Next please.

The IUCN 2011 Thematic Study on Desert Landscape already highlighted the nominated property as representing a selection of the most significant desert landscapes and geomorphological sites that are currently not included in the World Heritage List. IUCN 2021 Thematic Study on the Application of Criterion (viii) noted that the nominated property belongs to one of the evident geographical gaps in current listings.

The boundaries of the nominated property, as revised and clarified by the State Party in supplementary information, contain the main distribution range of mega dunes, as well as other types of sand dunes and desert landform features. The buffer zone effectively protects the geo-heritage and aesthetic values of the mega dunes within the nominated property. The area covered by the buffer zone includes important areas for the near source recharge of the interdunal lakes and does not contain any potential source of pollution.

In terms of protection and management, the nominated property benefits from several layers of legal protection, including the designation as UNESCO Global Geopark, national geopark and regional designation as scenic site and nature reserve. The Badain Jaran Desert Lake Nature Reserve of Inner Mongolia protects the majority of the nominated area, and in addition, the Badain Jaran Nature Reserve of Inner Mongolia serves as an additional layer of protection at autonomous region level. Additionally, IUCN notes that the State Party intends to designate the nominated property as a national park.

Management coordination for the vast area covered by the nominated property is ensured through a comprehensive management plan. The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region People's Government will establish a World Heritage Management Committee to lead on the protection and management of the nominated property and its buffer zone.

Mr Chair, the draft decision can be found in Document 8B, as shown on the slide, and contains IUCN recommendation to inscribe Badain Jaran Desert - Towers of Sand and Lakes on the World Heritage List under Natural Criteria (vii) and (viii).

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, IUCN, for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination.

I give the floor to Zambia, then Qatar.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Zambia would like to commend IUCN for the job well done. And in this case, I'm saying a job well done because when it comes to sites of geological significance or geomorphological significance, these are sites, as already presented in the report, that they are underrepresented on the thematic themes or the geographic representation. So, it pleases the State Party of Zambia that we have sites which are going to increase the representation of geodiversity on the global stage. At the same time, I would like to say that, at the end of the day, I would like to also thank the People's Republic of China for having selected such a site, which at the end of the day, if nominated, it is going to add to the sites which are on the same criterion as what we have at the Victoria Falls, which has which has got similar criteria. So, we are hoping that at the end of the day, we will have an opportunity to twin with the Republic of China.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Zambia.

Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I would like to start by appreciating the constructive comments and recommendation provided by the World Heritage Centre and IUCN on this nomination. It is clear to us that significant progress has been made by China in the areas of conservation and management, sustainable development and human settlement, along with several other important aspects. We support the inscription of the site of Badain Jaran Desert, Mr Chair.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you. I see. No more questions and comments.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.2**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement, M. le Président.

Je vous remercie.

The Vice-Chairperson:

I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.2** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate China on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List. China, you have the floor for a four-minute statement. Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of China:

[interpretation from Chinese]

[first speaker] Thank you Mr Chairman.

I would like to thank the Committee for recognizing the OUV of Badain Jaran Desert, and UNESCO as well as IUCN for the work done. And I would like to invite the Vice-Minister of Education, Mr Chen, to speak on behalf of China.

[second speaker] Mr Chair. On behalf of the Ministry of Education and the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, I would like to thank the Committee for having recognized the OUV of our nomination and also, we would like to thank you for your support.

Badain Jaran Desert - Towers of Sand and Lakes nomination is the result of the hard work that we have done in building ecological civilization and promoting integrated protection of mountains, lakes, farming, fields, forests, grasslands and deserts. China is willing to work with the States Parties to strengthen exchanges and cooperation, and to jointly contribute to the World Heritage Convention. And now I would like to give the floor to Mr Yan, the Representative of China's Natural Heritage Management Department to take the floor.

[third speaker] Mr Chair, on behalf of China's Natural Heritage Management Authority, I would like to appreciate the recognition and support from the Committee and the World Heritage Centre to the nomination of China's Badain Jaran Desert – Towers of Sand and Lakes as a natural heritage site. And my gratitude also goes to the IUCN for their guidance, and the scientifically objective evaluation in our heritage nomination process. And I would also like to thank the local community for their support and understanding and contribution to protecting the heritage of all humankind.

Badain Jaran Desert - Towers of Sand and Lakes demonstrates the diverse geological and geomorphological features of desert landscapes, and the successful inscription of this heritage is a great encouragement to China's natural heritage conservation efforts. The Chinese Government has placed a high priority on the ecological civilization and is labouring in its commitment to natural resource protection. We will strictly implement that decision, to ensure the protection for the Badain Jaran Desert World Natural Heritage site and extend further contribution to the global cause of world natural heritage protection.

Thank you very much. *[applause]*

The Vice-Chairperson:

Cheers, Mr Vice-Minister and the people of the Republic of China.

8B.3 Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China (Phase II) (China) // Sanctuaire d'oiseaux migrateurs le long du littoral de la mer Jaune et du golfe de Bohai de Chine (Phase II) (Chine)

The Vice-Chairperson:

I now invite IUCN to present the nomination of Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China (Phase II), a significant boundary modification of Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China (Phase I), China.

IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN:

So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

IUCN's evaluation can be found on the pages indicated on the slide, and we recommend the Committee to approve the inclusion of ten new component parts as an extension of the existing World Heritage property of the Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China.

The existing property consists of two component parts, which were inscribed by the World Heritage Committee under Criterion (x) in 2019, and that inscription Decision, which is **43 COM 8B.3** by the Committee, included a number of requests for a Phase II nomination, based on which the component parts of this, based on the component parts of the first phase which had been inscribed. And, accordingly, IUCN has based its evaluation of this new phase of the nomination on those previous requests that were laid out by the Committee. Next slide please.

So, the present nomination, which has been amended through supplementary information, consists of 29 component parts proposed to be added to the existing two components. And in response to the IUCN interim report, the State Party revised the local boundaries of five component parts in supplementary information, with some examples shown on the present slide. The nominated component parts, as revised, comprise an area of almost 140,000 hectares, with buffer zones totalling almost 50,000 hectares in total. Next slide please.

So, in comparison to the 415 bird species recorded in the existing component parts, a total of 562 bird species use the nominated component parts of the present Phase II extension nomination, according to the dossier. All the nominated component parts host numerous bird species assessed as threatened in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. IUCN considers that the Phase II extension nomination does include many areas that are important for the eastern Asian-Australasian Flyway, and these areas hold the potential to improve the integrity of the existing Phase I property. Next slide please.

There are, however, at present some of the mostly smaller nominated component parts that do not presently meet integrity requirements and that do not respond fully to the requests of the Committee that I mentioned earlier in its earlier decision. These issues relate to integrity or protection and management, and they require revision of boundaries to enlarge the local extent of these proposed component parts, and to align the boundaries to the maximum extent possible with the existing protected area boundary core zones. And in addition, it's necessary to confirm some of the additional key species information with some of those areas. In addition, the nomination includes component parts that clearly do not meet the protection and management requirements of the Convention, and these sites include some components which are open to oil exploration and with a number of other integrity and boundary concerns.

Finally, next slide please, IUCN does note that there are some potential components that are not included in the present Phase II nominations, which we consider could be added in a further phase of work to complete this series. And these include a number of critically important sites that have been identified in the Phase I nomination dossier and in the State Party's Tentative List. And while supplementary information from the State Party notes that there are some issues to be worked on, we do consider that these areas include places consistently identified as high priorities in the literature, and so we do consider these are worthy of consideration in a further extension to complete this nomination, in line with the Committee's original decision. And through such an extension, it could also be possible to include some of the areas that have been considered not to be included in our recommendation on this occasion, and to cover the issues that I've covered previously in this presentation, Mr. Chair.

But that said, Mr. Chair, we are in a position with a nomination which bears considerable merit, includes many component parts which add to Phase I. And so we can put forward to you today a recommendation for inscription. We appreciate that this is a complex nomination. So please, we draw your attention to Annex 1 of the IUCN Evaluation Report on pages 60 and 61, which provides some details on this different interplay of current and potential component parts. And Mr. Chair, the draft decision can be found in Document 8B as shown on the slide, and it contains IUCN's recommendation to approve the extension of the property through the addition of the ten nominated component parts that meet the protection and management and integrity requirements of this Convention's *Operational Guidelines*.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, IUCN, for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Mr. Chair, we are delighted to see that since successful descriptions of the site of the.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Excuse me. Excuse me please. Please wait for your turn from the Chair.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

We are delighted to see that since successful inscriptions.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Excuse me. Please wait until we give you your turn. We'll do that in a moment. Thank you.

Viet Nam will take the floor. Then we go to Kenya, then Rwanda, then Zambia. Viet Nam, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

We are delighted to see that since the successful inscription of the site on the World Heritage List in 2019, State Party, in accordance with decisions of the 41st sessions of the World Heritage Committee, in the Phase II nomination process, despite the challenges posed, the State Party makes this an intricate task requiring in-depth scientific research, extensive social consultations, and stakeholder coordination. The nominated sites under review. The critical for the conservation of the birds, biodiversity and present a significant contribution to global biodiversity conservation. That is why we support the draft decision presented.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Viet Nam.

We now move to Kenya.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair. Thank you.

The East Asia-Australasia Flyway is one of the most important flyways, both in terms of its richness in migratory waterbirds and of its significant gathering of globally endangered species. The nominated properties are an irreplaceable habitat for the flyway. We extend our congratulations to China for the file and our gratitude to the World Heritage Centre and IUCN for the evaluation and for the recommendations made. We recognize the exceptional value of the sanctuary sites, and the need to support more sites of this nature to ensure their protection for the future generations.

Thank you, Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Kenya.

Rwanda, please.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

We are immensely pleased to see the great effort by the China State Party to nominate this serious site. Since the successful inscription of the Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China Phase I on the World Heritage List in 2019, China has overcome the impacts of the pandemic and initiated the nomination of the second phase. These sites are located in China's most economically developed coastal areas, where population density and economic activities pose significant challenges to both nature conservation and the local communities.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Rwanda.

We go to Zambia.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We are grateful for this recommendation from IUCN. In just three years, China has achieved remarkable progress by extensively mobilizing resources, coordinating local communities and governments, and successfully completing the second phase nomination. We firmly support the inclusion of this series of nominated sites in the World Heritage List. Their successful inscription will represent a monumental contribution by the Chinese Government to global biodiversity conservation and serve as an outstanding example of World Heritage nomination within migratory bird

flyways. This action also actively advances the upcoming Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and we hope that more migratory bird habitats will contribute to the 30 by 30 target as World Natural Heritage Sites in the future.

Thank you, Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you.

We go to the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Republic of Korea first welcomes this draft decision and thanks the State Party, the hard work and efforts to protect intertidal habitats. This extension along the coast of Yellow Bohai Gulf is very significant to strengthen the protection of the remaining habitats in the Yellow Sea. The components of second phase submitted support 562 waterbird species, which is a higher number than those of Phase I. Recalling again the international importance of this intertidal area in the Yellow Sea, it will be necessary for the State Party to make further extension of newly additional components into the minor boundary modification to the other components in this Phase II. This would contribute not only protect the Yellow Sea, but also contribute to an international framework like protection and conservation of global biodiversity. Republic of Korea, as a country to share intertidal habitats in this Yellow Sea, we sincerely hope more close cooperation between the two countries for strengthening the protection of intertidal habitats in the Yellow Sea.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you.

Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

The World Heritage site Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of the Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf of China plays a crucial role in the conservation of migratory species, providing essential habitats for millions of birds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. We agree with the analysis provided by IUCN and the Centre, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude for their true examination and support to the Committee and the State Party in navigating this very complex dossier.

We would therefore like to congratulate the State Party of China with the decision we are about to take as a Committee and encourage the State Party to continue the completion of the series and include all relevant components, as well as to expand the boundaries of the nominated component parts as proposed in the draft decision. Thank you, Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

We would like to congratulate and commend the inscription of this site. Extending sanctuaries so as to protect migratory species and considering that we ourselves are a migratory species, is something so important for protecting biodiversity. And every agency of the UN is working on this. And we here in our Body are giving a very important message about this. If one species disappears or all of the other remaining species are further endangered. Thank you very, very much and congratulations for this inscription.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Argentina.

Let me give IUCN to make some clarifications.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair.

I just would like to take the opportunity to respond to the short debate. Firstly, I think to recognize the consensus around the key issues that are on the table with this nomination and the great progress that has been made. I'd like to thank the Delegation of Zambia for their comments about the potential that this shows to connect the World Heritage Convention to the Global Biodiversity Frameworks 30 by 30 target, and also the synergies with the Convention on Migratory Species, which might also enable us to move forward some additional opportunities.

And also, I think it is appropriate to acknowledge the comments from the Republic of Korea about the joint efforts that are being made through different but coordinated nomination processes across the Yellow Sea ecosystems and the collaboration that was referred to.

And lastly, Mr Chair, I would just like to return to note that this in fact, and also the previous nomination of China, both suffered delays in our evaluation process due to the impacts of Covid. And so I would just like to reiterate also the thanks for the collaboration and dialogue, which we've been able to sustain through those difficult times, and also to bring this evaluation process to a conclusion that looks forward to concrete and further next steps.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you all for your comments.

I see no more questions and comments.

Hence, I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.3**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Chair.

We have not received any amendments, but duly noted the supports from Viet Nam, Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, Republic of Korea, Belgium and Argentina towards this draft decision.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

I see none.

I therefore declare the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.3** adopted. [gavel] [applause]

Thank you very much.

Let me congratulate China on behalf of the entire Committee for the approval of the extension of this property to China. You have the floor for a brief four-minute statement. Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of China:

[first speaker] I'm very glad to, testimony together the successful inscription of Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of Yellow Sea. I would like to thank the WHC for the recognition of OUV. And I would like to thank the Secretariat and the IUCN for your support.

Now I give the floor to the Vice-Minister of Education and the Director of the National Commission for UNESCO, Mr CHEN Jie, to take the floor.

[second speaker] Distinguished Chairperson, thank you very much. I would like to, on behalf of the Ministry of Education and the National Commission for UNESCO, to express my gratitude to the decision of inscription of this site on the World Heritage List. And this represents a high degree of recognition by the international community of China's ecological and environmental protection efforts.

And that this site is a Chinese site, but also international site. The protection of birds that migrate globally. And these birds are the treasures given to the world by nature, which need to be protected by us. China will continue to actively carry out international cooperation in this field and support capacity-building for World Heritage in Africa, and contribute to the protection of global biodiversity, the promotion of a harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature to build a global community of life.

Now I would like to give the floor to Mr Yan Chenggao of the Natural Heritage Management Department of China.

[third speaker] Distinguished Chairperson, on behalf of China's Natural Heritage Management Authority, I would like to recognize the support by the Committee, by the Centre, to the nomination of Migratory Bird Sanctuaries along the Coast of the Yellow Sea-Bohai Gulf, Phase II. My gratitude also goes to the Advisory Body IUCN for their professional support as the serial nomination, this nomination covers the Hebei Province, Liaoning Province, Shanghai City and Shandong Province in China. Therefore, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration

has made numerous efforts to consult and coordinate. A special thanks goes to the governments and the forestry authorities at all levels in the regions mentioned above, the protected area management institutions.

With the successful inscription on the List, we give great importance for the protection of the sanctuaries. So, the second phase will integrate into Phase I. This will be significant for the systematic preservation of the migratory birds flyway. We will keep the good work on following the decision, gradually implement the relative requirements and strengthen site conservation, while carry forward the international cooperation with all States Parties along the flyway. And we will make a joint effort to safeguarding the World Heritage and to contribute to Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chairperson:

On an exceptional basis, I wish to give the floor to Australia for two minutes. But this is only if it is in support of the inscription.

The Observer Delegation of Australia:

Thank you, Chair.

It certainly is. We also thank India for their leadership of this Committee, and for welcoming us to experience the wonders and warmth of the hospitality of New Delhi.

Australia supports the nomination and the protection of various areas under Phase II, along the coast of the Yellow Sea. The protection of Phase II sites is critically important for the conservation and recovery of Australia's migratory birds. These species are protected as matters of national environmental significance under our national environmental law, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. A number of migratory shorebirds use the Phase II sites as staging areas while on migration to and from Australia. Australia encourages a Phase III nomination. The whole area is a critically important stopover site for migratory birds, and getting appropriate recognition and protection is key to ongoing conservation efforts. Australia thanks China on their ongoing commitment to protecting our shared migratory birds and looks forward to China hosting the next bilateral Migratory Bird Agreement consultative meetings later in 2024.

I thank you for your time.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Congratulations, China, and thank you so much, Australia. I'm sure even the migratory birds are happy.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

8B.4 Vjetrenica Cave, Ravno (Bosnia and Herzegovina) // Grotte de Vjetrenica, Ravno (Bosnie-Herzégovine)

The Vice-Chairperson:

I now invite IUCN to present the nomination file of Vjetrenica Cave, Ravno, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

But before, I give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chair.

We have received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the nomination of Vjetrenica Cave, Ravno, and this is to be found on page 2 of the English and French version of Document INF.8B.4.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, IUCN, for your presentation. I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination.

Let me take that again. Thank you, Mr Balsamo. IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

IUCN evaluation can be found on the pages indicated on the slide. Vjetrenica Cave is nominated under Criteria (vii) and (x).

Situated in the South Dinaric Karst, the nominated property boasts a wide range of karst features and attains a length of more than seven kilometres. Next slide please. The nominated property totals a surface area of more than 400 hectares, covering the extent of the cave system and its surrounding area. A buffer zone of slightly more than 4,600 hectares, surrounds entirely the nominated area.

IUCN notes that the nominated property boasts a remarkable level of cave biodiversity. It hosts 231 recorded taxa with numerous endemics. Many of the endemic species are Tertiary and Pre-tertiary relict species, hence essentially living fossils as their closest relatives went extinct. In addition, Vjetrenica Cave hosts the only subterranean tubeworm in the world. The Vjetrenica Cave area is a biodiversity hotspot, housing a significant number of species living in underground water, and by far the highest number reported globally for species strictly bound to underground habitat. The range, restricted and highly specialised species, underlined the fragility of the nominated property's biodiversity values.

Whilst IUCN considers that the nominated property is clearly significant at global level under Criterion (x), IUCN concludes that Criterion (vii) is not met.

The features described are typical of many hundreds of caves globally. Several World Heritage properties boast significantly larger and more geologically diverse cave systems. Vjetrenica Cave currently meets integrity requirements. Though fragile, the cave ecosystem is currently intact and not facing significant threats. The boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone adequately cover the cave system.

In terms of protection and management. Vjetrenica Cave is subject to a multi-layered governance involving federal, cantonal and municipal authorities.

The management plan is valid until 2031 and implemented by the Vjetrenica public company Ravno, serving as the managing body, though funding and staffing for the management of the nominated property should be increased for the implementation of the management plan.

The property is protected as a strict nature reserve and part of the protected landscape. Vjetrenica-Popovo polje declared in 2021. However, the zonation of the protected landscape Vjetrenica-Popovo polje remains to be completed and clearly mapped out, as the attributes of the potential OUV of the nominated property are fragile and prone to impacts from upstream sections, there is a need to demonstrate that sufficient water quality and water inflow into the Vjetrenica Cave system will be guaranteed in the long term. Changes in water regimes and quality can negatively affect the abundance of important cave dwelling species. Therefore, it is important to ensure that that careful analysis and mitigation of factors affecting the hydrological regime and water quality at the scale of the catchment of Vjetrenica Cave.

In conclusion, IUCN think considers that Vjetrenica Cave holds strong potential to justify Criterion (x). However, IUCN considers protection and management requirements are only partially met at the time of the evaluation of this property, and therefore recommended the Committee to refer the nominated property to allow the State Party to address the recommendations outlined in the draft decision, which can be found in Document 8B as shown on the slide.

And Mr Chair, in closing, IUCN would like to extend its gratitude to the State Party for the very fruitful dialogue throughout the entire nomination and evaluation process, including during this Committee session, which enabled further clarifications.

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, IUCN, for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination.

We have Türkiye, Argentina, Belgium, Greece, Qatar, Kazakhstan. We can invite Türkiye to take the floor.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Bosnian authorities for the preparation of this nomination dossier. Also, I would like to thank ICOMOS for the presentation.

We carefully examined the nomination dossier and the Advisory Body evaluation, and we believe that this nomination deserves careful attention for its quality and uniqueness of the natural site. In this regard, the most important thing is to underline that the International Union for Conservation of Nature, IUCN, considers that the nominated property holds a very strong potential to meet the criterion. Furthermore, we understand that the State Party adequately addressed all the concerns regarding the protection of management. All these elements

were explained and provided during the evaluation mission, but also in the recent submission of responses by Bosnia and Herzegovina to the World Heritage Committee.

Dear colleagues, the IUCN notes that Vjetrenica Cave not only holds one of the richest, if not the richest, cave fauna in the world, it also includes the richest subterranean amphipod community worldwide. Moreover, the nominated property has been recognized as one of the world's most important biodiversity hotspots for cave dwelling fauna. The World Conservation Monitoring Centre's comparative analysis also concluded that the biodiversity of this property appears to be of global significance, due to its exceptional subterranean biodiversity.

Regarding the IUCN concerns about the watershed management, according to the response provided by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the existing plans and studies provide for long-term water supply and water quality, as attested by the Adriatic Sea Watershed Agency of Mostar and the public institution Vode Srpske, Bijeljina, Department for Management of the Trebisnjica River basin.

Bearing all the above in mind. We firmly believe that the Vjetrenica Cave deserves to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, and therefore proposed to amend the text of the decision and to inscribe the Vjetrenica Cave, Ravno under the Criteria (x) on the World Heritage List.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you.

Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

I wanted to offer a brief comment about the background to this meeting and our way of working. At one point in time, it's almost as if there was a shift in criteria with the Advisory Bodies. But there is no difference. We actually would like to thoroughly support and endorse the work done by the Advisory Bodies. And we appreciate their role. But each and every one has to comply with their roles. We do understand the concerns and we share the concerns that are concerning the issues in this file. But we want to underscore what the most important thing, and that is that this is one of the most biodiverse underground hotspots in the world. And we also have a case of high endemism and biodiversity. And so unfortunately Criterion (vii) is not met. But Criterion (vii), we believe, Criterion (x), we believe is being satisfied. And that is why we would like to support the proposed amendment for inscription of this outstanding site.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And now we go to Belgium.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We wish to extend our sincere appreciation for the Delegate efforts and consideration given to the dossier concerning the Vjetrenica Cave in Bosnia from the Advisory Body and the World Heritage Centre once more. We are convinced that the inscription based on Criterion (x) is entirely justified.

And I'm not going to echo the statement that has been done by Türkiye that we fully support. We think that the concerns regarding protection and zonation have been sufficiently covered. And that's why, Mr Chair, we would like to co-author the amendment that has been proposed by Türkiye.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium.

We go to Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Chairman.

Our Delegation would like to commend the State Party for elaborating this nomination file of Vjetrenica Cave and to thank the Advisory Body for its detailed report. Our Delegation would like also to express its support to the

proposed amendment, recommending the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List. As demonstrated in the nomination file, Vjetrenica is one of the richest caves in terms of fauna in the world. A total of 231 taxa of subterranean biodiversity has been recorded, including 14 fungi and 35 protist species. The nominated property also stands out as an exceptional example of single genus diversity, whereas it hosts 21 plant species that are endemic to the Balkans.

Mr Chair, given all the above, we support the inscription of Vjetrenica Cave under Criterion (x), and we are confident that with appropriate management as well as the guidance and support of the Advisory Bodies, most of the challenges that the property faces will be addressed and put in place in order to ensure its protection and conservation.

I congratulate the State Party.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Greece.

Qatar, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I would like to start by appreciating the constructive comments and recommendations provided by the World Heritage Centre and IUCN on this nomination.

The State of Qatar would like to support the amendment proposal by Türkiye for the inscription of the site, Vjetrenica Cave, as it provides valuable remarks on the basis of its Criteria (x).

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Vice-Chairperson:

Thank you, Qatar.

Dear colleagues, we will resume our work this afternoon at 3:00 pm with a continuation of the examination of the nomination of Bosnia and Herzegovina, followed by the nomination from France. And then we will follow the order foreseen in the timetable, which is uploaded on the website.

Before closing, allow me to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre. Before I hand it over to him, I will kindly ask him to read out the names of the States Parties that will take the floor when we resume.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The following States Parties, members of the Committee will take the floor in the following order: Kazakhstan, Jamaica, Italy, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Republic of Korea, and India. And then after India, Zambia.

Thank you, Chairperson.

Now, I just want to provide you with some announcements of side events to take place during lunch time. Four side events will take place. The first side event is organized by Malaysia that will showcase its cultural heritage and natural heritage, entitled "Sarawak Malaysia: A Journey Through Culture, Nature, and Heritage" and the side event is in room MR6. And the side event is accompanied, it's an exhibition which will also stay until 28th July in the same room. The second side event is organized by the United Arab Emirates, and more specifically by the Sharjah Archaeology Authority and the event is entitled "Digital Preservation: Ensuring Cultural Legacy" and the side event will start at 1:30 in room MR19. And the third we have two side events organized by Category 2 Centres: one event called "Investing in Heritage in Africa and the Arab world" co-organized by the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, ARC-WH, and the African World Heritage Fund, AWHF, and this side event will start immediately now in room MR15. The other side event is entitled "Big Data for Sustainable Development of World Heritage Sites", and it is organized by the International Centre on Space Technologies for Natural and Cultural Heritage. It also starts at 1 pm now in room MR10.

Let me also remind everyone that we will have the budget group meeting, which will start at 2 pm in the Bureau meeting room.

Thank you Chairperson.

The Vice-Chairperson:

We meet after lunch. Enjoy your lunch.

The meeting rose at 1:09 pm. // La séance a été levée à 13h09.

FIFTH DAY
Friday, 26 July 2024
TENTH PLENARY MEETING
3:02 pm – 5:51 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

CINQUIÈME JOUR
Vendredi 26 juillet 2024
DIXIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h02 – 17h51
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

Colleagues,

It's past 3:00 pm., and we need to begin our afternoon session.

Dear Committee members, dear colleagues,

With your permission, let's resume our session. I hope you had a pleasant lunchbreak. I would like to thank His Excellency, the Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Kenya to UNESCO, for his excellent conduct of the meeting of the session this morning as Vice-Chairperson.

We are now going to resume the examination of our agenda Item 8B. But before we do that, I had received a request from the Distinguished Delegate of the United States of America to take the floor for a brief two-minute period to make an announcement that is in conjunction with the 1970 Convention related to the culture sector. You have the floor, Excellency.

I can't hear you. One second. Can we hear her? Because other than in the translation, one cannot hear the United States.

The Observer Delegation of the United States of America:

Okay. Can you hear me now? There we go. Thank you, Mr Chair.

Earlier today, the United States and India signed a new bilateral cultural property agreement, which is the mechanism which the US implements the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. With this important agreement with India, the United States has reached the milestone of having 30 bilateral agreements on culture.

The United States is unwavering in its commitment to protect and preserve cultural heritage around the world, and to prevent trafficking in cultural property. It is absolutely exciting for us to do this at the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting, and I want to take this opportunity to thank our Distinguished Chair for hosting us and for partnering with the United States.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

NATURAL SITES (Ct'd) // SITES NATURELS (suite)

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (Ct'd) // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD (suite)

8B.4 Vjetrenica Cave, Ravno (Bosnia and Herzegovina) (Ct'd) // Grotte de Vjetrenica, Ravno (Bosnie-Herzégovine) (suite)

The Chairperson:

We are now going to resume the examination of our Agenda Item 8B as indicated before we adjourned for lunch, we will start the session this afternoon with the remaining speakers on the pending nomination of the Vjetrenica Cave, Ravno, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I will ask the Secretariat to read the list of speakers. Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you. Chairperson. Good afternoon to all.

I will now, I will read again the list of speakers, and I will read them in the order they are going to take the floor. So, we will start by Kazakhstan and then Jamaica, then Italy, followed by Bulgaria, then Ukraine, then Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, then Republic of Korea, then India, and last Zambia.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Kazakhstan, to be followed by Jamaica.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

We have carefully studied the nomination of Vjetrenica Cave and strongly believe it has the Outstanding Universal Value and fulfils the needed criteria to be inscribed in the World Heritage List as one of the world's important biodiversity hotspots for cave-dwelling fauna. It is noteworthy that the State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina already handles Vjetrenica Cave not only the national protected area, but also as a Natura 2000 site. The corresponding proposal for inclusion in the network is ready and waiting to be legally adopted.

One of the concerns of the Advisory Body in the draft decision was the water quality and long-term inflow, and for this we have received additional guarantees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, both State Bodies responsible for water in the country, guarantee there are no direct impacts on the water regime except the influence of the natural, hydrological and hydrogeological regimes. The water quality is also substantiated by the physical chemical analysis provided by the University of Sarajevo, which also conducts monitoring within its respective research programmes.

It should be noted that the site is also studied intensively, molecularly. There is a range of microbiome studies of the bacterial composition of the cave, which is high ended proof of the water quality, as no traces of bacterial indicators of water pollution were found in these studies. Instead, the new generation sequencing efforts have demonstrated very promising and interesting results which are now being published.

Distinguished Committee members,

We believe the State Party will maintain the Outstanding Universal Value of the cave, and we ask for the support of the proposed amendments.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Jamaica, followed by Italy.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Jamaica commends the Bosnian authority for bringing this site to our attention. Having proven Criterion (x), the nominated property stands out with its remarkable cave biodiversity and endemism. The Vjetrenica Cave is one of the longest caves in the State Party, and its biodiversity is outstanding and includes some of the richest cave fauna of the world.

We appreciate the work of the World Heritage Centre and IUCN and note their recommendations, which include a confirmation of the exact and correct area of the nominated property and its buffer zone. There is also a requirement to confirm the protection status of the property and provide an updated assessment of its current threats.

Having had extensive dialogue with the State Party's experts, Jamaica believes these matters have already been addressed with the implementation of new and existing systems. Further, the supplemental information provided by the State Party has responded to the queries and include a confirmation that the water quality and water flow in the cave system is not compromised.

Jamaica also commends the State Party for all its efforts, and for working in collaboration with the Advisory Body, to address the concerns.

Although this site was recommended for referral, we believe the State Party has adequately addressed issues raised and that it can be inscribed on the World Heritage List. This is why Jamaica supports the amended draft decision towards the inscription of this wonderful site and encourages the State Party to submit the required report to the World Heritage Centre by 1st December 2025 for its review by the IUCN.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Italy, followed by Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Italy:

Mr Chair, thank you.

And since it's the first time I take the floor during this Committee, let me congratulate you for your knowledge and experience in the leadership of this session.

Italy warmly congratulates Bosnia and Herzegovina for this extraordinary nomination. We fully support its inscription, and we totally share the Advisory Body evaluation. In particular when IUCN acknowledges the Vjetrenica Cave as one of the world's most important biodiversity hotspots for cave dwelling fauna, as well as when it is recognized that the integrity requirements of the *Operational Guidelines* are met.

Concerning protection and management requirements, though the evaluation is not totally positive, the gap is easily reachable with the recommendations proposed in the amendments presented by Türkiye, which we thank for its excellent work.

Moreover, IUCN and several experts strongly emphasise that the Vjetrenica Cave may hold the potential to serve as a component part in a generic karst serial nomination, trans-boundary extension nomination under Criterion (viii). Such a possible future nomination, in addition to opening up a positive process of collaboration and partnership among different European countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia, could enrich the World Heritage List of natural sites with an important and extensive transnational property throughout Europe, increasing long-term conservation and management efforts for all the attributes of the exceptional geological phenomenon or karst.

In this regard, Italy supports the decision, as amended by Türkiye, with a suggestion of a minor modification, which we will explain better during the discussion of the text.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Bulgaria, followed by Ukraine.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you.

Dear Mr Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

We carefully examined the nomination documents for Vjetrenica Cave with its 231 taxa, the cave is undoubtedly a biodiversity hotspot and is among the richest caves in the world in terms of fauna. Impressive are not only the total number of established species, but also the active speciation processes which led to the formation of high endemism and exceptional diversity even within a single genus, perhaps the highest recorded in the world. We therefore consider that the site meets Criterion (x) and deserves to be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

We've read the report of the Advisory Body and fully agree with their findings and recommendations. We also noted the IUCN finding that there are currently no significant threats to the karst cave system and its biodiversity.

Weaknesses in the nomination documentation and in the current management of the site are important, but they do not significantly affect the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the site. We believe that the inclusion of the property in the World Heritage List would play a very stimulating role for the State Party to mobilise the necessary resources and fulfil the recommendations of IUCN for reliable conservation of the cave system and its biodiversity. Thus, we believe that the site should be inscribed on the World Heritage List and support the amendments submitted by Türkiye and co-authored by Kazakhstan and Belgium.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I thank you.

Now I give the floor to Ukraine, to be followed by Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Chairperson,

We have carefully studied the nomination dossier of Vjetrenica Cave from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and came to the conclusion that this is indeed a very important object. In our opinion, it definitely demonstrates an Outstanding Universal Value. Therefore, Ukraine supports the proposal of Türkiye and other States Parties to inscribe the Vjetrenica Cave on the World Heritage List based on Criterion (x).

Generic karst is a unique natural phenomenon which is characterized by a specific relief and numerous cave system, including the deepest in the world. A huge underground ecosystem has been formed here, known first of all for its unique biodiversity, which is represented mainly by endemic troglobite species.

However, we want to draw attention to another aspect. The Vjetrenica Cave is only a small part of the Dinaric karst, and its inscription in the World Heritage List can initiate the process of creating, on this basis, a powerful serial and transnational site, a property to represent the entire region. This was the case with the World Heritage site Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe, to which I am directly related. It began with a relatively small Ukrainian-Slovak property, Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians, and which has now turned into a huge pan-European site, including 93 component parts from the territory of 18 European countries. And this is not the end. Of course, in the case of the Dinaric karst, it is hardly possible to achieve such a scale, but it is necessary to strive for it. So, we wish good luck in this work.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I give the floor now to the Distinguished Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, followed by India.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines believes that the Vjetrenica Cave in Bosnia and Herzegovina is worthy of special attention given the uniqueness of this natural site. The exceptional biodiversity of cave-dwelling fauna and natural habitat for endemic species of gastropods and other creatures is well known to the world.

We commend the fruitful dialogue between IUCN and the State Party, which led to clarification and explanations on some issues in the file. Consequently, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines supports the amendments presented by Türkiye, and we are looking forward to seeing an extension of such a site in the other countries in the region.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of India, to be followed by Zambia.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The State Party of India would like to highlight that while terrestrial biodiversity, those above ground, is well identified and recognised, it is the richness and endemism of the less understood but fascinating subterranean fauna that the nominated Party, namely the property, namely the Vjetrenica Cave in Bosnia and Herzegovina, preserves, that is particularly striking. Accordingly, global recognition to such values would be a significant contribution to the World Heritage domain.

In addition, the nominated property demonstrates a long history of and improving layers of legal protection mechanisms, a wide range of local stakeholders appears to have been involved in the process of preparing the nomination for this property. Vjetrenica Cave also plays an important role for the local identity.

It is worthwhile to note that currently, the nominated property is not facing any significant threats that may likely impact the natural values of the nominated property.

Therefore, the State Party of India supports the nomination of the Vjetrenica Cave in Bosnia and Herzegovina to be inscribed on the World Heritage List under Criteria (x).

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I'll give the floor now to Zambia and thereafter give it to the Republic of Korea, whose name we had missed. Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

I would like to appreciate your wise leadership during this session, including your Vice-Chair. Mr Chairman, I would like to also thank the Advisory Body, IUCN, for the good work being done on, which they have done on this site. More than that, I would like to also appreciate the State Party of Bosnia for having, that is, identified this beautiful site.

As the State Party of Zambia, I would like to point out the fact that, you know, it is gratifying that much as, you know, the site did not meet the geodiversity criterion, but it also provides an opportunity for more research linking three thematic areas within the natural heritage, that is, geodiversity, hydrological or hydrosphere, as well as biodiversity. So when you look at the three, if you start linking them, you will be able to see opportunities for more, more research and especially that, you know, the rich biodiversity found at this particular site, it is of global significance in that, you know, it serves itself as, you know, the richest biodiversity hotspot looking at the subterranean ecosystem.

So, for us, we believe, I mean, as a State Party of Zambia, we believe this site is very important, and therefore, looking at the richness of species of subterranean nature, it meets, it already meets, you know, Criterion (x).

And beyond that, when it comes to issues of threats, these have been dealt with and the aspects of the buffer zone having been, that is, dealt with. They give us that confidence that as the State Party of Zambia, we should rally behind all those States Parties that have supported the amendment by the State Party of Türkiye.

I submit, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

But before you submit, can you please let me know about the wonderful dress that you are wearing today? Because I know the red dress which you are going to gift me. This new dress. Is it some symbolic? I would love to hear about it.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Chair.

The dress you saw me with the other day. And I mean, the two dresses are those representing the Western culture of Zambia. That is the Barotse Floodplain or Western Province. Then this attire you've seen me today with this is representing the Ngoni or Zulu culture. I'm saying Zulu because the Ngoni came from South Africa, the KwaZulu-Natal, and they migrated all the way through Central Africa, up to somewhere near East Africa and Tanzania and went back into Zambia and they settled on the eastern part of Zambia. So, this is the Ngoni traditional attire.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. And after hearing that, I love Africa even more. Thank you. *[applause]*

I now go to the Republic of Korea, to be followed by Japan.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you for giving me the floor, Mr Chair.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea takes a special note that Vjetrenica Cave has an international importance of supporting high diversity, biodiversity and endemic species of cave dwelling fauna. 78% of the stygofauna that are endemic to the Dinaric region is dependent on this nominated property. And this property is also highlighted as an exceptional example of a single genus diversity not to be seen in any other caves in the world.

We believe these attributes inherent in this nominated property are enough to meet the Criterion (x), and the necessary protection and management has been ensured by the State Party. Therefore, we join the other Committee members in supporting the inscription of the nominated property on the World Heritage List with the proposed amendment of the draft decision.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Japan.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairperson.

As other Committee members stated, we believe that nominated property merits inscription based on Criterion (x). We had a conversation with State Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina and IUCN, and our concerns have been resolved. Therefore, we also support the proposed amendment to the inscription based on Criterion (x).

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Now that the Member States have finished, I would like to give the floor to the Observer State Party of Australia.

Just one second. I see all the Committee members have spoken. Any other Committee member that would like to take the floor at this point in time? I see none.

Yes. Senegal. You have the floor.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci, M. le Président.

Comme les autres membres du Comité, nous constatons avec beaucoup de plaisir, que la faune tertiaire contenue dans cette côte est un patrimoine universel exceptionnel. Et certaines espèces endémiques sont presque des espèces fossiles. Et, en tant qu'archéologue, je suis très excité par cette faune-là.

Donc je pense comme les autres membres du Comité que ce site doit être inscrit.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So now that everyone has spoken, I will ask a question. There is no question asked by anyone.

So ICOMOS, IUCN, there's no point. IUCN you'd like to take the floor? Okay.

IUCN:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair, for giving IUCN the floor, and we'd like to extend our thanks to all the Esteemed Committee members for their comments.

And with your permission, I would like to highlight just one point also in relation to what the Distinguished Delegate of Italy has mentioned regarding the transnational or extension potential of the nominated area. So, our evaluation report also points to the IUCN Thematic Study on World Heritage Cave and Karst, which explores these options as well. There has also been in the past a pilot Upstream Process. So, these are strands that could potentially be connected in that regard.

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I have now seen that the Committee member from, the Committee member Kenya has raised its plate. You have the floor, sir.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chairman.

To save on your time and the Committee's time, we would want to fully support the inscription of this very unique site, which has a very wide diversity of biodiversity and a very unique environment and unique combination.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

I see that there are no further comments. We shall now proceed.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.4**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Concernant l'inscription de la grotte de Vjetrenica en Bosnie-Herzégovine, nous avons reçu deux amendements.

Le premier a été soumis par la Türkiye, co-écrit par le Kazakhstan et la Belgique, et vient d'être soutenu en salle par l'Argentine, la Jamaïque, l'Italie, la Bulgarie, l'Ukraine, Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines, l'Inde, la Zambie, la République de Corée, le Japon et le Kenya. J'espère que je n'ai oublié personne entre l'interruption de la session et maintenant.

D'autre part, nous avons reçu un deuxième amendement mineur de la part de l'Italie, un petit peu avant l'interruption, qui n'a pas encore, qui n'a pas eu le temps d'avoir été circulé. Nous le présenterons rapidement. Et celui-ci a reçu le soutien de la Türkiye et de la Belgique.

Je commence avec le paragraphe 2 et le changement du référé à l'inscription. « Inscrit La grotte de Vjetrenica, Ravno, Bosnie-Herzégovine, sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sur la base du critère (x) ».

Paragraphe 3, est, si vous le permettez, légèrement réécrit afin de correspondre aux standards et aux règles lorsque l'on passe d'un référé à une inscription pour donner « prend note de la Déclaration provisoire de valeur universelle exceptionnelle suivante » et le texte de la Déclaration de valeur universelle est disponible en langue anglaise.

Paragraphe 4, « se félicite de la pleine acceptation des recommandations de l'UICN par l'État partie afin de garantir des ressources supplémentaires pour renforcer les capacités de l'institution publique Vjetrenica comme l'a souligné l'UICN ».

Paragraphe 5, « se félicite de la confirmation par l'État partie qu'une qualité et un afflux de l'eau suffisant dans le réseau de grottes de Vjetrenica sont garantis à long terme ».

Paragraphe 6, « recommande que l'État partie prenne en considération les points suivants : a) améliorer davantage la cohérence de la cartographie et du zonage du paysage protégé de Vjetrenica Cave-Popovo Polje, en particulier dans le cadre du nouveau plan d'aménagement de la municipalité de Ravno qui est en cours d'élaboration ; b) S'assurer que la gestion hydrologique, y compris la qualité et l'afflux de l'eau dans le bien, est suffisamment suivie ». J'attire l'attention du Président sur le fait que sur ce paragraphe qui contient les recommandations à l'État partie, c'est sur ce paragraphe que l'Italie aurait un second amendement à porter à la connaissance du reste du Comité.

Enfin, dernier paragraphe 7, « demande à l'État partie de soumettre au Centre du patrimoine mondial, avant le 1^{er} décembre 2025, un rapport sur la mise en œuvre des recommandations susmentionnées pour examen par l'UICN ».

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We have received, excuse me, requests from Italy, to be followed by Argentina. We have received a request from Italy.

The mic of Italy is not working. Can you please help? Technical team, we need you here.

The Delegation of Italy:

Perfect. Thank you, Chair.

As I mentioned in my introductory remarks, and as it has been also highlighted again by the IUCN, and which I thank again, in the spirit of the Convention, it's important to keep always the door open for a possible potential future transnational transboundary serial nomination site. I think this promotes international collaboration, and this is one of the real added values of UNESCO in the world.

In this spirit, we would like to make reference to the original para 3 a). So, if we can go back to the. Yes, "recommends the State Party to explore to what extent it could be possible to envisage in future a potential serial transnational extension to enable a complete representation of the Dinaric karst, including in relation to Criteria (viii) and (v)". So, this para can be perfectly put, as the rapporteur suggested in the new para 6. And this is just to respect a potential for the future of this very outstanding nomination.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We give the floor to Argentina, to be followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

In our first statement, we believe that we clearly expressed our support for the inscription of this property, and we are convinced that it will be adopted. We would like to be added to the list of co-authors. And we would also like to support the draft amendment which has just been presented by Italy. We consider that it's of vital importance to ensure this possibility. Our country has a lot of experience in serial nominations, and we believe it's very important to leave the door open to this in the future because we want to leave those possibilities open.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We now give the floor to Qatar.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

Malgré notre intervention avant la pause de déjeuner, on a bien soutenu la proposition de la Türkiye. C'est la raison pourquoi nous voulons ajouter le Qatar parmi les États qui soutiennent la proposition de la Türkiye.

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Greece, you have the floor.

La Délégation de la Grèce :

Ça y est, maintenant ?

Même chose, M. le Président, comme Argentine and Qatar, on voudrait voir notre accord dans le texte.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see that Senegal and Ukraine have also raised their plate.

So first, the Distinguished Representative of Senegal to be followed by Ukraine.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Mr le Président, c'est juste pour rappeler que nous avons aussi soutenu la proposition.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Ukraine, you have the floor.

La Délégation de l'Ukraine :

Merci.

Nous voudrions notre nom soit inscrit dans l'amendement.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

I guess Italy also wants to have its name added. Please add the name of Italy, Mr Rapporteur. Thank you. Yes. Saint Vincent. India. Bulgaria.

Yes, Rapporteur. Please read them.

Le Rapporteur :

Je propose de les lire et sachez qu'ils seront bien rajoutés. Pour gagner du temps, si vous le permettez. Donc, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Belgique avant la présentation, ensuite Argentine, Jamaïque, Italie, Bulgarie, Ukraine, Saint Vincent, Inde, Zambie, République de Corée, Japon, Kenya, Qatar, Grèce, Sénégal.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Have all the names been added? I see no requests for intervention.

We shall now go para by para.

Let's go to para 1. I see no objections.

Para 2. How it appears on the screen. Scroll down. I see no objections.

Para 3, and the same lists of names, please copy paste, the statement of Outstanding Universal Value. Go down. I see no request for any interventions.

Paras 4 and 5.

Para 6, including its subsections.

Para 7.

Okay, I have, no one has raised any plate for any interventions. We'll go right at the top before we adopt this para as a whole.

Is there any objection or comment? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8A.4** adopted as amended. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Thank you very much.

Let me congratulate Bosnia and Herzegovina on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List. As a mark of respect for the Bosnian culture, I will, permit me to say a statement in the Bosnian language and please forgive me if my pronunciation in Bosnian is not very good. *[speaks in Bosnian]* *[applause]* Bosnia Herzegovina, you have the floor for a brief two-minute statement. Thank you. Or four minutes. Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of Bosnia Herzegovina:

Dear Chairman, dear Committee members,

On behalf of the Delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I would like to thank you for the inscription of the Vjetrenica Cave on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The inscription of the Vjetrenica Cave on the World Heritage List is very important for us. This is a great day for us, for our country, especially for the people of the small municipality of Ravno and all the people involved in the management and protection of the Vjetrenica Cave. We are confident that the inscription of Vjetrenica Cave on the World Heritage List adds additional value to the world's natural heritage, alongside other sites already on the List. I express our full commitment to protect and manage Vjetrenica Cave in accordance with the Committee's decision and UNESCO guidelines.

I take this opportunity to congratulate our host, the Government of India, for great organisation of this event and extraordinary hospitality. Also, I take this opportunity to invite you to visit Bosnia and Herzegovina and Vjetrenica Cave.

Thank you once again. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We go to the next item.

MIXED SITES // SITES MIXTES

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

8B.8 Te Henua Enata – The Marquesas Islands (France) // Te Henua Enata – Les îles Marquises (France)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS and IUCN to present the mixed nomination of Te Henua Enata, The Marquesas Islands, France.

But before I give the floor to the, I will give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr Balsamo, you have the floor.

Le Secrétariat :

Merci beaucoup, M. le président.

Nous avons reçu une notification d'erreur factuelle concernant l'évolution du dossier Te Henua Enata – Les îles Marquises, et ceci se trouve à la page 8 du Document INF.8B.4 de la version française et version anglaise.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo.

ICOMOS and IUCN, you have the floor.

UICN :

Merci, M. le Président.

L'évaluation de l'UICN se trouve aux pages indiquées sur la diapositive. L'UICN recommande au Comité d'inscrire Te Henua Enata – Les îles Marquises, sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Prochaine diapo please.

Le site est proposé comme bien mixte au regard des critères naturels (vii), (ix) et (x), associés aux critères culturels (iii), (iv) et (vi).

Concernant le critère (vii), le bien est marqué par des crêtes acérées, des pylônes et des falaises impressionnantes qui s'élèvent de manière abrupte à plus de 1 000 mètres au-dessus de l'océan. La partie marine accueille un spectacle de la vie sauvage exceptionnel. Au sujet du critère (ix), le bien abrite un endémisme exceptionnel et possède des biomasses de poissons les plus élevés au monde. Les eaux marquisiennes sont reconnues comme l'une des aires marines sauvages les plus importantes de la planète. Prochaine diapo please. Concernant le critère (x), le bien dispose d'une biodiversité terrestre et marine composée de 40 espèces marines emblématiques, 26 espèces de raies et requins, 16 espèces de mammifères marins et une tortue marine reconnue comme espèce menacée selon la liste rouge de l'UICN. Également, plus de 40 espèces de poissons retrouvées dans ce bien sont endémiques de l'écorégion. Prochaine diapo.

Au sujet de l'intégrité, le bien garantit une continuité des sommets à la mer. Les limites des éléments terrestres sont basées sur les caractéristiques paysagères les plus importantes et les plus intactes, satisfaisant aux critères naturels et culturels.

En ce qui concerne la gestion, le bien dispose d'un plan de gestion à long terme couvrant la période 2024-2039, basé sur la conservation de sa valeur universelle exceptionnelle. Toutefois, M. le Président, il est important que le nouveau plan général d'aménagement intègre pleinement les limites et les zones tampons du bien proposé. En termes de protection, l'UICN considère que le bien remplit également les obligations sur le plan juridique et réglementaire.

En conclusion, M. le Président, l'UICN recommande au Comité d'inscrire le bien Te Henua Enata – Les îles Marquises, sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial au titre des critères naturels (vii), (ix) et (x).

Avec votre permission, M. le Président, l'ICOMOS va compléter cette présentation avec les critères culturels.

Je vous remercie.

ICOMOS :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le rapport d'évaluation de l'ICOMOS se trouve dans le Document INF.8B.1 à la page 279 de la version anglaise et à la page 306 de la version française. L'ICOMOS a reçu une lettre d'erreurs factuelles et accepté certaines de ces erreurs.

Contraints par la topographie des îles, les *Enatas*, êtres humains Marquisiens, se sont installés dans les vallées profondes et encaissées du haut de crête jusqu'à la côte où ils ont construit des plateformes lithiques à deux niveaux, *paepae*, avec fonction résidentielle. La plupart des sites archéologiques inclus dans le bien proposé pour l'inscription sont des structures monumentales en pierre sèche, certaines très imposantes, et d'autres comprenant des pétroglyphes et ou des statues en pierre taillée, *tiki*.

Le périmètre bien proposé pour l'inscription comprend huit vallées. Trois sont situés dans l'île de Nuku Hiva. L'île de Ua Pou comprend deux vallées jumelles. Et des autres vallées sont situées sur l'île de Hiva Oa. La dernière des vallées identifiées est située sur l'île de Fatu Iva. Les lignes de crête étaient constamment surveillées pour prévenir toute invasion ennemie, ce qui conduisit à la construction des fortifications, des postes de guet ou des espaces de stockage de nourriture *ua mā*. Les cours d'eau principales définissaient l'axe vital depuis le fond de la vallée *vao* jusqu'à la mer *tai*, et contribuent à structurer le schéma de peuplement en trois ans fonctionnels : le littoral et la basse vallée, le centre de la vallée et le fond de la vallée.

Le bien proposé constitue un témoignage exceptionnel sur l'occupation territoriale de l'archipel des Marquises par les *Enatas*, entre le X^e et le XIX^e siècle, sur leur adaptation à un environnement naturel difficile et à la disponibilité limitée des matériaux de constructions, sur leur schéma de peuplement dans des vallées, ainsi que sur leur organisation sociale et spirituelle en chefferies.

L'ICOMOS considère que l'analyse comparative explique clairement la sélection des éléments constitutifs. Également, l'analyse comparative démontre que le bien proposé pour inscription se distingue au regard de l'aire géoculturelle, la Polynésie, en tant que témoignage exceptionnel du mode de vie et des traditions de construction des *Enatas*, de leur interaction avec l'environnement et de leur occupation territoriale des îles Marquises.

L'ICOMOS considère que le critère (iii) est pleinement justifié, mais les critères (iv) et (vi) ne sont pas justifiés. Certains des arguments présentés pour justifier les critères (iv) et (vi) soutiennent plutôt la justification du critère (iii). L'ICOMOS considère que les conditions d'intégrité et d'authenticité de l'ensemble de la série et de chaque élément constitutif sont remplies. Dans leur ensemble les éléments constitutifs offrent une représentation complète du mode de vie des *Enatas* et des liens sociaux, spatiaux et fonctionnels associés à leur occupation territoriale des îles Marquises. La transmission orale des récits, mythes et légendes conjuguées aux écrits des premiers visiteurs et aux travaux ethnographiques, a permis de conserver des connaissances importantes sur l'histoire et les significations sociales de ces lieux.

L'état de conservation du bien proposé pour l'inscription est satisfaisant et les limites du bien proposées pour inscription et des zones tampons sont appropriées en tant que biens mixtes. L'ensemble des principaux sites archéologiques situés au sein du bien proposé pour inscription doivent être inventoriés au plus court délai et désignées au titre du Code du patrimoine et les restrictions légales et/ou coutumières complémentaires posées à l'utilisation et à l'aménagement dans les zones tampons doivent être renforcées.

Le plan général d'aménagement est une priorité et doit être achevé d'ici à 2025, comme l'envisage l'État partie. Les systèmes de gestion et en matière de gouvernance doivent aussi être renforcés. La mise en œuvre de plans de gestion devra être soutenue par l'élaboration de plans de travail pour être efficace ainsi que par des évaluations à mi-parcours. De manière générale, les systèmes de gestion pour le bien proposé pour l'inscription doivent intégrer le patrimoine culturel et naturel pour une gestion efficace en tant que bien mixte.

Voici un résumé de l'évolution de l'ICOMOS de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle proposée pour le bien proposé pour inscription. En conclusion, l'ICOMOS recommande que le bien Te Henua Enata – Les îles Marquises, France, soit inscrit sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sur la base du critère (iii) et de critères naturels, et inclut un certain nombre de recommandations supplémentaires dans le projet de décision pour soutenir la conservation et l'inventaire.

Merci pour votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentations.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination.

Lebanon, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Liban :

Merci, M. le Président.

Ce bien a été proposé pour inscription sur la base des critères culturels (iii), (iv), (vi) et des critères naturels (vii), (ix) et (x). L'UICN considère que les critères naturels (vii), (ix) et (x) sont justifiés alors que l'ICOMOS retient uniquement le critère (iii). Tout en félicitant l'ICOMOS pour la qualité de son évaluation, nous considérons que la proposition d'écarter le critère (vi) ne nous paraît pas justifiée.

En effet, afin de justifier sa position, sa proposition d'écarter ce critère, l'ICOMOS note que le mode de vie des *Enatas*, qui a subsisté du X^e au XIX^e siècle, n'existe pratiquement plus aujourd'hui, que les zones bâties incluses dans le bien ne sont plus utilisées comme lieux de vie et ne sont pas non plus associées à des pratiques actuelles. L'ICOMOS se reconnaît toutefois que de nombreux récits, mythes et légendes liés à des paysages réels ou cosmologiques sont encore très présents aujourd'hui et que l'esprit et l'impression du lieu où se situent les vestiges archéologiques et les représentations des activités ancestrales sont encore très fortement perçues par les Marquisiens d'aujourd'hui.

Je cite, « De nombreux biens sur la Liste ont été inscrits sur la base du critère (vi), alors même qu'ils ne sont plus directement associés à des critères actuels. Les orientations indiquent que le bien doit être directement ou matériellement associé à des événements ou des traditions vivantes, mais également à des idées ou à des croyances ».

Tout en reconnaissant la quasi-disparition des *Enatas* et le fait que le choc démographique ainsi que l'acculturation contemporaine aux contacts européens aient pu s'opposer à la transmission de certains savoirs anciens auprès des habitants des îles Marquises, il n'en reste pas moins que pour les communautés locales vivant dans l'un des archipels les plus isolés du monde, les principaux attributs du bien ne peuvent pas être perçus comme de simples objets archéologiques ayant un pur intérêt scientifique, car ils témoignent du rapport avec leurs ancêtres, le rapport de leurs ancêtres avec l'environnement naturel, roches, plantes, animaux terrestres, animaux terrestres et marins, et se rattachent à des systèmes de croyances liés aux origines du monde.

La reconnaissance par l'UNESCO de la dimension spirituelle et des valeurs immatérielles rattachées au bien constituerait pour les populations marquisiennes une valorisation de leur identité et de leur histoire et contribuerait de ce fait à la sauvegarde durable du bien. Nous proposons donc d'ajouter, nous avons donc proposé d'ajouter le critère (vi) au critère (iii) reconnu par l'ICOMOS.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Belgium, followed by Argentina.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président.

La Belgique souscrit à tout ce que vient de dire notre collègue honorable du Liban. Nous n'aurions pas pu le dire mieux. Donc, nous proposons également d'inscrire cette proposition sur la base du critère (vi). Car la Belgique se réjouit pleinement de l'inscription sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial de Te Henua Enata – Les îles Marquises, et remercie la France et la population des Marquises pour l'engagement dans la préservation de cet ensemble unique et original de paysages naturels et culturels, de patrimoine matériel, immatériel et spirituel.

Les caractéristiques culturelles des îles et des modes de vie qui y sont associées définissent l'identité insulaire de ce territoire. Comment parler aussi des Marquises sans penser à Gauguin, à ses personnages, ses couleurs, son amour pour les îles ?

Mais la Belgique a aussi un lien personnel à ce nouveau bien du patrimoine mondial. Car Jacques Brel, un des plus grands chanteurs belges, a choisi d'y couler ces dernières années et participer, avec son avion, à faciliter la vie quotidienne de certains villages isolés. Brel a d'ailleurs consacré l'une de ses dernières chansons aux Marquises et à la tendresse qu'il leur portait. « La pluie est traversière, elle bat de grains en grains, quelques vieux chevaux blancs, qui fredonnent Gauguin, et par manque de brise, le temps s'immobilise, aux Marquises ».

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. It would have been even better had you sung it.

I now give the floor to Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

What can I say after hearing that statement from our dear colleagues from Lebanon and those beautiful lyrics which were expressed by our colleagues from Belgium? This site is not just a natural site, but as has been said, it also brings together great universal cultural values. Here we wish to support the inscription of this site firmly.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks ICOMOS for its presentation and for the positive evaluation for the inscription of Te Henua Enata of the Marquesas Islands. We thank also Lebanon for the analysis of this site, and we cannot say more than Belgium says very eloquently.

Therefore, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines supports the amendments presented by Lebanon for the inscription of the Marquesas Islands, sister Islands.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much.

The Mexican Delegation is also delighted to see this inscription nomination, because we also have two mixed sites, and we are well aware of the challenges that this may represent, but also because this is a holistic approach in biological and cultural terms, we see that it is moving us towards the 2030 targets, and it enables us to learn more about the evolution of the site thanks to the IUCN's presentation. And in the future, we know that the challenges of climate change will be faced, we'll be faced with these challenges. So, we are delighted to support this site's inscription because it is part of a management system, but it also in terms of cultural aspects.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Now that the Committee members have taken the floor, there are no further questions that are pending. So, I will go to the Rapporteur.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.8**, but before doing so I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Tel qu'annoncé par la Délégation du Liban, nous avons reçu un amendement du Liban proposant l'ajout du critère (vi), soutenu en salle par la Belgique, Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines et le Mexique. J'ai noté également le soutien de l'Argentine à l'inscription, mais je rajoute également l'Argentine à l'ajout du critère (vi). Ce qui entraîne un changement du paragraphe 3 puisque lorsque l'on modifie, on ajoute un critère, il y a un changement de forme pour la déclaration de valeur universelle : « Prend note de la déclaration de valeur universelle exceptionnelle provisoire suivante ». Et la déclaration figure en langue française, « avec dans la Déclaration de valeur universelle, l'ajout du critère (vi) ». Selon l'amendement du Liban, « Malgré le choc démographique et l'acculturation au contact européen et malgré la quasi-disparition des *Enatas*, de nombreux récits, mythes et légendes liés à des paysages réels ou cosmologiques sont encore présents aujourd'hui. Combinés aux savoirs transmis de générations en générations, ils rendent compte du lien spirituel qui unit les populations marquisiennes à leur environnement ».

Pour le reste, M le Président, il s'agit d'erreurs factuelles qui ont été préalablement intégrées au texte. C'est tout concernant le site de Te Henua Enata – Les îles Marquises en France.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We'll go para by para. Are there any objections to para 1?

Qatar, you have the floor. You would like to add your name as well?

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

Oui, je veux ajouter le nom du Qatar aux États membres.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I'll give the Rapporteur the floor to kindly read out the names of the Member States. And as they raise their plates, you may add their names as well.

Le Rapporteur :

M. le Président, je vois des pays qui ont levé leurs plaques. Je considère donc que je les cite parmi la liste des autres pays qui ont préalablement soutenu. Ce qui donne donc pour l'amendement du Liban un soutien par les mêmes coauteurs Saint Vincent, Belgique, Mexique, Qatar, Argentine, Viet Nam, Bulgarie, Japon, Inde, je pense que c'est Ukraine.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any objections to para 2, how it appears on the screen? I see none.

We go to para 3. Scroll down the entirety of it. Yes. Just we can copy paste the names. You can scroll down.

Go to para 4. Are there any objections?

I didn't see any objections to para 3.

And are there any objections to para 2 and its sub paras? Please scroll down.

Para 5. Para 6. I don't see any objections to paras 4, 5 and 6.

Now we go to adopt the entire decision as a whole. Is there any objection in adopting the decision as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.8** adopted as amended. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate France on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property, and I will speak one sentence in the beautiful French language.

Je vous félicite pour votre inscription. *[applause]*

France, you have the floor for a four-minute statement. Thank you.

La Délégation de la France (Observateur) :

[premier orateur] M. le Président,

Nous prenons la parole pour la première fois, je voudrais tout d'abord remercier et féliciter le gouvernement de la République d'Inde et votre présidence pour la remarquable organisation de ce Comité. Je remercie également les experts et de l'ICOMOS et de l'UICN pour leur travail exceptionnel.

M. le Président,

Je souhaite exprimer la grande satisfaction, les remerciements et la fierté de la France de voir les îles Marquises inscrites sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO. Une fierté d'autant plus grande qu'il s'agit de la très rare inscription d'un bien mixte. La France accorde une très grande importance à l'expression des peuples qui portent et incarnent cette candidature.

J'ai maintenant l'honneur de donner la parole au Ministre du Gouvernement de la Polynésie française, dont les îles Marquises font partie.

Je vous remercie. *[applause]*

[deuxième orateur] M. le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs les membres du Comité du patrimoine mondial, Excellences, chers collègues,

la ora na nui. Au nom de la Polynésie française, Te Henua, dont l'archipel des Marquises fait partie, j'ai l'honneur de m'exprimer afin de soutenir la candidature de Te Henua Enata, Les îles Marquises. Plus qu'un soutien, c'est le rayonnement mondial de la terre des hommes et de notre pays dont il est question. Ces îles sont un trésor

inestimable de notre planète, composées de paysages naturels d'une rare magnificence et de traditions culturelles bien vivantes. Il est le témoignage vibrant de l'harmonie ancestrale entre l'homme et la nature. Nous sommes le peuple issu de Te Henua Enata et notre relation à la mer et à la terre est au cœur de notre identité.

Selon la perception océanienne du monde, chaque élément de la nature est sacré et interconnecté. Les esprits de nos ancêtres continuent à nous guider et à protéger notre environnement. Ce bien exceptionnel sera reconnu internationalement et cela renforcera les efforts de protection et de valorisation des communautés locales et territoriales. Nous avons la conviction que cette inscription contribuera à préserver et respecter ce joyau pour l'humanité dans le cadre du plan de gestion où nos frères et sœurs marquisiens joueront un rôle primordial. Leur implication directe et active sera la clé pour assurer la protection et la valorisation de leur patrimoine foncier et culturel, reflet de leur identité et de leur héritage.

Je vous remercie tous de votre attention et de votre soutien à cette candidature unique.

[speaks in a Polynesian language] Merci. Gracias a todos. Thank you.

NATURAL SITES (Ct'd) // SITES NATURELS (suite)

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (Ct'd) // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD (suite)

8B.5 The Flow Country (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) // Le Flow Country (Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord)

The Chairperson:

I now invite IUCN to present the nomination of the Flow Country, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

But before I give the floor to this, but before, I give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr Balsamo, please.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chair.

We received a factual error of notification concerning the evaluation of the nomination of the Flow Country. And this is to be found on page 6 of both the English and French version of the Document INF.8B.4. Thank you.

IUCN:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

IUCN's evaluation can be found on the pages indicated on the slide. IUCN recommends the Committee to inscribe the Flow Country on the World Heritage List under Criterion (ix). The nominated property hosts an extensive expanse of blanket bogs in northern Scotland. A blanket bog is an area of peatland in which high rainfall and low evapotranspiration allow peat to develop over large expanses, playing an important role for the carbon sequestration. Across seven component parts, the nominated property totals an area of more than 180,000 hectares. Under Criterion (ix), the Flow Country is considered the most extensive and diverse example of an actively accumulating blanket bog landscape found globally. A diverse mosaic of mire and vegetation types with their associated species assemblages have evolved in large parts undisturbed.

The Flow Country is a type reference for a rare and threatened ecosystem, not yet appropriately represented on the World Heritage List. Peat land stores more carbon per surface area than any other carbon sink on land. The nominated property's ongoing ecological processes, sequestering carbon on a large scale, are therefore of even greater significance in light of climate change. The role of the nominated property as a nature-based solution to climate change is hence very important.

IUCN considers that the Flow Country demonstrates global significance under Criterion (ix) due to its large extent, its nearly undisturbed nature, and its biodiversity assembly with specific communities composed of Atlantic, Boreal and Arctic taxa. The nomination is exemplary in articulating the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

However, while the nominated property supports unique species assemblages, it does not show exceptional global biodiversity in regard to Criterion (x), under which the Flow Country has also been nominated. Nevertheless, the species assemblages contribute to the integrity under Criterion (ix) as indispensable element of the blanket bog's wider ecosystem and ecological processes.

The nominated areas therefore meet the condition of integrity.

Areas not contributing to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value are vulnerable to development pressures were excluded, resulting in the serial approach. The serial approach has also been informed by comprehensive stakeholder consultation. Regarding the protection and management of the nominated property, IUCN notes that the area of the nominated property parts, the nominated component parts, is legally protected through the Scottish Planning System and through environmental designations such as Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

A management plan has been prepared, and the Flow Country Partnership will oversee coordination if the property is inscribed. Monitoring has been in place since the 1970s and can be extended to the entire area. Climate change poses the most significant threat due to the drying out of bogs as a consequence of rising temperatures, and local threats include land use changes, wildfires, and wind farm development. However, existing policies, including the aforementioned, aim to mitigate these threats.

IUCN concludes that overall, the nominated property benefits from a robust protection and management system.

Mr Chair, the draft decision can be found in Document 8B as shown on the slide and contains IUCN's recommendation to inscribe the Flow Country on the World Heritage List under Criterion (ix).

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.5**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant the Flow Country, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Can I have the draft decision on screen? Okay. Are there any comments in adopting this draft decision as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.5** adopted. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on behalf of the entire community for the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List. The UK, you have the floor for a four-minute statement.

Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland:

Thank you, Chair. Distinguished members of the Committee,

On behalf of the people of the Flow Country in Scotland and the UK, I am honoured by your decision today to inscribe the Flow Country as a World Heritage site. I would like to thank the Committee, the Secretariat, IUCN and our gracious hosts for their generous hospitality and welcome to New Delhi.

The idea to nominate the Flow Country as a World Heritage site was first voiced in the 1980s, when conservationists began to recognise the significance of the blanket bog as a pristine and diverse natural habitat, which has been looked after carefully by many generations of farmers and crofters. It has since, of course, been recognised also for its huge value as a carbon store and significant nature-based solution in our global battle against human induced climate change. The blanket bog stores more than 400 million tonnes of carbon, which is more than double the UK's entire forest carbon store.

The decision today is a culmination of many years of work, both from the project team, some of whom have been involved for many years, but also those forward-thinking scientists who saw the immense value of this landscape over 40 years ago.

Inscription on the World Heritage List recognises the Flow Country as the best example of a blanket bog ecosystem anywhere in the world. We are particularly proud that this is the first World Heritage site inscribed purely for its qualities as a peatland ecosystem. For a habitat type which has been historically globally undervalued. The decision by the Committee is testament to improved understanding of peatland ecosystems. We hope this inscription will shine a spotlight on the importance of the world's peatlands, many of which are under threat, and in particular their role in the fight against climate change.

And finally, I want to thank the communities of the North Highlands for their stewardship of this area. The Flow Country covers nearly 2,000 square kilometres in one of the most remote parts of the UK, an area facing social,

economic and environmental challenges. Inscription of this site will help protect and enhance this 9,000-year-old blanket bog for future generations and provide new and exciting opportunities for our rural communities. We look forward to continuing the work with the international community to protect and promote the values of World Heritage in the Flow Country and beyond.

Thank you, Mr Chair. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÏBES

8B.6 Lençóis Maranhenses National Park (Brazil) // Parc national de Lençóis Maranhenses (Brésil)

The Chairperson:

I now invite IUCN to present a nomination of Lençóis Maranhenses National Park, Brazil. IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

IUCN's evaluation can be found on the pages indicated on the slide.

IUCN recommends the Committee to inscribe Lençóis Maranhenses National Park on the World Heritage List under Criteria (vii) and (viii). Next slide please.

The nominated property is found in northeastern Brazil on the east coast of Maranhão, covering about 156,000 hectares. As shown on the map, the property is surrounded by a buffer zone with an area of 268,000 hectares. About 90,000 hectares within the nominated area are composed of an extensive white coastal dune field with precipitation fed lagoons. The dune fields, interspersed with temporary and permanent lagoons, create an unparalleled environment of exceptional beauty, which is proposed to be recognised under Criterion (vii). The landscape resembles a desert but holds high volumes of water as rainfall during the first half of the year forms lagoons of various shapes, sizes and depths. Long winding chains of barchan dunes stretch up to 75 kilometres and extend over 20 kilometres inland, and are complemented by temporary green blue lakes in the rainy season, coastal broadleaf forests, beaches, tropical rivers and mangrove ecosystems, resulting in a diverse and breathtaking landscape of striking contrast. Whilst large sand dune systems exist elsewhere, the setting in tropical climatic conditions of a complex dune field with a lacustrine and coastal environment distinguishes the nominated property.

Regarding Criterion (viii), IUCN notes that the nominated property is shaped by sediments which, under the influence of wind, form a vast expanse of both stable and shifting dunes, recognised as the largest in South America. With no inlet or outlet, the lagoons within the nominated area are solely replenished by rainwater.

Expert reviewers highlighted the nominated property as a spectacular Quaternary geology site with global significance, the support, the understanding of the past few millennia of geo environmental change. Next slide please. Another slide please.

In terms of protection and management, IUCN notes that the entire nominated property is protected as a national park since 1981, which has a management regime that has seen continued improvement. Further efforts to strengthen the monitoring, enforcement, and governance would be needed to respond to future increase in tourism. IUCN also recommends strengthening the protection and management regime for the marine part of the buffer zone, to ensure any potential threats from off-shore and from tourism can be effectively addressed in future.

Overall, the nominated property benefits from a strong and multi-layered protection regime that goes beyond the nominated property itself, and beyond the areas where the main attributes of the proposed OUV are found. The boundaries of the nominated property thus comprise all necessary elements representing the proposed OUV. The inclusion of some non-dune ecosystems enables representation of the interplay between rivers, coasts, mangroves and Caatinga forests, which are part of the processes constituting the proposed OUV. IUCN therefore considers that the integrity requirements are met.

Mr Chair, the draft decision can be found in Document 8B as shown on the slide, and contains IUCN's recommendation to inscribe Lençóis Maranhenses National Park on the World Heritage List under natural Criteria (vii) and (viii).

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I would now invite you to adopt the draft decision of **46 COM 8B.6**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le président.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement sur le projet de décision pour l'inscription du Parc national de Lençóis Maranhenses, Brésil.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.6** adopted. *[gave]* *[applause]*

Thank you very much.

Let me congratulate Brazil on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property on the World Heritage List, and let me congratulate them in their own language. *[speaks in Portuguese]* *[applause]*.

Brazil, you have the floor for 4 and a half minutes, now. For a four-minute statement. Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of Brazil:

Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you. *[speaks in Portuguese]*

Thank you, Mr Chair. On behalf of Brazil, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Committee members and the IUCN experts and staff in the sector of 1972 Convention for the invaluable contribution to this moment. The success of the Lençóis Maranhenses nomination is the testament of the extraordinary work of the Brazilian Ministry and invaluable staff, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Brazil and Maranhão State Government, which I have the honour of leading. This inscription is *[unclear]* committing to environmental protection and the sustainable development.

The Lençóis Maranhenses National Park boasts a unique combination of the sand dunes, free walk, free water lagoons, *[unclear]* and *[unclear]* geology and biological diversity. *[unclear]* visual splendour, Lençóis Maranhenses is a thriving ecosystem supporting a diverse range of species, some endemic to the region. The *[unclear]* *[unclear]* invaluable for generations. The inscription of the Lençóis Maranhenses as a UNESCO World Heritage site will have a significant impact on the tourism and the local economy. Sustainably, that involves fostering high quality of life to the local community. We'll be encouraging the inhabitants to have *[unclear]* of this natural wonder. The inscription of the Lençóis Maranhenses on the UNESCO World Heritage List is a momentous step towards preserving this unique landscape that is celebrated, and we will work together to protect and enhance Lençóis Maranhenses for generations to come.

Thank you very much. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Obrigado.

I now invite ICOMOS.

The Observer Delegation of Brazil:

So. Can I?

The Chairperson:

Well, sure.

The Observer Delegation of Brazil:

[first speaker] At this moment of the great joy for the inscription of Lençóis Maranhenses National Park on the World Heritage List, I would like to thank everyone who was involved in this process of preparation this nomination, federal and local governments, local community, the civil society, local business and local tourism agents. We have all worked hard for this.

The Chico Mendes Institute for Conservation of Biodiversity believes that acknowledgement will further stress conservation value of these sites. As site manager, we know the new possibility that will be available to us just as we are to the challenges we will face and the responsibility we will assume.

And now I am proud to introduce to you the fisherwoman, Raimara Aguiar, that lives in Lençóis Maranhenses National Park. Please. Hi, Madam.

[second speaker] Good afternoon, everyone.

My colleague and I are very honoured to be here representing the community that lives in and around Lençóis Maranhenses National Park. This is eternal place. It's our home. Protecting this site means protecting this territory where you have grown up, its biodiversity and the amazing landscape. It also means protecting our way of life, our identity. We would like to thank the National Park manager for the wonderful job she has been doing, and for giving us high priority to engagement of the community. You have always taken care of the Lençóis Maranhenses. Now we will take care of the World Heritage site, and we are very proud of that.

Thank you so much. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

MIXED SITES (Ct'd) // SITES MIXTES (suite)

AFRICA // AFRIQUE

8B.7 Melka Kunture and Balchit Archeological and Paleontological Site (Ethiopia) // Site archéologique et paléontologique de Melka Kunture et Balchit (Éthiopie)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS and IUCN to present the mixed nomination of Melka Kunture and Balchit Archeological and Paleontological Site, Ethiopia. ICOMOS and IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

IUCN first. The IUCN evaluation can be found on the pages indicated on the slides.

The Melka Kunture and Balchit Archeological and Paleontological Site comprises six component parts, totalling an area of 55 hectares. The nominated property is situated in the Volcaniclastic deposit, developed in the slowly subsiding depression where the Paleo-Awash River had established its course. A substantial lava dam forms the fluvial basin within which the nominated property is located, favouring deposition in the basin, which thus prevented the archaeological remains from being fully eroded.

Besides cultural criteria, the nominated property has been proposed under Natural Criterion (viii). Based on careful, expert review of the nominated property's geological values, IUCN considers that the geological characteristics of the nominated property are important in supporting the archaeological values nominated under cultural criteria, but do not justify the application of Criterion (viii). The area in question is of national importance and not globally significant in terms of geological values.

However, IUCN notes that there is a strong case for cultural values, and further information on that will be presented, will be provided in the presentation by ICOMOS.

With respect to the interplay between the geology and the cultural criteria, IUCN reviewers viewed this as the main value of the geological features at the nominated property. The geology formed the basin within which the fauna gathered and provided the means to preserve the lithic and hominin remains. The current gully erosion exposes the remains. In the view of IUCN, these geological values would be able to be addressed in the nominated property's value statement as cultural property.

Based on dialogue with the State Party during the evaluation process and following the release of ICOMOS and IUCN's evaluations, it is IUCN's understanding that the State Party is in agreement with that approach.

Mr Chair, further details regarding the integrity, protection and management of the nominated property with respect to Criterion (viii) can be found in IUCN evaluation report. However, as the criterion is no longer considered, IUCN concludes its presentation at this point.

Accordingly, the draft decision in Document 8B is based on ICOMOS's recommendation. Thank you very much, Mr Chair. And I pass on to ICOMOS to address the cultural criteria.

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, IUCN.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Melka Kunture and Balchit Archeological and Paleontological Site, Ethiopia. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 266 of the English version, and page 291 of the French version. Next slide.

Located in the Upper Awash Valley on the Ethiopian Highlands at about 2,000 to 2,200 metres above sea level, the nominated serial property is made of six component parts, selected based on the richness of their material. The six component parts Gombore-Garba, Simbiro, Blachit, Kella, Wofi, and Atebella were selected among 70 archaeological outcrops identified in the area spanning over 80 square kilometres. The total area of the property as initially proposed in the nomination is 55.5 hectares, with buffer zones totalling 9,637.9 hectares. The Melka Kunture sites are located in the gullies and valleys which eroded alluvial sediments from the lower and middle Pleistocene, while the locality of bulkhead preserves the obsidian dome floor created as a result of volcanic activity some 3.5 million years ago.

The cluster of Pleistocene archaeological and paleontological sites of Melka Kunture and Balchit preserves an exceptionally long cultural sequence consisting of four consecutive phases of the Oldowan, Acheulean, middle Stone Age and late Stone Age techno complexes. The sites testify to the occupation of the area by the hominin groups from 2 million years ago and their adaptation to the challenges and climatic conditions of the high mountain ecosystem. They yielded remains of *Homo erectus*, *Homo heidelbergensis*, and archaic *Homo sapiens* in different contexts and in association with a rich variety of lithic tools. The component parts contribute to the understanding of human evolution and allow to determine the chronology of cultural horizon of the Pleistocene epoch.

The comparative analysis demonstrates the exceptional character of the property as a rare example of a preserved sequence of paleo landscapes that testify to the occupation by hominins of high altitudes, and their adaptation to the environment of the high mountain ecosystem, with an exceptionally long sequence of four consecutive technological traditions recorded within one area and documented in different archaeological contexts.

The nominated property demonstrates Criteria (iii), (iv) and (v). However, ICOMOS considers that the application of a cultural landscape category is not justified as the included scattered fragments of the paleo landscapes cannot be considered representative of what used to be a cultural landscape.

The requirement for authenticity and integrity of the whole nominated series and of the individual component parts have been met. All component parts contribute substantially to the OUV of the property. They suffer from erosion to a small extent, and the intactness of the deposits in some areas is threatened by activities related to sand quarrying. The expansion of settlements and the related development of infrastructure need to be monitored at some of the component parts.

The boundaries of component parts Gombore-Garba and Kella have been adjusted in February 2024 to include sub-sites that had been left in the buffer zone. The updated figures for the arrears of the revised boundaries are yet to be provided.

The legal tools to ensure the protection and management of the nominated property are in place. A management plan has been developed through a consultative process. However, adequate procedures and practical mechanisms should be put in place to guarantee effective protection and management within the existing legal framework, to strengthen human capacity and to ensure sustainability of funds for the maintenance of the property. Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed OUV of the nominated property.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Melka Kunture and Balchit Archeological and Paleontological Sites, Ethiopia, be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria (iii), (iv) and (v), and recommends that the name be changed to Melka Kunture and Balchit: Archaeological and Paleontological Sites in the Highland Area of Ethiopia. This recommendation has been approved by the State Party in its response letter, following the official submission of the evaluation text. ICOMOS has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination. I see none. Let's proceed then.

Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you. Chair.

Thank you ICOMOS for the job well done, and the State Party of Ethiopia.

What I wanted to just find out is just a matter of procedure. What would have happened. This is a question to ICOMOS. What would have happened if the State Party didn't agree with you on the name?

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

ICOMOS, please respond to the question asked by the State Party of Zambia.

ICOMOS:

Thank you very much for the question, Zambia.

If the State Party wouldn't have agreed, I guess it would have to be discussed by the whole Committee to find an agreement and have the final decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.7**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

M. le Président, nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le projet de décision pour l'inscription du Site archéologique et paléontologique de Melka Kunture et Balchit, Éthiopie.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.7** adopted. ^[gave!] ^[applause]

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate Ethiopia on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property. As a mark of respect to the Ethiopian culture, I'll try to try to speak one line in the Amharic language ^[speaks in Amharic] ^[applause]. Thank you. Ethiopia, I hope you understood what I said. And you have the floor for a four-minute statement.

The Observer Delegation of Ethiopia:

Thank you, Chair. We've understood the message. Thank you.

Excellency, My Minister of Tourism, Her Excellency Nassise Chali, has sent a message. So, I will send, I will read it on her behalf.

Excellency, Mr Vishal Sharma, President of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee, Mr Lazare Assomo, Director of UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Distinguished Delegates of the Committee members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the State Party of India for hosting the 46th session of World Heritage Committee. I would also like to express our appreciation to the Secretariat and Advisory Bodies for the meticulous work they have accomplished in evaluating the nomination dossier and Africa World Heritage Fund for all the support. Ethiopia would like to thank the World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies for inscribing the Melka Kunture and Balchit: Archaeological and Paleontological Site on the World Heritage List.

As clearly stated in the Statement of Outstanding Values, the Melka Kunture and Balchit: Archaeological and Paleontological Site is located in central Ethiopia, 60 kilometres south of Addis Ababa along Awash River, where most of human origins paleontological sites in Ethiopia are found. Notably, the Lower Awash paleontological site, inscribed on the List in 1980 is one of those. The unique nature of the Melka Kunture site is related to its Pleistocene sequence of records covering the last 2 million years. The earliest technologies represented by the early Stone Age, middle Stone Age and later Stone Age human technologies are all well recorded at this site. Along the continuous exploitation of techniques of obsidian as raw material for the production of stone tools since 2 million years ago.

The site also provided fossil remains of early human ancestors known as *Homo erectus*, *Homo heidelbergensis*, and modern humans, associated with various technological stages and innovations. The Melka Kunture Archaeological and Paleontological Site is testament to the last 2 million years of continuous exploitation of Awash riverine environment, highlighting the site's importance as evidence of human influence through its evolutionary trajectory. Being the true cradle of humankind and the origin of the Land of Origins, Ethiopia commits itself to the decision made by the Committee in preserving and protecting the property.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

CULTURAL SITES (Ct'd) // SITES CULTURELS (suite)

**8B.12 The Emergence of Modern Humans: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa (South Africa)
// L'émergence de l'humanité moderne : les sites d'occupation du Pléistocène en Afrique du Sud (Afrique du Sud)**

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of The Emergence of Modern Humans: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa, South Africa. Agenda Item 46 COM 8B.12.

But before that, I give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the nomination of The Emergence of Modern Humans: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa. And this is to be found on page 40 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B.4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

This is a presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of The Emergence of Modern Humans: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa, South Africa. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1, on page 37 of the English version and page 16 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

The nominated property is composed of three archaeological sites that provide exceptional evidence of behavioural and paleoenvironmental developments in the middle Stone Age, and bear witness to the development of modern human behaviour, dating back as far as 162,000 years. The evidence includes ochre processing, engravings, beads, decorated eggshells, advanced projectile weapons, heat treated stone, stone tools, and microliths.

The three component parts that define the nominated property are disseminated across South Africa. Diepkloof Rock Shelter and Pinnacle Point Site complex are located in Western Cape Province, and the Sibhudu Cave is located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The three nominated archaeological sites provide excellent scientific evidence for the first appearance of modern human behaviour in the middle Stone Age, and they present the best preserved and probably most complete record known of this important step in human development. They offer some of the most important evidence known for the consistent exploitation of coastal resources during the middle and late Pleistocene. They contain early evidence of symbolic thought and advanced technologies. All three component parts contain long stratigraphic sequences of human occupation that together cover a time span of about 124,000 years, from 162,000 to 38,000 years ago.

The comparative analysis underscores the importance of these archaeological sites, as they offer comprehensive evidence of the evolution of modern human behaviour during the middle to late Pleistocene. These sites reveal not only well documented interactions of *Homo sapiens* with a changing environment, but also crucial cognitive advancements and diverse cultural expressions.

The nominated property demonstrates Criteria (iii), (iv), and (v).

The nominated property is of adequate size to encompass all the attributes necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value, and to ensure the complete representation of the features that confer its significance. Preservation conditions, even for organic materials, are the Sibhudu Cave, are very good. Favourable dispositional processes have allowed the steady accumulation of archaeologically significant deposits with little or no loss due to natural erosion or human or animal activities.

The views from the sites are generally undisturbed. Archaeological excavations have been conducted according to the highest international standards. All remains have been carefully curated and catalogued in national collections, and their significance and the interpretations based upon them have been reported and published in international journals.

The stratigraphic sequences and the dating of the different deposits confirmed the authenticity of the archaeological context and remains that constitute evidence of modern human behaviour. The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met.

While the boundaries of the buffer zone of Diepkloof Rock Shelter are adequate, the buffer zones of the two other component parts have been the subject of discussion and exchanges between ICOMOS and the State Party during the evaluation procedure of this nomination. Thanks to this dialogue, the State Party agreed to explore the option of extending the buffer zone of Pinnacle Point Site complex into the ocean. ICOMOS considers that the buffer zone of Sibhudu Cave is too narrow to adequately protect the component parts from mixed development. ICOMOS will recommend an expansion of the buffer zone to include the 300 metre-wide conservation through a minor boundary modification request.

The Legal Protection framework offers adequate protection to the three archaeological sites. ICOMOS notes that the three component parts remain under private ownership and recommends the urgent establishment of formal heritage agreements with legal honours.

The management structure and planning documents are adequate. ICOMOS considers that there is a need to operationalise the management tools and finalise the two updated integrated conservation management plans to ensure the most effective management of the nominated property. Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that The Emergence of Modern Humans: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa, South Africa, be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria (iii), (iv), and (v). ICOMOS has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property, and has requested a name change of the property to The Emergence of Modern Human Behaviour: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentation.

I would now like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination. I see none.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.12**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le projet d'inscription, le projet de décision pour l'inscription des Sites d'occupation du Pléistocène en Afrique du Sud.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none. Before we adopt this draft Decision as a whole, would any Member State like to take the floor? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.12** adopted. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate South Africa on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of their property. South Africa, you have the floor. But before you do that, in continuation of our desire to speak native languages, the Secretariat now wants me to speak in Zulu *[applause]*. So please bear with me. These are very ancient languages, and I do that as with deep respect for Zulu language in my heart. *[speaks in Zulu]* *[applause]*.

Thank you. And South Africa, I hope you could forgive me if I pronounce anything wrongly, but you have the floor for your four-minute statement.

The Observer Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you. Members of the World Heritage Committee, Excellencies representing various States Parties, Distinguished guests, Esteemed colleagues,

I greet you on behalf of the people of South Africa. Since it is our first time taking the floor, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate India on hosting a well-organized conference and for your exceptional hospitality. It is with immense pride and profound gratitude that I stand before you today to accept the gracious recognition for The Emergence of Modern Human Behaviour: The Pleistocene Occupation Sites of South Africa as a World Heritage site on behalf of the people of South Africa and the world. This designation includes Diepkloof Rock Shelter in Elands Bay, Pinnacle Point Site complex in Mossel Bay and Sibhudu Cave in KwaZulu-Natal, connecting through our eastern border on the Indian Ocean.

This momentous occasion marks a significant milestone in our collective journey to preserve and celebrate the origins of modern human behaviour and our shared cultural heritage. The inscription of the Modern Human Behaviour Site complements the existing World Heritage recognition of South Africa's Fossil Hominid Sites and underscores our country's pivotal role in narrating the origin and the story of human origins.

This inscription adds the 11th site to South Africa's World Heritage sites. As we celebrate this prestigious recognition, we also acknowledge the critical role of heritage in fostering national unity and identity. These sites are not only for archaeological treasures, but also symbols of our resilience, creativity and capacity for innovation. They remind us of the importance of preserving our cultural and natural heritage for future generations.

In the words of the late South African palaeontologist, Professor Phillip Tobias, who was once asked: "What has South Africa given the world?" His reply was, "There's a simple answer. South Africa gave the world humanity, and this is no small thing". At this juncture, I'd like to hand over to Dr Thobile Sifunda, the Head of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport in KwaZulu-Natal, where Sibhudu Cave is located.

[second speaker] In accepting the honour, we reaffirm our commitment to preserving the cultural and natural heritage of South Africa and the world. We pledge to continue fostering a deeper understanding of our shared history, promoting education and encouraging sustainable economic spinoffs that respect and protect these invaluable sites. The commitment to protecting the site as a collective effort involving local community, stakeholders and authorities. That dedication is crucial to maintaining the integrity and authenticity of these sites. We recognize their invaluable contributions and pledge to support their efforts through comprehensive management frameworks and national heritage legislation.

On behalf of the people of South Africa, we extend our heartfelt thanks to UNESCO, the World Heritage Committee, the African World Heritage Fund, the World Heritage Centre and other States Parties that have supported us for this distinguished recognition. Together, we will ensure that these sites continue to inspire and educate future generations about the rich tapestry of human history.

Siyabonga. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

8B.9 Royal Court of Tiébélé (Burkina Faso) // La Cour royale de Tiébélé (Burkina Faso)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Royal Court of Tiébélé, Burkina Faso. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Merci, M. le Président.

Il s'agit de la présentation de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS de la Cour royale de Tiébélé au Burkina Faso. Le rapport de l'ICOMOS se trouve dans le Document INF.8B.1 à la page 15 de la version anglaise et à la page 31 de la version française.

La Cour Royale de Tiébélé est située dans la commune de Tiébélé, à 172 kilomètres au sud de Ouagadougou, la capitale du Burkina Faso et à la frontière avec le Ghana. Elle constitue un ensemble architectural remarquable en terre, témoignant de l'organisation sociale et des valeurs culturelles du peuple Kassena répartis entre le nord du Ghana et le sud du Burkina Faso. La Cour Royale de Tiébélé s'étend sur environ 1,84 hectares. Elle est clôturée par un mur d'enceinte défensif et est composé d'îlots ou concessions, de placettes et de passages. Elle est répartie spatialement et socialement en cinq domaines organisés chacun autour des maisons mères en forme de huit, complété par les maisons des jeunes mariés de forme quadrangulaire, celle des adolescents et hommes célibataires de forme circulaire et les greniers, silos et poulaillers de forme conique. Plusieurs éléments symboliques sont situés à proximité de l'enceinte de la cour.

Installée depuis le XVI^e siècle au pied de la colline Tchébili, la Cour se distingue par son architecture spécifique en terre, organisée sous forme de concessions réparties selon le statut des habitants. Elle regroupe les maisons mères ou Dinian, réservées aux personnes âgées, aux veuves, aux femmes célibataires et aux enfants. Les maisons des jeunes mariées ou Mangolo et les maisons des adolescents et hommes célibataires ou Draa. À ces habitations s'ajoutent des éléments sacrés symboliques qui témoignent de la préservation des pratiques traditionnelles de la culture Kassena. Le pourou, butte sacrée où est enterré le placenta des nouveau-nés de la famille royale. Le figuier rouge marquant l'entrée de la cour et sous lequel sont disposées les dalas, pierres sacrées représentant les sièges des princes et des notables. Le nabari, tombe du fondateur de la famille royale. Le nankongo, qui fait office de tribunal et de lieu de palabre, et le bonnalè, les cimetières de la cour royale. La Cour est également le réceptacle de pratiques et de savoirs faire qui en font un site évolutif et vivant, à l'exemple des décorations murales réservées aux femmes de la Cour ou des pratiques rituelles associées au culte des ancêtres et aux rites funéraires. Le Pê, chef coutumier, est le garant de l'ordre social et spirituel.

L'analyse comparative démontre la singularité et la spécificité de la Cour Royale de Tiébélé à l'échelle de l'espace géoculturel africain en tant que site vivant et la particularité des formes architecturales et du style décoratif qui le caractérisent, mais aurait pu être renforcé en prenant en compte la technique de construction, la répartition spatiale, sociale et fonctionnelle et le rôle des hommes et des femmes dans la construction.

Le bien est proposé pour inscription sur la base des critères (iv), (v) et (vi). L'ICOMOS considère cependant qu'aucun de ces trois critères n'est démontré, mais que le bien répond au critère (iii) au regard de sa capacité à représenter de manière remarquable la culture Kassena à travers l'architecture, les décorations murales et les aspects sociaux, anthropologiques et politiques qui lui sont associées.

Les conditions concernant l'intégrité et l'authenticité sont remplies mais demeurent menacées par un défaut d'entretien des bâtiments pouvant parfois les mener à l'état de ruine. L'évolution des techniques de construction, avec notamment l'emploi de la daube et l'utilisation de nouveaux matériaux tels que le ciment, la tôle ondulée, les fenêtres métalliques, le goudron ou d'autres produits chimiques constituent également des menaces. L'évolution des motifs illustrant les murs est à contrôler de façon à permettre la création de nouveaux motifs tout en assurant la préservation des anciens.

Les limites du bien proposé pour inscription comprennent l'ensemble des attributs de la Cour Royale, tandis que celles de la zone tampon correspondent aux limites précoloniales de la Cour.

Le système de protection et de gestion de la Cour Royale de Tiébélé est satisfaisant, mais doit être renforcé à travers l'intégration des projets d'aménagement et de développement en cours ou futurs et leurs éventuels impacts. Le recours à des évaluations d'impact sur le patrimoine, l'inclusion de la gestion des risques et le suivi de la mise en œuvre du plan de conservation. Il est urgent de finaliser le processus de nomination du gestionnaire du site. Voici un résumé de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle proposée pour le bien.

En conclusion, l'ICOMOS recommande que la Cour Royale de Tiébélé, Burkina Faso soit inscrite sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sur la base du critère (iii) et a inclus un certain nombre de recommandations supplémentaires dans le projet de décision pour soutenir la conservation à long terme du bien.

Merci de votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination at this point, or I would also open the floor when I go and ask the Rapporteur if there are any amendments.

Lebanon, you want to intervene at this point? You have the floor.

La Délégation du Liban :

Oui. Merci, M. le Président.

L'État partie avait proposé le bien pour l'inscription sur la base des critères (iv), (v) et (vi). L'ICOMOS n'a retenu aucun de ces trois critères proposés par l'État partie, mais a proposé le critère (iii). Cela nous a paru quelque peu bizarre et nous a poussé à étudier le dossier en profondeur. Nous avons alors estimé que tous les éléments présentés dans le dossier justifiaient le critère (vi). La Cour Royale de Tiébélé est un haut lieu de pratique vivante et de rites religieux ancestraux liés à la culture du peuple Kassena, les attributs matériels du bien comme la butte sacrée, le figuier rouge, la casse du tribunal ou l'autel ancestral sont le support de ces pratiques, et les décorations murales sont riches en significations qui reflètent les mythes et les croyances traditionnelles du peuple Kassena.

Après avoir présenté notre amendement proposant d'ajouter le critère (vi), l'État partie nous a informé qu'il ne souhaitait plus que le bien soit inscrit sur la base de ce critère (vi) et que la proposition de l'ICOMOS de ne retenir uniquement que le critère (iii) leur convenait parfaitement.

Monsieur le Président, nous n'allons pas être plus royaliste que le roi, puisque l'État partie et l'ICOMOS sont d'accord, nous retirons notre projet d'amendement d'ajouter le critère (vi).

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Belgium.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

M. le Président, la Belgique a examiné avec une grande satisfaction la proposition d'inscription de la Cour Royale de Tiébéle, que la Belgique connaît très bien par ailleurs. En effet, depuis plus de dix ans, la Belgique entretient des liens étroits avec le bien. Grâce à ce soutien se sont déroulés des échanges mutuels d'acteurs du patrimoine, d'experts et d'artisans des deux pays pendant plusieurs années. Pour cela, ce dossier est au cœur des préoccupations de la Convention et est un signe d'espoir en faveur d'une Liste du patrimoine mondial plus crédible, plus représentative de la diversité et de la richesse des cultures du monde, mais également du renforcement des capacités.

La décision que nous nous apprêtons à prendre est également une reconnaissance d'une organisation sociétale et d'un mode de gestion traditionnel et efficace. Ce bien représente la valorisation des savoir-faire traditionnels mais vivant. Le développement de cette architecture et sa décoration a été conditionné par le développement des connaissances et des pratiques des communautés locales concernant la nature, l'univers et les pratiques sociales, rites et fêtes régis par celle-ci.

Marqueur culturel de la région, la Cour Royale de Tiébéle témoigne de la transmission des savoir-faire, la répartition sociale des tâches entre la construction et la décoration des habitats, mais également des croyances, des légendes et des mythes transmis à travers les motifs décoratifs qu'on voit à l'écran et qui confirment la forte symbolique architecturale portée par les communautés locales.

Dès lors, la Belgique souhaitait porter l'ajout du critère (vi) à la décision, telle que proposée dans l'amendement porté par le Liban. Comme le Liban l'a indiqué, la Belgique respecte aussi la position de l'État partie du Burkina Faso et ne suivra pas le critère (vi). La Belgique, donc, remercie l'État partie d'avoir proposé ce dossier à l'inscription et soutient ce magnifique bien.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Senegal, followed by Zambia.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci, Monsieur. Merci, M. le Président.

Je n'ai pas eu l'occasion de le faire depuis le début. Je dois féliciter l'Inde pour l'accueil et la parfaite organisation de cette rencontre. Féliciter aussi, M. le Président, je n'ai jamais vu un Président aussi joyeux et aussi bien inspiré. Ce qui fait que nous avons un Comité sans stress. Je n'ai jamais vu un Comité du patrimoine mondial aussi calme. Je pense que le nous devons au Président. Nous le devons aussi et nous le devons aussi au Comité du patrimoine mondial, à son Président qui a anticipé sur beaucoup de questions. Donc on vous remercie, on remercie le Comité. Je pense aussi que c'est un Comité extrêmement convivial. Les observateurs, les États parties et aussi tout le personnel autour de nous qui est en train de faire un travail remarquable.

Pour en revenir à la Cour Royale, je pense que l'ICOMOS a joué un rôle extrêmement important. Les critères qui avaient été retenus par l'État au début s'avèrent, avec le temps, manquer de prudence. Parce que le fait que le site soit vivant et que les traditions peuvent évoluer induisaient un recul par rapport aux critères précédents. Je comprends et je salue aussi l'attitude de nos collègues, comment il s'appelle, du Liban, qui ont fait une proposition argumentée mais qui, à la rencontre de l'État partie, ont compris qu'on ne pouvait pas être plus royaliste que le roi. Donc on est très, très heureux de l'issue de cette proposition et le fait qu'on puisse l'accepter conformément aux travaux et aux suggestions de l'ICOMOS et au choix de l'État partie.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Senegal, for your kind words of appreciation.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Zambia, followed by Rwanda.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Mr Chairman, I just want to join the State Party of Senegal in appreciating your Chairmanship. The first time I learned that you are going to be the President or the Chair of this Committee, I remembered the Saudi 40-minutes discussion and I was saying, are we going to have a good one in India? But the opposite of you has been seen today.

Mr Chairman, I want to take this special occasion to just appreciate the role played by ICOMOS. I am saying so because I am thrilled to see a young lady in the name of Alyssa, sorry to mention your name, sitting in front there and representing the youthful Africa. For me, this is something which is very commendable, and we don't just appreciate ICOMOS as well as the works that they have done on this special file. So, for this, I don't want to bore you with a lot of words, but just to appreciate what ICOMOS is doing in terms of, you know, promoting the young generation, but at the same time being gender-oriented.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Zambia. Thank you for your kind words.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Rwanda.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Rwanda s'associe aux voix de nos prédécesseurs et félicite le Burkina Faso, de même que l'ICOMOS pour l'analyse judicieuse de ce dossier. Le Rwanda soutient la proposition émise par l'ICOMOS d'inscrire la Cour Royale de Tiébélé sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sous les critères proposés qui est le critère (iii), (vi) plutôt.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Kenya.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

On behalf of Group V(a) we are very excited to convey our congratulations to Burkina Faso for the well-deserved listing on the prestigious World Heritage List. This contributes significantly, because this is a practical way of bridging the gap that we've been speaking about for the last few years. We congratulate you. We celebrate you. And to ICOMOS, kudos for providing very specific and excellent guidance.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see that there are no more comments nor questions.

Rwanda, you want to take the floor again? You have the floor.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci.

C'est peut-être pour ^[unclear]. La proposition émise, c'est inscrit, le site, sur le critère (iii), comme proposé par nos prédécesseurs. Merci.

The Chairperson:

Yes. I see that there are no more questions and comments.

So, other than appreciation for the ICOMOS representative from the Distinguished Representative of Zambia. Do you want to take the floor to thank, ICOMOS?

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chair and thank you, Zambia. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I now invite another son of Africa who cannot stop himself, so I'll give him the floor as well.

Le Directeur du Centre du Patrimoine mondial :

Merci M. le Président.

C'était juste pour peut-être réagir suite effectivement à cette situation liée autour de l'ajout du critère (vi) ou pas. Et dire simplement que, effectivement, c'est un site sur lequel j'ai beaucoup travaillé personnellement dans les années passées. C'est un site vivant et je pense que dans le projet de décision que vous allez examiner, l'ICOMOS à faire un ensemble de recommandations et qui de toute façon, vont amener l'État partie et toutes les autorités en charge de la gestion de la conservation de ce site, de continuer à promouvoir et mettre en place les systèmes de gestion traditionnelle qui vont permettre la préservation des motifs, le contrôle de l'apparition des nouveaux motifs, la responsabilisation de toutes les parties prenantes qui tous les jours continuent d'assurer la conservation, la gestion et la préservation de ce site. Et cet ensemble de recommandations est effectivement très important et nous allons travailler bien sûr avec les autorités pour ce faire.

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.9**. But before doing so I will ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous avons reçu un amendement qui a été retiré à l'instant par la Délégation du Liban, tel qu'annoncé, M. le Président. Nous n'avons plus d'amendement concernant l'inscription, le projet de décision pour l'inscription de la Cour royale de Tiébélé au Burkina Faso.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.9** adopted. [gavel] [applause]

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate Burkina Faso on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property.

Je vous félicite pour votre inscription.

Burkina Faso, you have the floor for a four-minute statement. Thank you.

La Délégation du Burkina Faso (Observateur) :

M. le Président, Distingués membres du Comité du patrimoine mondial, Distingués invités, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Au nom du peuple Burkinabé, je voudrais exprimer ma plus profonde gratitude à la République de l'Inde qui nous fait l'honneur d'accueillir cette 46^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial. J'exprime toute ma reconnaissance aux membres du Comité et aux Organisations consultatives pour avoir consacré la valeur universelle exceptionnelle de la Cour Royale de Tiébélé.

Par cette décision du Comité, la communauté internationale reconnaît ainsi au Burkina Faso d'être l'un des dépositaires de la conscience de l'humanité, pour emprunter les mots aimables à Son Excellence Monsieur le Premier Ministre de l'Inde, dans sa déclaration d'ouverture de la présente session.

Ce jour, 26 juillet 2024, est historique pour le Burkina Faso et son peuple. C'est le couronnement d'efforts continus et d'actions concrètes et cohérentes qui permettent au pays des hommes intègres de savourer l'inscription de son quatrième bien sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. En effet, Monsieur le Président de la Cour Royale de Tiébélé est devenu par cette consécration un témoignage universel commun que nous engageons à conserver et à valoriser dans l'intérêt de l'humanité tout entière.

En dépit de ce qui se dit sur les pays du Sahel en général, M. le Président, le peuple Burkinabé vient de recevoir encore ici un témoignage de sa résilience, une résilience qu'il a su bâtir depuis les temps immémoriaux et sur laquelle d'ailleurs le Gouvernement du Burkina Faso entend consolider sa souveraineté culturelle et nationale de façon décomplexée.

L'inscription de la Cour Royale de Tiébélé est un marqueur de l'engagement de notre pays dans un esprit de coopération fructueuse aux côtés des autres nations du monde dans la mise en œuvre de la Convention de 1972 par des actions concrètes et tangibles. Je vous fais la promesse, M. le Président, que le Burkina Faso veillera à la préservation de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle de la Cour Royale de Tiébélé, tout en la gardant ouverte et accessible à tout le monde entier, car elle est désormais notre bien commun.

M. le Président, Distingués invités et Distingués délégués de la 46^e session,

J'ai hâte de vous accueillir tous à Tiébélé les prochains jours et les prochaines semaines et les prochains mois pour apprécier par vous-même les attributs exceptionnels de ce merveilleux site.

Et pour terminer, M. le Président, je ne saurais passer sous silence le gigantesque et remarquable travail abattu au quotidien par l'UNESCO à travers le Centre du patrimoine mondial et le Fonds du patrimoine mondial africain. Qu'il me soit permis d'exprimer la reconnaissance du peuple burkinabé à notre organisation commune.

Je vous remercie pour votre attention. *[applaudissements]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN // AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET CARAÏBES

8B.29 The Colonial Transisthmian Route of Panamá (Panama) // La route transisthmique coloniale du Panamá (Panama)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Colonial Transisthmian Route of Panamá, Panama.

But before I give the floor to the. Before that, I give the floor to the Secretariat, Mr Balsamo.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the nomination of the Colonial Transisthmian Route of Panamá. And this is to be found on page 32 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B.4. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS, for. Thank you, Mr Balsamo.

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Colonial Transisthmian Route, Panamá. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 251 of the English version, and page 54 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

From the 16th century, the Isthmus of Panama became a global strategic geopolitical asset, facilitating the transportation of goods and people between the Iberian Peninsula and the colonies of the Kingdom of Spain. This nominated serial property is testimony to the crossing of the Isthmus of Panama, linking fortified settlements, historic towns, archaeological sites, and parts of the roads that were used to connect to the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean until the mid-18th century.

This is the first of a two-phase nomination, which proposes a renomination of the World Heritage property of the Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and Historic District of Panamá by adding three sections of Camino de Cruces and the Castle of San Lorenzo to the already inscribed component parts. The Castle of San Lorenzo is also part of an already inscribed World Heritage property, the Fortifications of the Caribbean side of Panama, Portobelo and San Lorenzo. In 2019, this nomination was deferred by the World Heritage Committee. The nomination has responded to requests from the World Heritage Committee and advice from ICOMOS, proposing a significant modification to the rationale for inscription boundaries, criteria and name of the already inscribed property. This followed several years of World Heritage Committee decisions, a high-level reactive monitoring mission and an ICOMOS advisory process focused on serious concerns about the state of conservation of the Historic District of

Panamá. The deferral in 2019 proposed that the nomination should include access to and from the Caribbean Sea, and more research on the connections of the Transisthmian Route and surviving tangible evidence.

The State Party has responded positively to these issues, and improvements have been made to the state of conservation of the Castle of San Lorenzo, enabling a terminal point on the Caribbean to be included in the first phase. Shown here are the Camino Real on the eastern side of the isthmus, and the Camino de Cruces, further to the west. These are the two stages of this nomination. The Camino Real went overland, and the Camino de Cruces had both land and water sections. These were used in different seasonal conditions and for different types of cargo. Both sections are to be nominated, but this nomination concerns only phase 1, the Camino de Cruces. The red pegs on the right show the locations of the six component parts. Phase 2 of the nomination strategy will in future add the Camino Real and the Caribbean terminus at Portobelo, which are shown by the blue pegs.

There are six component parts starting from the cliff top fortification at San Lorenzo on the Caribbean Sea, the route terminates on the Pacific coastline at the historic District of Panamá and the Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo. Three component parts define the route: a fluvial section, a longer terrestrial section located within forested national parks, and a short final section that reaches the semi-urban outskirts of Panama City.

The Colonial Transisthmian Route of Panama played an important role in the development of inter-oceanic trade from the 16th to 18th centuries, when the Kingdom of Spain established political and religious dominion in Spanish colonies in the Americas, the Philippines, and Africa. Due to its location between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, the Isthmus of Panama became a central node in this global transportation system, and the route was a conduit for the exchange of goods and people.

The comparative analysis established the basis for the route to be included in the World Heritage List. The justification for inscription is structured around the route as a central node of an inter-oceanic axis, the global pattern of trade and colonial domination, and the specific operation of the system of transportation.

The property is proposed on the basis of Criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi). ICOMOS considers that Criteria (ii) and (iv) are demonstrated, but that Criterion (vi) has not been demonstrated.

Issues of integrity and authenticity differ between the component parts due to their physical contexts. Although discontinuities to the route have occurred over time. The authenticity and integrity of the Camino de Cruces components are generally good. There have been substantial concerns about the integrity of the urban components in the past, due to the deterioration and loss of historic buildings and large-scale development and infrastructure projects. ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the archaeological site of Panama Viejo and the Historic District of Panamá are improving but remain vulnerable.

Overall, the state of conservation is fair but variable. The most serious factors are development pressures on the urban components. The protection of the nominated serial property needs further improvement to designate the Camino de Cruces and Camino Real as cultural heritage, and to protect the nominated serial property as a single entity. ICOMOS recommends that the State Party should continue the survey, research and documentation work so that the second phase of the nomination can be submitted.

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. ICOMOS considers the Criteria (ii) and (iv) have been met. The property is an outstanding example of a route establishing transcontinental flows of culture, resources and colonial power during a crucial stage in the history of the Americas. However, Criterion (iv) has not, sorry, Criterion (vi) has not been demonstrated. The integrity of the nominated serial property is vulnerable, as already explained.

Here is the summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the conservation, protection and management of the nominated property. Despite commendable improvements, several issues that were requested by the World Heritage Committee's previous decisions require further work. The Archaeological Site of Panama Viejo and the Historic District of Panamá remain vulnerable to development pressures. A formal heritage impact assessment mechanism is considered essential to ensure that the potential impacts of development on the potential Outstanding Universal Value are thoroughly considered.

Designation of Camino de Cruces and Camino Real as cultural heritage should be completed, and the protection of the serial property as a single entity is needed, as already explained.

The management system needs to be put into operation, additional elements such as a tourism and interpretation strategy are needed, and mechanisms for the participation of local communities and Indigenous Peoples need to be reinforced.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the Colonial Transisthmian Route of Panama be referred back to the State Party for the following main reasons shown on the slide: to legally protect the whole heritage route as one entity, to legally protect the sections of Camino de Cruces and Camino Real as cultural heritage, to complete, legally adopt and implement the heritage impact assessment Mechanism, and to complete and implement a tourism and interpretation strategy for the nominated serial property as a whole. ICOMOS has included a number of recommendations in the draft decision. Yes. Thank you. I'll start again. We have included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property, as shown on this slide.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination.

Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Chair.

I'm sorry to take the floor so often, but there are some technical issues. This nomination dossier seems very complex. It's the first phase of a two-phase serial nomination. The first phase includes Property 790bis, namely the Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo and Historic District of Panamá, and it includes also one component of the property, C135, Fortifications on the Caribbean Side of Panama, namely the Castle of San Lorenzo.

Since 2008, the Committee expressed deep concern on the state of conservation on Property 790bis, namely Panama Viejo and the Historic City of Panama. Several decisions were adopted to consider the possibility of inscribing the property on the List in Danger, and since 2013, the Committee requested to submit a significant boundary modification to avoid the deletion of the property from the List.

On the other hand, the Fortification of the Caribbean side of Panama, Property C135, is inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger since 2012.

We have three questions to ICOMOS.

What would happen with Property 790bis, namely Panamá Viejo and Historic District of Panamá, once the Colonial Transisthmian Route is inscribed?

Number two, what is the rationale to include in a new nomination properties that have problems of integrity or are inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger?

And the third question is, at its 43rd session in Baku, the World Heritage Committee adopted the Decision **43 COM 8B.40** to defer the examination of this nomination and requested from the State Party several issues, including the preparation of risk preparedness strategy for the heritage route, acknowledging the difficulty, the different risk to the various components. What happens with this recommendation that does not appear anymore in the draft decision, while it may be essential, given the difficult conditions of integrity and authenticity of several components? These are three questions to ICOMOS. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I thank you, Excellency, and please don't apologize to take the floor. It's always a pleasure to hear you. You're always so well prepared and precise in your questions. And you remind me of my colleague from the ASI, Mr Janhwi Sharma, who is also so precise. Thank you.

I now give the floor to ICOMOS to answer those questions.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the Distinguished Delegate of Lebanon.

I will try my best to answer these very pertinent questions about this nomination. They are also challenges for our work since we have begun nominating, sorry, evaluating this nomination.

To answer the first question you asked, what will happen to the currently inscribed property of Panamá Viejo and the Historic Centre of Panamá should this property be inscribed? My understanding is that these, that inscribed property will be absorbed into this one. So, this is essentially a major re-nomination of that property. So, we will no longer have that as a standalone World Heritage property, the way it is at the moment within the World Heritage List.

The second question was about the consequences for including the Castle of San Lorenzo into this first stage of the two-stage nomination strategy, given that it is currently part of a two-component serial property which was retained on the List of World Heritage in Danger, several days ago by this Committee under Item 7A. We of course watched your discussions of that matter with great interest. My understanding is that that property will remain on the list of World Heritage in Danger, according to the decision that was taken. However, the Castle of San Lorenzo will have a second World Heritage inscription which will be attached to this route. We looked at, therefore, looked with great care at the current state of conservation of the Castle of San Lorenzo and noted, as I'm sure all of you did earlier this week, that the State Party has undertaken significant improvements to the state of conservation of the Castle of San Lorenzo. So, its inclusion in this first stage of the nomination strategy is considered to be possible, both technically and in terms of the overall impact on the nomination of the route to the World Heritage List. ICOMOS had in 2019 been very insistent that in order for the Route to be represented in the first stage, it had to touch both coastlines because it was the, it was the ability to show the crossing of the isthmus, which was at the heart of the revised nomination strategy. Therefore, the provision of the Castle of San Lorenzo as part of this first stage of the

revised nomination strategy was a direct response to that recommendation, which had been adopted when the Committee deferred the nomination in 2019, in Baku. I guess you are also suggesting that there are vulnerabilities to the integrity of this new nominated Route, because of the existing issues that have been in place for both properties on both sides of the Isthmus of Panama. This is discussed in some detail in our evaluation report.

In terms of the recommendations that were made in 2019, these obviously informed the continuing work on this nomination by the State Party and were taken into account in the current evaluation. I think we have, I think we have covered them all, but perhaps you can direct our attention to any that you think are not. Certainly the recommendations that now appear in our evaluation report for this property are the matters that we consider to be the most serious outstanding issues for this, the stage 1 of the route, and we also, I think, would be very much hoping that the State Party can continue its conservation work at Portobelo and consider continue its documentation and research on the second stage of the Route so that it can also come forward as early as practicable from their position.

I think I've done my best to answer the questions of the, from the Committee member, Chair, so I will finish there.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any further queries or questions?

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

What we heard from the ICOMOS, am I correct in understanding when you were responding to the first question and you said that there was a particular, you know, portion of this nomination, which was already a World Heritage property, but now that we have another one that we are examining, in which the previous one also is one of the components. So, in case this nomination goes on to the World Heritage List, then the previous property is subsumed into this, which means that no longer remains a World Heritage property in its isolation? And only this one will be considered? Am I correct in my understanding?

The Chairperson:

ICOMOS?

Mexico, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

We would like to make a clarification and with the permission of the State Party, we would say that this is a nomination very close to our hearts because we've been part of the group who from the outset have been working with the authorities in Panama regarding this nomination.

Two distinguished figures from ICOMOS were advising us in the preparation of this nomination. I'd like to make it clear because there is some doubt, I see, and the Mexican case is a good example of this, Distinguished Delegate of Lebanon. In 2010, Mexico inscribed the Tierra Adentro Real Camino, which included five historical centres which were already inscribed on the World Heritage List. They did not lose their category as individual sites, but they were included within the historical narrative to justify the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro. This case seems to be similar. In the case of Panama, we're talking about sites that will not be entirely replaced but will be part of that narrative.

A detailed work has been carried out by Panama, and they have fully addressed the recommendations made by ICOMOS. And we agree with what's been said by ICOMOS international. However, there are other current circumstances which mean that the site may continue its work to address the new recommendations because there are some laws which are currently being reviewed, particularly when it comes to the conservation of Portobelo. That was what I had to say.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I'll now give the floor to ICOMOS to respond. One second.

Argentina, you have the floor, please.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

In this case, we're talking about a State Party which is from our region. And they have taken a decision which we would like to be recognized in all of its merit. And then regardless of which decision is adopted, we are sure that the Delegation of Panama will be given the floor to express their full commitment to this Convention and the importance that our region attaches to this Committee. With this nomination, within the framework of this 46th session, we've had a number of similar examples. And in this particular case, the commitment of the Delegation, I'm sure, will be demonstrated when we take a decision.

We are going to support consensus to ensure that this serves as an example of how we should work in the future.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

India, are you satisfied with that response? And Mexico as well?

The Delegation of India:

Mr Chair, can I also have ICOMOS view on this?

The Chairperson:

Yeah, I had given the floor to ICOMOS. My request is, please respond to the queries so that the Chair doesn't have to ask it again. You have the floor once again.

ICOMOS:

Thank you. I'll attempt to do that, Chair. Thank you.

Our understanding is, and this is, as many of you have said, a case that goes back some years. In 2013, the high-level reactive monitoring mission suggested this as one of three possible options for resolving the difficulties that had been identified by the World Heritage Committee in the years before. This is the option that the State Party chose to pursue and has been pursuing since 2013. And the 2019 decision that you took in Baku, or the World Heritage Committee took in Baku, was also based on this strategy. So, it is essentially a renomination of the existing World Heritage property of Panamá Viejo and the Archaeological Historic Centre of Panamá. It creates a different basis for Outstanding Universal Value but uses those two components to create this route that crosses the isthmus. The property on the other side, on the Caribbean side, Portobelo and San Lorenzo, will not be absorbed into this property in the same way. So, many of you have mentioned, for example, the example from Mexico where you ended up with some sites having more than one World Heritage designation. This has happened many times. It's happened with the Spa Towns of Europe. It's happened with Kotor in Europe. Many more and more sites now have more than one designation on the World Heritage List, but for different reasons, for a different statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

So, I hope that's clear. It is confusing. We have worked with this for a long time and worked closely with the State Party to elaborate and implement the option that was proposed in the high-level reactive monitoring mission, and has been supported in subsequent decisions taken by the World Heritage Committee.

And beyond that, we take care to evaluate every nomination on its merits, and that is what we have done in this case. So, I hope that that's clear. I do acknowledge that it's a very complex case that has many background steps, which make it hard to fully appreciate as we bring the case to you today, and we are here at your disposal, if needed any further.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see that there are no more questions or comments.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.29**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le projet de décision pour l'inscription de la Route transisthmique coloniale du Panamá.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.29** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate Panama on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property. Panama, you have raised your plate, but I was going to give you four minutes. As it is, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Panama:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Chair.

The Delegation of Panama thanks the Committee for its support, as well as the Advisory Bodies throughout the consideration of the nomination, the Colonial Transisthmian Route of Panama. By accepting the decision of this honourable Committee, we recall that for ten years we have been working on this process. And to those who wait, great things happen, as we often say.

We are working to ensure governance which is consistent with the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. And we'd like to take the opportunity of this referral to strengthen this file. We are committed, as we mentioned when we took the floor several days ago during the state of conservation of World Heritage in Danger properties, we stated that we are fully committed to fulfilling the recommendations set out and to follow the practical guidelines and national regulations in force. We hope in the future to have our nomination adopted for inscription in an upcoming session of the World Heritage Committee.

We wish to state that we do not agree with the assessment of ICOMOS on Criterion (vi). However, we will work closely with the Advisory Body as well as the World Heritage Committee to do everything possible to improve, streamline and come up with a file which meets all of the expectations, as the Distinguished Delegate of Argentina mentioned.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I will now give the floor to Mr Lazare to make some announcements, and then I will be adjourning the meeting. Mr Lazare, you have the floor. Lebanon? No. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Liban :

Oui. Pardon.

The Chairperson:

Lebanon, the practice is that we have given the floor to the State Party, but you are a Committee member, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon / La Délégation du Liban :

Thank you, Mr President.

Je voudrais simplement d'abord féliciter l'État du Panama pour avoir accepté la recommandation de l'ICOMOS de référer le dossier à l'État partie. On a de moins en moins des exemples où des États acceptent cette situation, voilà, de plus en plus, lorsqu'il y a des recommandations de référer, les États font le *forcing* pour avoir l'inscription. Je voudrais donc souligner réellement le professionnalisme de la Délégation du Panama qui a accepté la solution de référer, parce que réellement, ça va permettre de faire évoluer la nomination, et d'avoir une nomination extrêmement en très bon état et qui permettra de pouvoir conserver le bien à l'avenir sans problèmes.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

I give the floor to the Director of the WHC.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

I just want to, since everyone is here in the room, because as you have seen, the order of the presentation has been, we have been trying to adapt it constantly. And I really would like to thank all the States Parties who have been really flexible, given that we are advancing well. So just for your information and we will update on the website the table of presentation for tomorrow.

But I just want to inform the room that tomorrow we will have, we will start when we resume here, with Japan, followed by China, Beijing Central Axis. Japan will be Sado Island Gold Mines. And then we'll have Thailand Phu Phrabat Historical Park. And will have also the site of the Russian Federation, the Testament of Kenozero Lake. And we will also have a site from Kenya, the Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi. And a site from South Africa, Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation. So, this is for tomorrow morning.

As we will go, we will continue to informing you. So, we will update the remaining programme on our website immediately after this session.

I would also like to inform you of the two side events to take place this evening. The first side event is organised by the Archaeological Survey of India entitled "Culture Follows Commerce: Historical Interactions Across the Eastern Indian Ocean ", and it will be in Room MR19 starting from 6:00 pm. And the second side event is co-organized by IUCN, ICOMOS, and UNESCO, and it is entitled "Enhancing World Heritage: Exploring the potential of the Preliminary Assessment Process for World Heritage Nominations" and this side event will also start at 6:00 pm in MR17 in the Advisory Bodies' space.

And I also would also like to say in any way that and I will give it to the Chair, but I think I'm fine. Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Lazare. And with this we are gonna come to the end of today's session. But, let me remind that the Bureau meeting will happen tomorrow at 9:30 am. Once you have your wonderful breakfast, it's my face you are going to see first. So, I look forward to seeing you tomorrow. This session is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 5:51 pm. // La séance a été levée à 17h51.

SIXTH DAY
Saturday, 27 July 2024
ELEVENTH PLENARY MEETING
10:40 am – 12:59 am
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

SIXIÈME JOUR
Samedi 27 juillet 2024
ONZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h40 – 12h59
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

Please take your seats. I request everyone to please take your seats. It's past 10:00 am in the morning and we need to begin our morning session.

Dear colleagues, *Namaste*. And seeing the large Delegation from Japan, *Konnichiwa*.

Before we resume our session, I would like to inform you of the outcomes of the sixth meeting of the Bureau. Yesterday we have opened general Item 8, which will remain open, and have examined Item 8A. Under Item 8B, we have progressed swiftly and reviewed 14 nominations, including one that had been submitted on an emergency basis. Thirteen of them were inscribed on the World Heritage List, including one inscribed simultaneously on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Allow me to congratulate once more, on behalf of the entire Committee, all nominating States Parties for enriching the World Heritage List.

Today we will have other nomination files to examine. The list can be found on the updated calendar posted by the Secretariat on the 46th session web page. The procedure regarding the Sado Island Gold Mines, Japan, was also recommended by the Bureau, and we will come to it in a few minutes. I trust that the members of the Committee will agree to this course of action, which is possible thanks to the extraordinary spirit of compromise of the States Parties concerned, which I wish to salute on behalf of the Committee. Furthermore, I would like to recall that concerning Item 8B, after we have completed the examination of nominations, we will need to examine 13 minor boundary modifications.

Dear colleagues, the Bureau also heard a progress of work of the Working Group on the budget by its Chairperson, Mrs Chiara Franco of Italy. I am pleased to inform you that the group has concluded its work, and that the recommended draft decision will be shortly transmitted to all members of the Committee. Consequently, there will be no more meeting of the group. The Bureau also discussed the timetable of work and the remaining items to be examined. The Secretariat is working on a proposed revised timetable of work and will update the Committee shortly in this regard. Thank you very much.

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

CULTURAL SITES (Ct'd) // SITES CULTURELS (suite)

ASIA-PACIFIC (Ct'd) // ASIE-PACIFIQUE (suite)

8B.18 Sado Island Gold Mines (Japan) // Mines d'or de l'île de Sado (Japon)

The Chairperson:

We shall now turn to the nomination of the Sado Island Gold Mines, Japan. As I stated at the start of yesterday's meeting, Japan has informed the Bureau of the Committee that an agreement had been reached among the interested States Parties with respect to this nomination. I therefore propose that this nomination be examined by the Committee without debate. I shall first give the floor to the ADG Culture on behalf of the Secretariat and to ICOMOS to present the nomination. We shall thereafter turn directly to the consideration of the draft decision.

As you know, an amendment to draft Decision **8B.18** proposed by Bulgaria was circulated yesterday to members of the Committee, 24 hours in advance of our examination of the item. I should underline that this amendment is an integral part of the agreement reached by the interested States Parties. Under the proposed amended decision, the Committee would decide to inscribe the property on the World Heritage List under Criterion (iv), and a footnote would be included in para 4 e), which would take note of a statement to be made by Japan as regards the interpretation and presentation strategy and facilities referred to in that paragraph. The text of the statement by Japan was also circulated to members of the Committee yesterday. I should point out that for Japan and the Republic of Korea, the English version of the statement would be the binding version, since it was the one agreed

upon by Japan and the Republic of Korea. When we move to the adoption of the draft decision, I shall give the floor to the Representative of Bulgaria on the amendment. I will propose that the Committee adopt the draft decision as a whole with the proposed amendments. I trust that the Committee will be able to adopt the draft decision as amended by consensus. After the adoption of the draft decision, and if the Committee accepts the amendments proposed, I shall give the floor to the Representative of Japan who will make the statement I referred to in the English language, which shall then be reproduced in the summary records of the present session. I shall then give the floor to the Representative of the Republic of Korea. Given the nature of these statements, I have exceptionally accepted to grant four minutes for each of these statements. I trust that the members of the Committee will agree to this course of action, which is possible thanks to the extraordinary spirit of compromise of the States Parties concerned, which I wish to salute on behalf of the Committee.

Are there any questions? I see none.

Since I see there is a general agreement in the room to proceed in this manner, I will now give the floor to the ADG culture. Mr Ottone, on behalf of the Secretariat. Mr Ottone, you have the floor, sir.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I wish to inform you that we received a factual error notification from Japan concerning the evaluation of the nomination of Sado Gold Mine Island, and this is on page 27 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B.4. Before the Committee starts the examination of this nomination, I would like, on behalf of UNESCO, to commend the remarkable spirit of cooperation which led the two States Parties concerned to reach an agreement on this matter. Let me also take this opportunity to reiterate to all States Parties my availability, as the Head of the cultural sector, to exercise my good offices, to assist you in resolving matters relating to any of the UNESCO cultural conventions falling under my purview, including as concerns the work of the Committee.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

ICOMOS:

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Sado Island Gold Mines Japan. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 108 of the English version, and page 106 of the French version. On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

The Sado Island Gold Mines is a serial property located on Sado Island, some 35 kilometres west of the Niigata Prefecture coast. It is formed of three component parts covering two main mining areas, the Nishimikawa Placer gold mine and the Aikawa-Tsurushi gold and silver mine. Illustrative of different unmechanized mining methods of the Edo Period to obtain gold and silver. The first cluster covers a large mining area used for placer gold mining, settlement areas, and several sections of waterways used for placer mining. The second cluster includes two component parts connected by a route today interrupted for a short section and corresponding to the Nishi-Ikari-michi and Tsurushi-michi pass. The two component parts of the second cluster cover two different mining areas, the Tsurushi Silver mine and the Aikawa gold and silver mine area. The latter also includes part of the Aikawa-Kamimachi town, in which the remains of the Sado magistrate's office are found.

The Sado Island Gold Mines are nominated as a serial property that bears witness to the most important gold mining operations that contributed to the stability of the rule of the Tokugawa Shogunate during the Edo period. The mine's success is rooted in a management system that governs mining operations from a technical and social perspective and has been maintained for over 250 years.

Despite some shortcomings in comparative analysis, ICOMOS considers that the nominated property deserves consideration for the World Heritage List as an exceptional mining ensemble and landscape that testifies to the continuation and perfection of unmechanized mining and processing technology in a period when, elsewhere, mechanisation was spreading in the industry. Of the two proposed Criteria (iii) and (iv), ICOMOS considers that only Criterion (iv) is demonstrated and supported by the surviving attributes.

Initial issues of fragmentation of the component parts at Nishimikawa area have been resolved through the evaluation process. Mechanized mining operations were carried out in the post-Edo period until the late 20th century, and some sections of the nominated property also includes post-Edo mining related standing structure. A substantial cluster of standing post-Edo mining related facilities in Aikawa-Kamimachi town do not reflect in discernible way the mining technology and social cultural system of the Tokugawa Shogunate or Edo period. Therefore, ICOMOS considers that the condition of integrity and authenticity could be met only if this delimited area is excluded from the nominated property and put in the buffer zone.

The legislative protection at the national, prefectural and Sado city levels seem to provide sufficient integrated protection to the nominated property. However, the protection system could be strengthened as suggested in the draft recommendations. In ICOMOS's view, the buffer zone of the Aikawa-Tsurushi gold and silver mine should be extended offshore. As mining rights are still in force, an explicit commitment appears necessary from the mining rights holder not to reactivate commercial mining operations in the nominated property and buffer zones.

The remains of the Edo period, mainly archaeological, are less visible than the standing structures of post-Edo mining and less understandable without explanations and presentation, and it is therefore essential to develop an interpretation and presentation programme of the Edo period attributes and how they convey the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. And here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the conservation, protection and management of the nominated property.

ICOMOS, in this regard, consider that the revision of the plans needs to be adopted before the comprehensive management plan is implemented, so as to ensure the provisions are consistent with the aim of sustaining the proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Sado Island Gold Mines, Japan, be referred back to the State Party in order for it to modify the boundary to exclude a small area in the Kawakami-Machi town, expand the buffer zones of the Aikawa-Tsurushi gold and silver mine component offshore, and provide explicit commitment from the mining right holders not to reactivate commercial mining within the nominated property or buffer zones. ICOMOS has also included further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property, and these are outlined in full in the evaluation report and on this slide.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentation.

As agreed, we shall now turn directly to the consideration of the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.18**. I would first now invite you to adopt the draft decision.

But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Bonjour à vous et bonjour à toutes et à tous. Concernant les Mines d'or de l'île de Sado, Japon, nous avons un amendement soumis par la Bulgarie, coécrit par la Jamaïque, la Belgique, le Kazakhstan, le Qatar, l'Italie, le Viet Nam, la Zambie, le Sénégal, le Kenya, la Grèce, l'Inde, l'Ukraine, le Rwanda et le Mexique, soit un total de 15 pays.

M. le Président, si je me réfère à ce que vous aviez annoncé ce matin à la réunion du Bureau, je suggère que la présentation de l'amendement se fasse par la Délégation Bulgare, qui est l'auteur et la soumissionnaire de l'amendement.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Rapporteur.

I shall give the floor to the Representative of Bulgaria, who has who had introduced the proposed amendment.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

At the outset, we would like to express our gratitude to both the States Parties of Japan and the Republic of Korea for having reached an understanding on the inscription of the Sado Island Gold Mines on the World Heritage List through sincere and close dialogue. We would also like to compliment the State Party of Japan for presenting an excellent dossier on this property. We also commend the excellent work conducted by the evaluation body.

We have examined the nomination dossier and the additional information provided by the State Party, as well as the ICOMOS evaluation report. We have no hesitation in accepting that this property, which is formed of three components, the Nishimikawa Placer gold mine and the Aikawa-Tsurushi Gold and Silver mine, is an exceptional example of the continuity of manual mining and smelting technology in a period when mechanization was progressively being introduced elsewhere. Such an example of unmechanized mining methods make us realize that its OUV lies in the management system and social and work organization deployed by the Tokugawa Shogunate at Sado, which made it possible to extract and process considerable quantities of high-quality gold for global standards in the 17th century. We have also noted the ICOMOS evaluation report and agree with its acceptance of the property's OUV under Criteria (iv). ICOMOS have reported general satisfaction with the comparative analysis, the state of conservation and the management framework. ICOMOS has made three recommendations concerning integrity and protection and management requirements. In this regard, we are pleased to note with satisfaction that the State Party's responses to all of these recommendations.

As recommended by ICOMOS, Japan has already excluded the area in Aikawa-Kamimachi town, corresponding to the zones identified at Shimo-Yamanokami, Sakashita, Kitazawa and Yajuro, and this area turned to be a part of buffer zone. Secondly, Japan has already expanded the buffer zone of the Aikawa-Tsurushi gold and silver mine component part offshore in order to exclude any possibility of building offshore wind power plants within the eyesight from the viewpoint in the nominated property. And thirdly, Japan has also obtained an explicit commitment in writing from the holders of the mining rights not to reactivate commercial mining on the land of the nominated property and the buffer zone.

We firmly believe that with these responses to the three recommendations, the nominated property now fully meets all the required conditions for inscription on the World Heritage List.

Finally, in accordance with the understanding reached by both the States Parties of Japan and the Republic of Korea, our proposed amendments to the draft decision also include the addition of a footnote to paragraph 4 e), which takes note of the statement to be made by Japan regarding its interpretation and presentation strategy referred to in that paragraph.

On the basis of these observations, we have submitted amendments to the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.18** Sado Island Gold Mines. We hope that all members of the Committee will accept the decision by consensus.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

As agreed, we shall proceed to the consideration of the draft decision as a whole, as amended. May I take it that the Committee accepts the draft decision with the amendments proposed by Bulgaria? I see no objections.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.18** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Let me congratulate Japan on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property, as agreed at the start of our consideration of this nomination. I shall now give the floor to the representative of Japan for a four-minute statement. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

[first speaker] Thank you, Mr Chair. Good morning to you all.

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this statement on behalf of the Government of Japan. The Sado Island Gold Mines is an extraordinary example of the continuity of manual mining and smelting technology in the Asian context in the period until the mid-19th century, when mechanization was progressively being introduced elsewhere.

It is an honour for the Government of Japan that Sado Island Gold Mines has been inscribed as a World Heritage, which is of the Outstanding Universal Value. Concerning three recommendations by ICOMOS, the Government of Japan has already completed responding to all of them in full. In regard to the WHC's Recommendation e), Japan has been engaging in close dialogue with the ROK to develop an interpretation and presentation strategy and facilities that comprehensively address the whole history of the Sado Island Gold Mines, including the workforce from the Korean Peninsula.

Bearing in mind all the relevant WHC decisions as well as its commitments associated with these decisions, and sincerely remembering all the workers at the Sado Island Gold Mines, especially those from the Korean Peninsula, Japan will faithfully and thoroughly implement the recommendations and continue to make efforts to enhance the interpretation and presentation strategy and facilities that comprehensively address the whole history of the Sado Island Gold Mines in close consultation with the ROK. With a view to demonstrating its commitment to do so and its willingness to amicably resolve differing views with the ROK with regard to the Sado Island Gold Mines, Japan already installed new exhibition material relating to all the workers at the interpretation and presentation facility in the site to explain the severe conditions of their work and remember their hardship. A memorial event for all the workers at the Sado Island Gold Mines will also be held annually in the site.

Taking this opportunity, allow me to briefly introduce some elements exhibited at a local facility installed. During the wartime, the National Mobilization Law and the National Requisition Ordinance and other relevant measures were introduced even in the Korean Peninsula. At first, open recruitment and then official placement were implemented with the involvement of the Government-General of Chosen, an administrative organ in the Korean Peninsula established by Japan. Since September 1944, requisition of workers to engage in tasks and imprisonment or fines were imposed against its violation. In the exhibition room, there are also data indicating that a higher percentage of workers from the Korean Peninsula engaged in dangerous tasks inside the mineshafts, such as rock drilling, shoring, and holing. There is also a record of labour dispute over working conditions, a record of food shortage and record of fatal accident. One record states that the average number of working days in a month was 28 days for those from the Korean Peninsula. Another record shows that there were escapes and imprisonment of the workers from the Korean Peninsula.

Mr Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee, the Government of Japan expressed its deep appreciation to all the members of the World Heritage Committee, including Bulgaria, who has kindly submitted the amendment,

UNESCO Secretariat and ICOMOS members for their kind cooperation towards the inscription, based on their understanding of the Outstanding Universal Value of this property.

Now, Mr Chair, please allow Mr Hanazumi Hideyo, Governor of Niigata Prefecture, to give a few words of appreciation for the inscription.

[second speaker] Thank you, Mr Chair. I'm Hanazumi, Governor of Niigata Prefecture.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone here today, and to those who have given us unwavering support and dedication to the inscription. We will do our best to preserve and pass on this important heritage to future generations.

Thank you very much. Thank you. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

As also agreed, I shall now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea for a four-minute statement. You have the floor, sir.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Government of the Republic of Korea has carefully listened to the statement just made by the Government of Japan and wishes to highlight the following points therein.

First, Japan has been developing an interpretation and presentation strategy and facilities that comprehensively address the whole history of the Sado Island Gold Mines and sincerely remembers all the workers, especially those from the Korean Peninsula.

Second, in faithfully and thoroughly implementing the WHC recommendations, Japan will bear in mind all the relevant WHC decisions, as well as its commitments associated with these decisions, and continue to make efforts to enhance the interpretation and presentation strategies and facilities that comprehensively address the whole history of the Sado Island Gold Mines, in close consultation with ROK.

Third, to demonstrate its commitment to do so, Japan already installed new exhibition materials relating to all the workers in the site to explain the severe conditions of their work and remember their hardship.

Fourth, a memorial event for the workers will be held annually in the site.

In regard to the second point just referred to, the Government of the ROK would like to underline that Japan's commitments associated with the relevant WHC decisions include the statement made by Japan in 2015 relating to the inscription of the Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution, which carries relevance and implications for this case, as both sites share a common history of mobilizing Korean workers during the wartime, at first through open recruitment and then official placement with the involvement of the Government-General of Chosen, followed by requisition under the National Mobilization Law since September 1944, as confirmed by the statement of Japan.

The Government of the ROK has consistently maintained that every history has its light and shadows, and heritage should be remembered for both its bright and dark sides. It is only natural that this is recognized by the ICOMOS recommendations and duly reflected in the WHC decisions.

In light of the above, and considering the willingness of both the ROK and Japan to resolve relevant issues through mutual agreement with a far-sighted approach aimed at fostering future oriented bilateral relations, the Government of the ROK, after long and careful deliberations, has decided to join the Committee's consensus decision to inscribe the Sado Island Gold Mines on the World Heritage List, while welcoming Japan's action to install exhibition materials prior to the Committee decision, which helps dispel concerns in the ROK about its failure to deliver on previous promises. We expect that the Government of Japan will fulfil its commitments made before this august body faithfully and thoroughly.

The Republic of Korea expresses its deep appreciation for the Chair's leadership and the cooperation and support of all the Committee members and the Secretariat.

Thank you. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Let me congratulate once again Japan for the inscription of this property, and both interested States Parties for their extraordinary spirit of compromise.

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination. We will wait for some time.

Can I give the floor to the Director of the WHC? You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, sir.

Can I invite the Committee members, please, to take their seats so that we can continue the examination of nomination? And I would also like to remind that if, for congratulation and everything, please, there is a space outside. We would like to continue.

Thank you.

8B.15 Beijing Central Axis: A Building Ensemble Exhibiting the Ideal Order of the Chinese Capital (China)
// Axe central de Beijing : un ensemble de constructions représentant l'Ordre idéal de la capitale chinoise (Chine)

The Chairperson:

May I request Committee members to please take your seats?

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Beijing Central Axis: A Building Ensemble Exhibiting the Ideal Order of the Chinese Capital, China.

But before that, I will give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

And we received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the nomination of the Beijing Central Axis. And this is to be found on page 9 of the Document INF.8B.4.

Thank you.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Beijing Central Axis: A Building Ensemble Exhibiting the Ideal Order of the Chinese Capital, China. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 75 of the English version, and page 70 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors.

The Central Axis is defined by former imperial palaces and gardens, imperial sacrificial buildings, ancient city management facilities, ceremonial and public buildings and Central Axis road remains. The Central Axis originated in the Yuan Dynasty that established Dadu, its capital, in what corresponds to the northern section of the Axis. The nominated property also features later historical structures built during the Ming Dynasty and improved during the Qing Dynasty.

The nominated property runs from north to south through the heart of the Historical Beijing. It consists of an ensemble of historic buildings, monuments, and archaeological sites that bear witness of the evolution to the city during the imperial dynastic system.

The nominated property represents an outstanding testimony of the Chinese urban planning tradition, showcasing its evolution during the imperial dynastic system in its urban layout. It bears witness to the paradigm of the ideal capital city, based on Confucian principles stated in the ancient Kaogongji, the Book of the Diverse Crafts, influential in conceiving other capital cities in China and East Asia, such as defining the north-south axis and establishing a centre to provide neutrality and harmony to society by means of symmetry and balance in the urban layout. The Beijing Central Axis exhibit an urban ensemble that provides a distinct urban pattern in walled urban history.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List. Criteria (iii) and (iv) have been met, but Criterion (vi) has not been demonstrated.

The key attributes of the nominated property are the layout of the Axis, the physical structures and architectural styles that define it and testify of its development during the imperial dynastic system in China. The natural and historical urban setting of the Axis, landscape sequences, visual corridors, key views from different points of the Axis, the functions and traditions connected to each of the historical structure, which includes city management, urban government, and rituals. Although rituals conducted during the imperial dynastic periods are no longer practiced, related festivities still performed in the Central Axis space can be considered attributes of the nominated property. On the other hand, ICOMOS does not consider that the Tian'anmen Square Complex and the

Yongdingmen Gate are attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. Nevertheless, they remain included within the boundaries of the nominated property.

Conditions of integrity have been demonstrated. The authenticity of some of the proposed attributes has been compromised by remodelling and reconstruction. In particular, ICOMOS recommends that the Tian'anmen Square Complex remodelling and the Yongdingmen Gate reconstruction be presented in the interpretation of the nominated property. ICOMOS considers that the authenticity of the Central Axis has been nevertheless demonstrated. The boundaries and buffer zones are adequate to support the integrity of the nominated property. Though some sections of the access roads might be vulnerable to development pressures. ICOMOS considers that the state of conservation of the nominated property is good, and that the boundaries and buffer zones are adequate.

Legal protection is comprehensive and includes laws for the protection of cultural heritage and planning framework for guiding heritage conservation and development.

The management system is based on the Beijing Municipal Advisory and Coordinating Mechanism, led by Beijing Municipal Leading Group for Building the National Cultural Centre. Site-level management is coordinated by the Beijing Central Axis Conservation Centre, which implements the conservation and management plan for Beijing Central Axis.

Presentation and interpretation of the World Heritage property that form part of the Beijing Central Axis should be continued and reinforced. Proposed measures of urban planning and mitigation of existing and potential tourism impacts need to be adequately enforced and adapted where tourism pressures are to increase. To support long-term conservation, ICOMOS recommends that the involvement of the residents in the nominated property and buffer zone be ensured and continuous.

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the Beijing Central Axis, a building ensemble exhibiting the ideal order of the Chinese Capital China, be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria (iii) and (iv), and has also included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentation.

Are there any questions or comments?

Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I would like to thank ICOMOS for this presentation.

Greece welcomes the State Party's nomination of an outstanding property. Beijing Central Axis is an example of imperial buildings, urban management facilities, road remains along the Central Axis, contemporary public edifices and public spaces. The dossier under discussion clearly shows the evolution of this Axis since the Yuan Dynasty in the 13th century. It is a historical continuum of time and space. The traditional philosophy and urban planning, concepts which influenced the form of the ancient Chinese capitals, continue to impact the planning of modern Beijing.

In its evaluation, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity of the nominated property have been met, and the authenticity of the nominated property as a whole has been demonstrated.

The Tian'anmen Square Complex's planning and layout have followed the balance and the symmetrical pattern of Beijing Central Axis, of which the square is a solid, integral element. Suffice it to say that the National Museum of China and the Great Hall of the People face each other symmetrically on the east and west sides of the square. Tian'anmen Square Complex's architecture demonstrates China's determination to respect the past, while exploring and innovating the style in the design of public spaces as it has been evolved through the centuries.

As for the Yongdingmen Gate, originally built in 1553 at a southern edge of the Beijing Central Axis and dismantled in 1957, it was rebuilt in 2004, in the same location and at the original size, implementing the original design techniques and materials in accordance with the Nara Document of Authenticity. Both elements, the Square and the Gate, have been always considered by the 22 million of Beijing residents as an integral part of the Central Axis, a fundamental part of their country's history, and, I would add, of their daily lives.

Mr Chair, Distinguished Committee members,

Greece is convinced that the totality of the Beijing Central Axis, with all its 15 elements, deserves to be acknowledged as having Outstanding Universal Value. In order to reflect the above, we have submitted an amendment in the draft Decision's text, clarifying beyond any doubt that all the elements included in the nomination file, without any exception, are of Outstanding Universal Value.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Lebanon, to be followed by Zambia.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Chair.

Beijing Central Axis is the cumulative product of more than seven centuries of history and has continued to evolve and exert an influence on the city's urban development. At the heart of the capital of Yuan, Ming, Qing and modern China, Beijing's Central Axis is a testimony to major historic events, including the end of China's more than 2,000 years of dynastic rule, the birth of China's Republic, the establishment of the People's Republic of China. It has stood witness to the gradual historical transformation of the Chinese society from a dynastic system into a modern state. Hence, Beijing's Central Axis should be considered based on the historic urban landscape approach, which sees and interprets the city as a continuum in time and space, where countless population groups have left their mark and continue to do so today.

In its additional recommendations, ICOMOS considers that both Tian'anmen Square Complex and the Yongdingmen Gate do not form attributes of the properties of OUV. We cannot agree with such an interpretation. The historic urban landscape is the urban area, understood as the result of historic learning of values and attributes, including the built environment, the open spaces both historic and contemporary, the land use patterns and spatial organization, the perceptions and visual relationships.

Tian'anmen Square Complex is a major component of the Great Urban Ensemble organized along Beijing Central Axis, which has witnessed the historical continuity of Chinese tradition. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Imperial Square was a place for holding major celebrations. In early 20th century, it was transformed into a major public area, and modern China has inherited and continued the tradition carried by the Axis throughout its history.

How could we consider that such a major public space that is central to the spatial organization of Beijing Central Axis does not contribute to the properties of OUV?

As for the reconstruction of Yongdingmen Gate, although ICOMOS recognized that, quote, "it has been undertaken based on detailed documentation, and that it was widely supported by local population and court", end quote, it considers, nevertheless, that its authenticity is compromised. Such a conclusion seems to us inappropriate, since it expresses a narrow interpretation of the concept of authenticity, which contradicts the principles adopted in the Nara Document. Hence, we agree with the amendment presented by Greece, sent to us yesterday by the Rapporteur, which proposes to delete Point 2 of ICOMOS's additional recommendations.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

The amendments have yet not been presented by the Rapporteur, which I will be doing once Member States are done by taking the floor. A large number of Member States have raised their plate. So, we'll give them the floor. And then I will go to the Rapporteur where I will ask him, does he have any amendments being presented?

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Zambia, to be followed by Senegal. Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Beijing Central Axis displays distinct urban axis layout, fiscal and architectural structures and corridors, and symmetrical lattice layout. Beyond this, Mr Chairman, we also, I mean, the State Party of Zambia appreciates the fact that, yes, ICOMOS has pointed out that the Chairman Mao Square and Yongdingmen Gate, this being, that is, a new infrastructure, they seem to contradict the expectations of ICOMOS. But the State Party of Zambia is of the view that, you know, when you look at the general layout of these structures and also in terms of most of the features, they still conform to the original concept. And here we are talking of an idea, and this idea is about symmetry. And this idea of symmetry is what the Republic of the People's Republic of China has demonstrated.

And in terms of, you know, culture. Culture is also evolutionary, and you cannot have all the structures look the same if they look, I mean, if you look at the outlook of a 17th century, you don't expect 20th century structures to be modelled in the same manner. So, the general, that is, the aspect that the State Party of Zambia is advancing is that the general layout plan or the idea of symmetry has been maintained in terms of the general, that is the outlook of the structure, it has also been maintained in terms of height. So, we should not start, you know, mutilating the authenticity of the site on the basis of, that is, this, that is, more, I mean, these old ideas.

So, what I want to start, I mean, rather to emphasize, Mr Chairman, is that, you know, the, I mean, the State Party of China has demonstrated the original idea and these attributes, they are not supposed to be at the same level. They are supposed to be complementary.

And most of all, Mr Chairman, the state of, I mean, the condition of the site of the Beijing Axis, it is okay. The boundaries are in coordination. The management plans and coordinating mechanisms are in place. The criteria number (iii) has been met. Criteria number (v) has also been met. So, at the end of the day, the State Party of Zambia joins the States Parties of Greece and Lebanon in terms of supporting the nomination, the inscription of this site as a World Heritage site.

I submit, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Zambia.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Senegal, to be followed by Türkiye. Senegal, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Le Sénégal pense que le dossier présenté par la Chine est un dossier extrêmement solide et cohérent et que les observations faites par la Grèce et le Liban sont tout à fait pertinentes.

Les 15 éléments sont dans une ligne de cohérence qui traduit la continuité historique exceptionnelle de la Chine dans ce domaine et qui se traduit à Beijing. Nous pensons que les monuments et les paysages sont un tout qu'on ne peut pas désagréger. Sur la question précise de la Porte, nous pensons que quel que soit l'avis de l'ICOMOS, il faut peut-être sortir d'un certain dogme autour de l'authenticité. Est-ce que aujourd'hui, si Notre-Dame de Paris est reconstruite, on va l'exclure de la Liste ? Je pose la question, et je pense que la réponse sera non. Donc je crois avec mon ami de la Zambie, qu'il ne faut pas rester dans le dogme et qu'il ne faut pas amputer le bien d'un de ses éléments constitutifs.

Donc je rejoins les collègues de la Grèce, du Liban et de la Zambie pour dire la totalité de la Liste doit être prise en considération. Merci. On ajoute, le Sénégal, bien sûr, salut et appuie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

As I mentioned, I have yet not given the floor to the Rapporteur and asked him the question are there any amendments. But Member States have raised their plates, so I will give them the floor.

I give the floor to Türkiye, to be followed by Kazakhstan.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Dating back to the 13th.

The Chairperson:

Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Mr Chairman, we had requested the floor in following along in the order.

But I get the feeling that you had not seen our name plate. I'm sorry. It's not a point of order. I just wanted to take the floor after Türkiye.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I thought it was a point of order. And that is the reason I interrupted Türkiye. Because you were waving your nameplate like this. I see that the name of Argentina is indeed mentioned in that list. But it's mentioned after a particular Member State that has been provided by the Secretariat. So, I can only request a little bit of more patience. Thank you.

Türkiye, you may restart your statement. And sorry for the interruption.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Okay. Thank you, Mr Chair. Take two. Okay.

Dating back to the 13th century, the Beijing Central Axis bears testimony to the historical process of Chinese society from the imperial dynastic system to the modern nation and demonstrates the historical continuum of time and space. It is not surprising that each subsequent period leaves its own imprint on the Historic City. The Tian'anmen Square and the Yongdingmen Gate are an integral part of the Central Axis. In particular, the Tian'anmen Square Complex, located in the centre of the nominated property, is a vital part of the urban layout and contributes to the OUV of the property, meeting Criteria (iii) and (iv). The rebuilt Yongdingmen Gate being built in its original location, using documentation from surveys undertaken in 1924 and 1944 before the demolition identifies the location of the southern exit of the Beijing Central Axis, thus vital to our understanding of the Central Axis.

Therefore, Türkiye supports the amendment proposal of Greece regarding the deletion of paragraph 4 d).

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Türkiye.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Kazakhstan, to be followed by Argentina. Kazakhstan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Thank you, Chair. Distinguished Chair, Esteemed Delegates, *Namaste*.

I would like to add our voice in support of the amendments proposed by our Greek colleagues and backed by some other fellow members of the Committee, regarding the inscription of the Beijing Central Axis on the World Heritage List.

According to the ICOMOS evaluation report, for which we thank them sincerely, the conditions of integrity for the nominated property have been satisfied and the overall authenticity of the property had been demonstrated. The Tian'anmen Square Complex's design and layout adhere to the balanced and symmetrical pattern of the Beijing Central Axis. The Monument of the People's Heroes and Chairman Mao Memorial Hall are centrally placed on the Axis, reflecting a classical Chinese style centred on the principle of choosing the centre. Additionally, the National Museum of China and the Great Hall of the People symmetrically face each other on the Square's east and west sides. This architectural and landscape arrangement highlights China's modern efforts to innovate within the traditional national style of public space designs, even if we have some modern buildings presented there as well.

As voiced by some of the previous speakers, the Yongdingmen Gate stays at its original site and was reconstructed using the original design techniques and materials, following the Nara Document on Authenticity.

Given these considerations, we agree with the amendment put forward by Greece and to delete paragraph 4 d) in the draft decision. This change aligns with the objective of accurately reflecting the historical and cultural significance of the Beijing Central Axis.

In conclusion, Kazakhstan commends China's continuous efforts to preserve this important site and supports its inscription on the World Heritage List. These efforts will ensure the long-term preservation and appreciation of this important heritage site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Argentina, to be followed by Japan.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

This Committee is turning out to be very different to other Committee sessions in which we've even had arguments, we've been clashing. But this, in this Committee, there, I get the feeling there is a mutual understanding of each other's work and comprehension. And we want to thank ICOMOS and the Advisory Bodies for their work, and we do take on board their recommendations, but we also have a very important role, which is not only to fulfil our task, but also to really analyse what is submitted to us.

The analysis of the Yongdingmen Gate, which does have a central place on the Central Axis, is a symbol for humanity independent of whether the Axis in its entirety is inscribed or not. We live in a world which would not recognize the whole Square and Complex opposite and the Gate opposite it, if we didn't include that. So, what's more, we need to talk about the ensemble as OUV. And it's like I was saying, you know, that all human beings are exceptional, and it's the outstanding ensemble as a whole that we feel needs to be recognized here.

And what we need to be able to do is to learn to trust, learn to delegate. And that is why, even though we have excellent Advisory Bodies and in this case it's ICOMOS, we are grateful for the work that you do, and we honour the work you do, and yet at the same time, you also need to understand that it's sometimes important to delegate certain aspects of the interpretative process to the State Party. And in this case, we feel that there is a clear message and an example here in that China is continuing to look after and safeguard the world's heritage.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Japan, to be followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

Japanese Delegation would like to commend the State Party China for this important nomination. It is truly important site because it is enormously influential for Asia and the world. We also understand that conservation of this site in a complex, modern city situation needs considerable efforts. We also thank ICOMOS for their thorough evaluation.

It is basically the site of urban planning and urban ensemble, which clearly shows an ancient planning theory. But more importantly, if I may say, it is deeply connected to the knowledge system, cosmology, relationship between heaven and earth or grain, its idea, as well as a way of design of capital have been disseminated to all over the world, especially in Asia, including Japan.

Therefore, we fully support the inscription of this site, Beijing Central Axis, a building ensemble exhibiting the ideal order of the Chinese capital. Also carefully reading the nomination dossier and ICOMOS evaluation report, allow me to say, Chair, we support the proposed amendment by the Distinguished Delegate of Greece and other members of the Committee.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Qatar, to be followed by Viet Nam.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Chair.

I extend my gratitude to the Chinese Delegation for their comprehensive nomination for the Beijing Central Axis. It is clear that this nomination is of great cultural and historical significance and showcases a legacy that spans from the Yuan Dynasty through to modern-day China.

Upon reviewing the arguments put forth by the Chinese Delegation, I believe there is merit in reconsidering paragraph 4 d) of the additional recommendations in draft Decision **46 COM 8B.15**.

The inclusion of elements under Criteria (iii) and (iv) is justified by the State Party. They embody the continuation and adaptation of traditional urban planning principles through different historical epochs, reflecting both historical significance and architectural integrity. The integral role of the Tian'anmen Square Complex and the Yongdingmen Gate in the historical and cultural fabric of the Beijing Central Axis should be recognized and preserved, without the implication that they detract from the site's Outstanding Universal Value.

In light of these considerations, I support the request to amend the draft decision submitted by Greece.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Viet Nam, to be followed by Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Viet Nam concurs with the views expressed by previous speakers. We think that the Tian'anmen Square Complex and the Yongdingmen Gate are integral elements of the Beijing Central Axis, and the Tian'anmen Square Complex bears witness to the historical continuum of national ceremonial traditions from the previous dynasties, and it's also a sacred palace connecting the feelings of the Chinese people since the national independence. And, regarding the Yongdingmen Gate, it was rebuilt at the original site and using the original design techniques and materials in accordance with the Nara Document of Authenticity.

And given the Outstanding Universal Values of the Beijing Central Axis, as already reflected in the nomination file, we think we support the inscription of this valuable site, and we also support the Greek amendment to delete the paragraph 4 in the draft decision.

We thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the distinguished Representative of Bulgaria, to be followed by Ukraine.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

We thank the Advisory Bodies and the nominating State Party for the extensive and thorough reports they have prepared.

We have taken good note of the OUV and rich cultural connotations carried by the Beijing Central Axis. The traditional Chinese planning concepts carried by the property contributes significantly to the global history of urban planning and influence the planning of other capitals. Beijing Central Axis provides an exceptional material testimony to the philosophy of neutrality and harmony.

The Axis includes historic structures built during the Yuan Dynasty, the Ming Dynasty, and improved during the Qing Dynasty, as well as mid-20th century interventions in line with the traditional planning. The Tian'anmen Square is an integral part of the Beijing Central Axis, and its role as a social and political centre is also recognized in the ICOMOS assessment. With regard to the reconstruction of Yongdingmen Gate, we share the view that it has been carried out respecting the original materials and technologies as much as possible and based on thorough archaeological research.

In light of this consideration, the State Party of Bulgaria has co-authored the amendment proposed by Greece.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Ukraine, to be followed by Jamaica. Ukraine, you don't want to take the floor? Okay.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Jamaica, to be followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair.

Jamaica thanks ICOMOS, for their presentation on this site. And we congratulate the State Party of China for the submission of the serial nomination, which through its component parts bear testimony to the evolution of the city, exhibiting evidence of the imperial dynastic system and urban planning traditions of China.

Dialogue with the State Party, we have noted a concern in relation to the Tian'anmen Square Complex and the Yongdingmen Gate. It is our belief that all components of this nomination adequately reflect the OUV of this site and are a part of the Central Axis in its entirety.

Jamaica supports the statements made previously by other Distinguished members of the Committee, and we align ourselves with the amendments as proposed by Greece.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Having heard the detailed and informative comments made by the previous speakers, the Republic of Korea would like to support the amendment proposed by the Distinguished Delegation of Greece.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Now that the Member States have spoken, we have seen that there are no questions which have been asked.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.15**, but before doing so, I will ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Tel qu'annoncé, nous avons bien reçu un amendement sur le projet de décision concernant l'inscription de l'Axe Central de Beijing, Chine, amendement soumis par la Grèce, co-écrit par l'Argentine, la Bulgarie, la Jamaïque, le Kazakhstan, le Kenya, le Liban, le Qatar, le Rwanda, la Zambie et la Belgique, et soutenu à l'instant en salle par le Sénégal, la Türkiye, Argentine, Japon, Viet Nam et République de Corée. Amendement qui vise au paragraphe 4 sur les recommandations à la suppression de la recommandation d).

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Italy, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Italy would like to support to the amendment.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Please add Italy's name.

Are there any further comments?

Argentina, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

Thank you very much.

We are so strong supporting the amendment that they put our name two times. It is fantastic, but one is enough.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Just one of him is enough. I completely agree with you on that.

Are there any further amendments? I see none.

Is there any objection for this entire draft decision to be adopted as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.15** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate China on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of the property. As I have done with other languages, given the diversity, as a mark of respect to the Chinese language, I'll speak one line in Chinese or Mandarin. *[speaks in Chinese] [applause]*

China, you have the floor for an up to four-minute statement. Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of China:

Thank you, Chair, for trying the Chinese language. Thank you so much.

[interpretation from Chinese] Thank you, Mr Chair.

China would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Committee for fully recognizing the OUV of the Beijing Central Axis, and China is extremely proud of the inscription of the property. China thanks the UNESCO Secretariat and ICOMOS for their contribution to the inscription.

Now I would like to invite Mr CHEN Jie, Director of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, to take the floor.

[second speaker] Thank you, Mr Chair.

On behalf of the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, I would like to thank the World Heritage Committee, UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Advisory Body for their outstanding work.

The Beijing Central Axis is the quintessential embodiment of the traditional culture and modern civilization of China and its people. The inscription of this important property on the World Heritage List is of special significance to every Chinese person. The Beijing Central Axis belongs not only to China but also to the world.

China is willing to strengthen its cooperation with UNESCO in heritage protection and other areas, and promote cultural prosperity and development, cultural heritage protection, exchanges between civilizations, and mutual understanding.

Next, I would like to invite Mr Li Qun, the Director-General of the National Cultural Heritage Administration, and Mr Tan Xuxiang, the Vice-Mayor of the Beijing Municipal People's Government, where the property is located, to take the floor.

[third speaker] Mr Chair, the successful inscription of Beijing Central Axis brings great joy and excitement to all the Chinese people. On behalf of the Chinese government, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Mr Ottone, ADG Culture, Mr Eloundou Assomo, Director of the WHC, as well as other colleagues of the Centre. Furthermore, I would like to pay tribute to ICOMOS for their scientific and professional evaluation throughout the process. I also thank the Committee for the support.

Beijing Central Axis manifests the urban planning tradition and philosophy of neutrality and harmony of China and has great significance on the urban planning history of the world. The successful inscription will be a new start.

The Chinese Government will fulfil its commitment to the World Heritage Convention. We will continue to work relentlessly on heritage conservation and management, property interpretation and presentation, community participation and climate change adaptation to ensure the transmission of the OUV of Beijing Central Axis to future generations. We will share China's experience and contribute Chinese wisdom to the World Heritage cause.

[forth speaker] Mr Chair, the dear members of the Committee,

On behalf of the CPC Beijing Committee, as well as the citizens of Beijing, to greet all of you. Beijing Central Axis serves as a powerful testament to the continuity, innovation, unity, inclusiveness and peaceful nature of the Chinese civilization.

In recent years, we have adhered to the highest standards in the comprehensive conservation of the Old City and in the meticulous work leading to the inscription of this property. We have continuously improved the living environment, benefiting residents and visitors from home and abroad. Today's decision marks a new starting point for us. We will adhere to the spirit of the World Heritage Convention. We look forward to meeting you all in Beijing.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you. We'll give two minutes for Delegates to congratulate and settle down.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Can I ask all the Committee members to please come back to their seats so that we can proceed with the next nomination? Can I also remind everyone that there is a room outside where the celebration can take place. Please. I invite all the Committee members to take their seat. Please.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

8B.20 The Phu Phrabat Historical Park (Thailand) // Le parc historique de Phu Phrabat (Thaïlande)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination Of the Phu Phrabat Historical Park, Thailand.

But before, I give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the nomination of the Phu Phrabat Historical Park. And this is to be found on page 41 of both English and French version of Document INF.8B.4. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Phu Phrabat Historical Park, Thailand. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 131 of the English version and page 132 of the French version. Next slide.

The nominated property has two component parts Phu Phrabat Historical Park and the Sīma stone cultural site at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban. Common to both are stone boundary markers, which represent the Sīma stone tradition of the Dvaravati period from the 7th to 11th centuries. Sīma, a Buddhist term denoting a sacred area where Buddhist monks or nuns perform ceremonies, are found in various stylistic representations and layouts, representing the largest *in situ* collection of Sīma stones globally.

This nomination was first submitted in 2015 under the same name, and resubmitted following an ICOMOS recommendation of deferral to allow the State Party to deepen research of the Sīma Stone culture in relation to Buddhism. Next slide.

The Phu Phrabat Historical Park is a small mountain in the Pha Khuea Nam National Reserve Forest, at the northern part of the Khorat Plateau in northeast Thailand. It contains 59 historic sites, which are either megalithic rock shelters surrounded by Sīma stones, or just the rock shelters. The cultural site at Wat Phra Phuthabat Buaban contains diverse Sīma stones randomly positioned around a rock shelter, and another organized as triple concentric circles facing eight cardinal directions. Next slide.

ICOMOS notes that Sīma is the foundation of Buddhism. Phu Phrabat Historical Park is the best representative of the Sīma Stone tradition of the Dvaravati period in the world. While various materials were used in Theravada Buddhist monastic practice to mark sacred boundaries, extensive use of stone for marking sacred boundaries is found only in the Khorat Plateau region in Southeast Asia. The megalithic rock shelters at Phu Phrabat were venerated by prehistoric populations two millennia ago, as evidenced by rock paintings on 47 shelters. Following the arrival of Buddhism in the 7th century, local religious beliefs evolved towards Buddhism, and rock shelters were transformed into venues for Buddhist ceremonial activities, some of which were surrounded by Sīma stones.

As the State Party clarified in a later submission, a large collection of Sīma stones from the Dvaravati period still exist in museums and collections, however only Phu Phrabat has the largest concentration of Sīma stones still in their original spatial layout and context. Next slide.

ICOMOS considers that comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List. Upon recommendation by ICOMOS, the State Party provided a contextualized description of the Sīma stone tradition in Southeast Asia and extended the comparative analysis outside Thailand. The comparative analysis demonstrates that nominated property preserves the largest corpus of *in situ* Sīma stones of the Dvaravati period, representing the most complete trajectory of their evolution and the diversity of their typology of form and style. It is an outstanding example of land use, that is representative of the stone tradition that once prevailed in the Khorat plateau during the Dvaravati period. The nominated property testifies to this unique Buddhist tradition in Southeast Asia and the world, and therefore justifies consideration for the World Heritage List under Criteria (iii) and (v). Next slide.

ICOMOS considers the site exhibits a high degree of integrity and authenticity. The nominated property is of adequate size, with all necessary attributes included, and adverse impacts under control. The Sīma stones displayed on the nominated property are preserved in their original locations, with unchanged spatial arrangement patterns and untouched physical forms and decorative art, providing a truthful and credible source of information

for understanding the Sīma stone tradition of the Dvaravati period in terms of form and design, materials, location, traditions and spirit and feeling.

Since it was converted to Buddhist religious centre in the 7th century, the site continued to be used as such. The nominated property boundaries and buffer zones are adequate to protect the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. Compared to the 2015 nomination, the buffer zone has been substantially reduced without a clear rationale. ICOMOS recommends a minor boundary modification request to expand the buffer zone and ensure effective protection of wider setting. Next slide.

Legal protection management are adequate and the state of conservation is good. ICOMOS however considers that heritage impact assessment mechanisms need to be incorporated into the management system. Although tourism management is adequate, ICOMOS considers that a carrying capacity should be established to guide site management, and measures should be adopted to prevent the spirit of protecting the site from being disturbed by tourism. Next slide. Here's a summary of the evaluation of the Outstanding Universal Value of nominated property. Next slide.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Phu Phrabat Historical Park, Thailand, be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria (iii) and (v), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of property. Next slide.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination. I see no more comments or questions.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.20**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received an amendment to the draft decision.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le projet de décision sur le parc historique de Phu Phrabat, Thaïlande, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none. Is there any objection to the draft decision being adopted as a whole? I see no objections.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.20** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Thank you very much.

Let me congratulate Thailand, on behalf of the entire community for the inscription of this property, and as a mark of respect to the Thai culture, I will attempt to speak one line in the great Thai language. *[speaks in Thai] [applause]*

Thank you. Thailand, you have the floor for up to a four-minute statement. Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of Thailand:

Mr Chairman, dear Committee members,

I wish to thank the Committee and all those concerned for the decision today to inscribe Phu Phrabat on the World Heritage List. We are immensely proud of the recognition that has been accorded to Phu Phrabat for its Outstanding Universal Value, dating back to the Dvaravati culture in the 8th century and reflecting the early roots of Buddhism in Southeast Asia by way of the Sīma stone tradition.

Indeed, we have worked hard on this nomination. It has been a team effort among many agencies concerned. And importantly, we appreciate the cooperation of ICOMOS in providing its expertise in order to ensure that the nomination meets the relevant criteria. We also recognize that the inscription entails responsibility to maintain, protect, and conserve this World Heritage site for the present and future generations. I now have the honour of presenting a video message from His Excellency the Prime Minister of Thailand on this auspicious occasion.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Prime Minister of Thailand (video message):

Mr Chairperson, members of the World Heritage Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government and the people of Thailand, I would like to express my gratitude to the Committee members, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for recognizing the Outstanding Universal Value of Phu Phrabat, a testimony to the Sīma stone tradition of the Dvvaravati period which led to its inscription on the World Heritage List. With Phu Phrabat inscription Thailand's World Heritage List now includes five cultural and three natural sites. It's important to note that Udon Thani, where this new site is located, is now the only province in Thailand that is home to two World Heritage sites. The Phu Phrabat site consists of Phu Phrabat Historical Park and the Sīma cultural sites. It represents the Sīma stone tradition from the Dvvaravati period dating back to around the 8th century and preserves the largest corpus of Sīma stones in the world.

The inscription of the Phu Phrabat on the World Heritage List today is not only significant to Thailand, but it will also benefit future generations. This will bring forth conservation, restoration and protection efforts at all levels, as well as contributions to academic research in the interest of humankind. I look forward to welcoming all of you to Thailand to visit our new inscribed World Heritage site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. We move to the next item.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (Ct'd) // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD (suite)

8B.26 Testament of Kenozero Lake (Russian Federation) // Témoignage du lac Kenozero (Fédération de Russie)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Testament of Kenozero Lake, the Russian Federation.

But before that, I give the floor to the Secretariat. Mr Balsamo.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the nomination of the Testament of Kenozero Lake. And this is to be found on page 37 of both the English and French version of the Document INF.8B.4.

Thank you.

ICOMOS :

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Il s'agit de la présentation de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS du Témoignage du lac Kenozero, Fédération de Russie. Le rapport de l'ICOMOS se trouve dans le Document INF.8B.1 à la page 196 de la version anglaise et à la page 185 de la version française. Pour cette évaluation, l'ICOMOS a reçu une lettre d'erreurs factuelles et a accepté certaines de ces erreurs.

Situé dans le parc national de Kenozero, au Nord-Ouest de la partie européenne de la Fédération de Russie, le paysage culturel relique de Kenozero illustre le mode de vie paysan qui se développa à partir du XII^e siècle à la suite de la colonisation progressive de la région par les Slaves. Les limites du bien proposé pour l'inscription ont été tracées de manière à englober les 22 complexes paysagers identifiés situés dans les ensembles paysagers de Kenozero, Lyokshmozero et Vilno-Porzhenska.

Les limites de la zone tampon coïncident avec celles du parc national. Le bien comprend un grand nombre d'établissements ruraux traditionnels à l'architecture vernaculaire en bois, situés dans les paysages pittoresques de lacs, rivières, de forêts et de champs. Ce paysage culturel reflète la gestion communautaire de l'agriculture et de la nature qui se développa lorsque la culture forestière autochtone finno-ougrienne s'associa à la culture traditionnelle slave des champs, transformant et façonnant le paysage au fil des siècles. Les églises en bois, les enclos paroissiaux et les chapelles dont bon nombre étaient à l'origine décorées des plafonds peints aux cieux, sont les principaux points de repères sociaux, culturels et visuels de la région. L'organisation spatiale de ces bâtiments, ainsi que les bosquets sacrés, les cimetières et les croix de bois qui jalonnent les paysages soulignent le lien spirituel des habitants avec ces environnements.

L'analyse comparative a été renforcée grâce aux informations complémentaires fournies par l'État partie en novembre 2023 et en février 2024. Elles confirment que le Témoignage du lac Kenozero se distingue de la vaste série de biens comparables. Il est surtout exceptionnel pour son état de conservation et la diversité de son

architecture historique en bois, caractéristique du nord de la Russie, y compris un grand nombre d'édifices domestiques et religieux traditionnels.

Le bien proposé pour l'inscription répond au critère (iii), mais les critères (i), (v) et (vi) n'ont pas été démontrés.

Un nombre important de bâtiments traditionnels en bois ont été conservés dans leur situation et leur contexte authentique au sein du bien proposé pour l'inscription. Sur les 77 établissements qui existaient au début du XX^e siècle, 62 ont été entièrement préservés avec plus de 1 500 structures religieuses et domestiques traditionnelles en bois. Le bien est considéré comme authentique en ce qui concerne les éléments architecturaux en bois préservés, les schémas de peuplement et le contexte. La tradition et l'esprit du lieu complètent les principales sources d'information qui reflètent l'authenticité du bien proposé pour inscription. Les conditions d'intégrité et d'authenticité sont remplies malgré les évolutions qu'a connues le paysage traditionnel. Les limites du bien proposé pour inscription et de sa zone tampon sont appropriées. Cependant, la limite orientale de la zone tampon devrait être étendue au moyen d'une demande de modifications mineures des limites afin d'apporter un niveau de protection supplémentaire au bien proposé pour l'inscription.

Le Témoignage du lac Kenozero est protégé par plusieurs dispositifs juridiques aux niveaux national et régional. La protection juridique est complète tant du point de vue du secteur culturel que naturel. Un mécanisme de contrôle opérationnel et substantiel visant à préserver l'aspect traditionnel des établissements historiques est en place. Afin de renforcer la protection du bien, des zones de protection des monuments historiques et culturels devraient être établis pour tous les bâtiments classés et les limites de tous les bâtiments classés devraient être définies. Le plan de gestion du bien proposé pour inscription et de ses zones tampons couvre la période 2021-2027 et est en cours de mise en œuvre. Le Parc national de Kenozero a élaboré des plans de gestion pour cet ensemble paysager et des plans de gestion devraient être élaborés pour l'ensemble de ces complexes.

L'ICOMOS note les efforts de l'État partie pour réglementer, gérer et conserver l'environnement historique du bien proposé pour l'inscription en intégrant les objectifs de conservation de la nature à l'objectif de la protection de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien. Voici un résumé de l'évaluation de l'ICOMOS de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle potentielle pour le bien proposé pour inscription.

En conclusion, l'ICOMOS recommande que le Témoignage du lac Kenozero, Fédération de Russie, soit inscrit en tant que paysage culturel relique sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sur la base de critère (iii), et a inclus un certain nombre de recommandations supplémentaires dans le projet de décision pour soutenir la conservation à long terme de biens. En ce qui concerne le changement du nom du bien, l'ICOMOS est d'accord avec la proposition de l'État partie, à savoir Paysage culturel du lac Kenozero, ou ^[parle en russe].

Je vous remercie pour votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination.

Ukraine, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Dear colleagues,

A draft law has been submitted to the State Duma to give regions the right to abolish specially protected natural areas and share their boundaries. The draft law justifies the need to exclude from specially protected natural areas, land plots and water bodies necessary for the implementation of national goals and strategic objectives, as well as significant projects in the field of socio-economic development and defence of the Russian Federation. The grounds for changing the boundaries of regional specially protected natural areas have been clarified. This can be done for the sake of, quote, "realization of national health and strategic objectives", end of quote, which the document specially includes the need for the armed forces and projects in the field of socio-economic development. It is also proposed to allow the change of boundaries in cases where it is proposed to add more areas to the protected areas as compensation.

Today, the territory of the Kenozero National Park is a, quote, "specially protected natural area of federal significance", end of quote. This means that these areas are well protected from various interventions from a legal point of view. Given the existing risk, we consider it necessary to take measures to ensure that the planned changes to the legislation on specially protected areas do not have a negative impact on the protected status of the object of the draft law. To this end, we suggest that one clause be added requiring that proposed amendments to the legislation be submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by Advisory Bodies prior to the entry into force.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any further requests for the floor from any Committee member?

Viet Nam, you have the floor, followed by Rwanda.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Cultural Landscape of Kenozero Lake represents an outstanding combination of traditional architecture of the Russian north and the original peasant lifestyle, with its crafts, folk stories and religious beliefs. The authenticity and integrity of the proposed property are well maintained and visible as it is stated in ICOMOS's evaluation.

We would like to underline the exceptional role of the Kenozero National Park, the main management authority in preservation of this unique territory, especially considering the fact that the protected status of the park is strengthened by the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation.

And we would like to thank the State Party for their long-term efforts improving the site management and protection, and we fully support the inscription of the Cultural Landscape of Kenozero Lake on the World Heritage List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Rwanda, I think you have cancelled your request.

So, I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Zambia to take the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Chair.

The State Party of Zambia wishes to commend the Russian Federation for the work put in to ensure that the Testament of Kenozero is well conserved, even as we agree and support the recommendation made by ICOMOS that the site meets the requirements to be inscribed on the World Heritage List under Criteria (iii).

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Rwanda, you have put your plate up now. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

Rwanda did not request the floor before, but we will happily take the floor now. We would like to thank the, l'organe d'évaluation, and support the recommendation by the evaluation body.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Any other Member State would like to take the floor? I see no further requests. No further questions. There have been no questions posed to the Advisory Body.

Therefore, I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.20**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendment to the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Mr le Président, dans le projet de décision initial figuraient des erreurs factuelles qui ont été reconnues et intégrées dans le texte.

Néanmoins je souhaiterai, si vous le permettez, que nous puissions revenir à l'amendement suggéré en salle par la Délégation de l'Ukraine, en demandant à la Délégation ukrainienne de parler à une vitesse suffisamment lente pour que nous puissions l'écrire mot pour mot dans une version telle que suggérée par l'Ukraine.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Ukraine, you have heard the Rapporteur. Please dictate it slowly, your amendment. We wish it was presented before. But you did not do so. So please dictate it now.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

So, we suggest an additional recommendation to para 4 which reads as follows: "Ensuring that the planned legislative amendments on the specially protected areas do not have a negative impact on the protected status of the property, and submitting them to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before they are in force."

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Wonderful.

So it reads: "Ensuring that the planned legislative amendments." Planned, which means as of now, they are not operational. It's a hypothetical situation. We are dealing with the report of the Advisory Body, and the decisions are based on the dossier which has been presented and studied. So, this is based on something that is in the past. If you are going to predict the future and incorporate that, then it's a bridge that has yet not reached. And if at all there is any hypothetical negative impact on a hypothetical futuristic event, then you always have the state of conservation reports, you have the subsequent Committee meetings to bring these protections and safeguards. But you have suggested your amendments, so I'm just reading it out. "Do not have a negative impact on the protected status of the property and submitting them to the World Heritage Centre for review by the Advisory Bodies before they are in force". Okay.

This is the amendment presented by the State Party of Ukraine. Would any other Member State like to take the floor? You may raise your plate, but if you raise your plate, do not put it down, please, because it confuses us. Do you want to take the floor, or have you withdrawn your request?

I see the State of Qatar, to be followed by Lebanon.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je pense qu'il y a un consensus vraiment sur l'inscription de ce bien. Et bien sûr, c'est le rapport de ICOMOS que je remercie beaucoup. Moi je voudrais savoir et comprendre vraiment la raison pour laquelle on ajoute ce paragraphe, sachant que juridiquement sur le texte, on est sur le mandat de la Convention du patrimoine mondial et les *Operational Guidelines*. Et là, si on, ça pourrait donner de confusion je pense. Je parle de la langue technique de texte qu'on adopte ce paragraphe pour des textes à venir, notamment des textes juridiques ou législatifs dans un pays membre. Oui, donc je pense, même dans le sens juridique, il n'y a pas d'application des textes de manière rétroactive, ni dans l'avenir, qui ne sont pas encore mis en vigueur. Et je pense que bon, c'est vraiment un conseil de garder le texte dans l'esprit de mandat de notre règle de Comité.

Merci, M. le Président. Et nous gardons toujours l'esprit de consensus.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Qatar.

Ukraine, you have heard the request for clarification and the justification.

But I will give the floor to other Member States who have raised the plate before I come back to you.

The Distinguished Representative of Lebanon, you have the floor, followed by Rwanda.

La Délégation du Liban :

Oui, M. le Président, merci.

Je suppose que vous nous demandez d'intervenir sur le point i) proposé par l'Ukraine. Donc bon, oui, évidemment, tout le monde peut être d'accord, on peut tous être d'accord que pour n'importe quel bien, les amendements législatifs qui peuvent venir à l'avenir concernant des zones protégées ou des zones, etc. doivent être présentés au Centre du patrimoine mondial, doivent être présentés aux Organisations consultatives. Ce que je veux dire, ça, ça s'applique sur tous les biens, ça s'applique partout. Je ne comprends pas le besoin de venir ici, particulièrement sur ce bien-là, l'inscrire. C'est, il faudrait à ce moment-là le mettre partout. Or, c'est dans les orientations, c'est dans

les principes de notre Convention. Je ne vois vraiment pas pourquoi ici venir mettre le doigt dessus. Je pense que ce n'est absolument pas nécessaire.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for those wise comments.

I, you know, you have explained very nicely, and that's why I respect your views, as I respect everyone else's views as well.

Rwanda, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

Rwanda will suggest that we stick to the original recommendation by the Advisory Body, please.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Please capture Rwanda's request. Okay.

Ukraine, you have heard what our distinguished colleagues from various States Parties have asked and how they have given the explanation. It appears to me that, number one, one is a futuristic aspect of it, and number two is the inherent intention in the Convention itself that already captures what, you know, what your feeling is about a property. And there are mechanisms, you know, there are, once a property is inscribed on the World Heritage List, the World Heritage Centre does not let go of it. There is supervision, there is scrutiny. And if at all there is any violation, it's always brought in. So, there is a request by Rwanda to, you know, if it's possible for you to withdraw this particular amendment so that, based on the consensus that we had, we can move ahead.

Ukraine, I'll give you the floor to respond. You have it.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Okay. For the sake of consensus, it can be deleted. But we request that this point should be included into the report.

The Chairperson:

So noted. Thank you. I request the Secretariat to please note that point in the report.

Okay. Now that Ukraine has withdrawn its amendment, can we adopt this whole paragraph as a, this whole decision as a whole, as it appears on the screen? Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.20** adopted. *[gave]* *[applause]*

There is some error. The draft Decision is **46 COM 8B.26** adopted. *[applause]*

Let me congratulate the Russian Federation on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property and permit me to speak a line in the Russian language. *[speaks in Russian]*

Thank you. Russian Federation, you have the floor for an up to four-minute statement.

The Observer Delegation of the Russian Federation:

[interpretation from Russian] Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Members of the Committee, dear colleagues, dear friends,

On behalf of the Russian Federation, I wanted to express our gratitude for the recognition, the global recognition of the unique cultural value and of the cultural landscape of Kenozero Lake.

This site not only includes architectural masterpieces of Russian architecture, but it also includes the live spiritual and cultural traditions of Russia. It is particularly pleasing to see that this notable event is occurring in India, a country known for its hospitality, ancient history and rich culture.

The inscription of Kenozero on the World Heritage List is a tribute to our forefathers who, with tremendous sense of proportion and beauty, managed to build, in these inhospitable parts, villages, churches and chapels with beautiful painted heavens. It is also a mark of respect to scholars and scientists and writers who have studied and protected the cultural heritage of Kenozero for centuries.

And lastly, it is a great and long-awaited joy for the communities, the heirs and continuators of these traditions. Imagine, thousands and thousands of kilometres away from here, in small villages, facing the endless forests and lakes of the Russian far north, hundreds of people with a heavy heart have been waiting to hear the good news and share in our joy. This Russian architecture, which has developed in Russia's far north, illustrates the highest qualities of the local folk culture and the exceptional contribution of Russia to World Heritage.

Kenozero National Park, within which the borders of the property is located, is special in that it ensures integrity and proper development of all forms of heritage, natural and cultural, tangible and intangible. And we'd like to thank Kenozero National Park, the Russian Heritage Institute for the work on the file. It has been a long and demanding and lengthy process which has included extensive research, the establishment of museums, conservation and sustainable development of the protected area, and the support of local communities who carefully and lovingly protect their heritage. It was, all of this was an invaluable contribution to the nomination process at all times. We also thank ICOMOS for their careful review of the file at every stage, and for its recommendations to improve the management of the property, as we found in the decision. Russia would like to recognize the importance of preserving this unique cultural landscape and will commit all the necessary efforts to do so.

Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Committee and dear colleagues, do come and visit this exceptional property. If you do come in the winter, dress warmly and have some furs with you.

Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Can I ask the Russian Federation to repeat the last statement, please? My translation was not very good.

The Observer Delegation of the Russian Federation:

[interpretation from Russian] I wanted to. Sorry. I'll do this again? I wanted to invite everyone to come and visit this property. If you come, do come and enjoy the hospitality of the cold far north of Russia. But it is a warm welcome indeed.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I'll just give some time for the congratulations, before we move on to the next agenda item.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Can I please invite all the Committee members to take their seats so that we can proceed with the next nomination, and also remind everyone that there is an available space outside for the celebration.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

AFRICA // AFRIQUE

8B.10 The Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi (Kenya) // La ville historique et site archéologique de Gedi (Kenya)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi, Kenya.

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi in Kenya. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1, on page 26 of the English version, and page 42 of the French version.

Gedi was one of the most important Swahili cities on the East African coast in the period from the 10th to 17th centuries. During this period, it was part of a complex network of trade and cultural exchanges that crossed the

Indian Ocean. Abandoned in the 17th century, Gedi demonstrates the characteristics of Swahili architecture, building materials and town planning. Gedi was an opulent settlement and is clearly delineated by its inner and outer walls. There are remains of domestic and civic architecture, mosques, tombs, and a sophisticated water management system. Luxury goods imported from China, Persia, India and Venice are found at Gedi and demonstrate its role in international networks.

The nominated property and buffer zone align with the designation of Gedi as a national monument. The boundaries are based on the location of the outer wall of the former city and fully contains it. The forested buffer zone provides additional protection and visual setting for the nominated property. Gedi demonstrates the characteristics of a Swahili-Islamic settlement, with a clear street layout within its inner wall and an intact outer wall, which demonstrates differences according to social stratification. The site demonstrates the exchanges through the Indian Ocean trade networks that supported the prosperity of its inhabitants. Some elements within Gedi demonstrate a fusion between African and Islamic cultural traditions and beliefs.

The comparative analysis was augmented during the evaluation process by the State Party through exchanges with ICOMOS and has included consideration of many other Swahili coastal settlements, including some already inscribed in the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists. While Gedi exhibits many similarities with other Swahili coastal settlements in terms of architectural types and building materials, its abandonment in the 17th century and lack of later periods of occupation have contributed to a high degree of completeness and state of conservation. ICOMOS considers that Gedi adds significant depth to the understanding of Swahili coastal settlements and the associated trade networks over a long period. The abundance of archaeological evidence, readable spatial layout and remains of significant structures are notable.

The nominated property demonstrates Criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv). The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met. The inner and outer walls of the settlement are intact and contain all the elements of the historic town, including its water management infrastructure. The physical fabric of the site is in a stable state of conservation, although some recommendations have been made to reduce the impacts of visitors and vegetation growth.

Gedi has been subject to legal protection from 1927, and the property and buffer zone are owned and managed by National Museums of Kenya. The site is fully protected by national laws and local planning processes, and the buffer zone forests are protected and managed by the Kenyan Forest Service.

The most significant pressures potentially affecting the property are vegetation management and fire risk. There is a management plan in place, and the State Party is committed to advancing the staffing, capacity-building and conservation needs of the property.

ICOMOS considers that the community engagement and benefit sharing is a strength of this nomination. Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi in Kenya be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentation, ICOMOS.

I would now like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination.

Rwanda, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Rwanda remercie le Kenya pour avoir élaboré minutieusement ce dossier pour lequel le Comité prendra une décision d'inscription, nous le pensons bien et nous l'espérons. Nous remercions les organes consultatifs pour les recommandations émises, de même que le projet de décision sage et réfléchi du Comité d'inscrire la Ville historique et archéologique du Gedi sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

M. le Président, Gedi était un établissement opulent avec des bâtiments publics et privés, des rues, des tombes, un ensemble palatial élaboré et une grande mosquée. Dans l'ensemble d'intérieur des vestiges de l'architecture domestique, civile et religieuse, tous construits en roche corallienne locale et mortier de chaux, sont disposés selon un plan de rue quadrillé, les mosquées et les tombes étant embellies par des sculptures et incrustées de porcelaine Chinoise.

La ville historique et site archéologique de Gedi est si important, non seulement pour le Kenya, mais aussi pour la sous-région et l'humanité tout entière, vu sa valeur universelle exceptionnelle, pour laquelle elle est proposée pour inscription.

Le Rwanda soutient l'inscription de La ville historique et site archéologique de Gedi sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sous les critères (ii), (iii) et (iv).

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Zambia, followed by Belgium.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

Zambia is happy to contribute to the comments that have been already contributed by the State Party of Rwanda. When you look at the report from ICOMOS, it is really impressive in the sense that it is clear that, you know, the State Party of Kenya did its homework in trying to come up with this dossier, because it is one of those files which is coming to us as one of the cleanest. I think this is something which is very commendable for the State Party of Kenya. And at the same time, this is also a good example to the rest of us on the continent of Africa. I think this is also showing that, you know, the quality of dossiers is improving.

And we would also want to take advantage of this, I mean, this opportunity to specifically appreciate the role that the African World Heritage Fund, which is Category 2 Centre on the continent of Africa, that it is doing for the States Parties of Africa, because they have also had a lot of input in the quality of ensuring that we have a quality, I mean, dossier for the State Party. I submit, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Belgium, followed by Senegal.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous savons que les anciennes villes côtières swahilies de plusieurs États parties d'Afrique de l'Est sont reconnues depuis de nombreuses années sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Porter à l'inscription des nouveaux biens de ce type, nécessitait d'illustrer la singularité du site de Gedi comme un témoignage complémentaire renforçant la compréhension des sites déjà inscrits et partageant des similitudes en termes d'époques historiques, de forme architecturale, de situation géographique ou encore de matériaux de construction.

L'organisation consultative a confirmé la qualité du site de Gedi comme bien permettant d'approfondir la connaissance des établissements côtiers swahilis et leurs réseaux commerciaux entre cette région du monde et l'Océan Indien. Nous saluons le travail réalisé par L'État partie et l'encourageons à le poursuivre, notamment dans les plans de gestion et stratégies de recherche, afin de conserver et protéger au mieux ces vestiges architecturaux et archéologiques d'une grande richesse.

La Belgique apporte son plein soutien à ce dossier qui représente aussi un signe d'espoir en faveur de la Liste du patrimoine mondial plus crédible et plus représentative de la diversité et de la richesse des cultures du monde.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Senegal, followed by Viet Nam.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci M. le Président.

Le Sénégal associe sa voix à celles que nous avons déjà entendues. Gedi est dans un continuum, où on peut trouver Lamu, Mombasa et toute cette culture Swahilie. Elle a été abandonnée au XVII^e siècle, alors que Mombasa a continué à vivre. Et les problèmes de conservation sur ces deux sites sont totalement différents, bien entendu. Mais il y a un fond culturel commun, c'est-à-dire que toutes ces villes ont participé à une culture mondiale. Toutes ces villes ont été connectées avec l'Orient et même avec la Chine. Et donc c'est important pour l'histoire de l'Afrique de savoir que l'urbanisme n'est pas né avec la colonisation. L'urbanisme a été aussi inventé quelque part en Afrique et c'est des éléments qu'il faut potentialiser, qu'il faut enseigner et qu'il faut mettre en valeur pour l'humanité.

Il est important de peut-être d'enseigner les caractéristiques architecturales et surtout les réseaux hydrauliques complexes qui ont été développés dès le XII^e siècle, dans le X^e siècle même, dans cette ville. Donc, c'est important pour l'humanité de capitaliser sur tout cela et c'est un enseignement pour l'histoire.

Et on félicite bien sûr l'État partie d'avoir fait un remarquable dossier. On félicite les Organisations consultatives, l'ICOMOS, d'avoir aidé à mettre en valeur tout ce potentiel.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Viet Nam, followed by Argentina.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Well, thank you very much, Mr Chair.

I'm very brief. We would like to commend the State Party for all their efforts to present this valuable property. And the authenticity and integrity of the proposed property are well maintained and visible, as it is stated by ICOMOS evaluation. And in this regard, we fully support the inscription of the Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi of Kenya on the World Heritage List.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to India. Argentina, followed by India.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Mr Chairman.

It's very easy to take the floor after having heard the previous speakers from here in the room. We would like to echo all of the statements already made by starting with Rwanda. And I think here you can really see the incredible work that's been done, and to get the expertise from around Africa to truly highlight the splendour of this site. We are totally in favour of inscription.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to India, followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving India the floor.

India congratulates Kenya for submitting the nomination dossier of the Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi on the World Heritage List. This honour will highlight the site's significance in the history of the Indian Ocean.

As the exhaustive research presented in the nomination dossier and the justification of Criterion (ii) rightly points out, the Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi stands as a testament to the vibrant trade networks that once thrived across the Indian Ocean. These networks connected the East African coast, the Arabian Peninsula and the Indian subcontinent through seasonal monsoon winds that carried dhows filled with goods, ideas and cultures.

The Swahili towns, including Gedi, were not only the centres of trade, but also hubs for cultural exchange, influenced by interactions with traders from India. The influence of Indian Ocean trade is evident in Gedi's socio-religious structures and residential settings, showcasing a blend of styles and techniques from various cultures, including that of India.

Today, as we celebrate the Gedi's inscription, we recognize the shared heritage that binds our nations. This also correlates closely with the initiative of Project Mausam that promotes this concept of shared heritage across the region. Congratulations to Kenya for this remarkable achievement.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, India.

I give the floor to Qatar, to be followed by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous voudrions tout d'abord remercier les organes consultatifs et Kenya pour la coopération très constructive et que je salue profondément. Le Qatar porte son plein soutien pour la nomination de Ville historique et site archéologique de Gedi qui mérite bien d'être dans la Liste, sur la Liste de patrimoine mondial.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines congratulates the State Party of Kenya on the work done on this dossier, and we say thanks to the Advisory Bodies as well for their work.

We support all the previous comments made by various Representatives and the inscription of the Historic Town and Archaeological Site of Gedi as a World Heritage site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

As there are no further comments or questions posed, we'll go to the draft decision.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.10**, but before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le projet d'inscription de La ville historique et site archéologique de Gedi de Kenya.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none. Is there any objection to this draft decision being adopted as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.10** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate Kenya on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property. Let me say a line in Kiswahili. *[speaks Kiswahili] [applause]*

Kenya, you have the floor for an up to four-minute statement. Thank you.

The Delegation of Kenya:

[first speaker] Honourable Chair, the World Heritage Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you so much for your kind words. Thank you for giving the State Party of Kenya the opportunity to bestow to the world the Historic Town and the Archaeological Site of Gedi, one of the most prominent Swahili cityscapes on the East African coast. The property is an outstanding testimony to the social and economic structure of the inhabitants of Gedi around the 13th century A.D. The property presents outstanding elements of construction techniques that blended the use of coral rag, coral mortar and earth mortar. The property also presents intricate water engineering techniques evident in the proliferation of wells, storage facilities, and its distribution and drainage that is rare in a town of its time.

Mr Chair,

The inscription of this property on the World Heritage List makes it the eighth World Heritage property in Kenya. Kenya is blessed with diverse natural and cultural heritage treasures. The inscription of Gedi is a testimony to the

fact that Kenya offers not only wildlife tourism products, but to the world, but also interesting cultural heritage worth sampling.

We express our immense gratitude to the Government of the Sultanate of Oman for the financial support that was instrumental in facilitating the nomination. We appreciate the World Heritage Centre for their support under the framework of the Operational Strategy for Priority Africa 2022-2029. We thank the African Wild Heritage Fund for the financial and technical support during the processing of the nomination. We express our deepest gratitude to the County Government of Kilifi and the people of Kilifi for their support and collaboration during the nomination process.

Finally, we invite you to Kenya to enjoy the country's rich heritage. Welcome to the Cradle of Humankind. I will now pass the floor to the Kenyan High Commissioner to India, Ambassador Peter Munyiri.

[second speaker] Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I convey my heartiest congratulations to the people and to the people of the Republic of Kenya for the inscription of the historical archaeological site. We celebrate the technologies that were deployed in the 13th century and their positive impact on lives. We learn great lessons from them, we commit to conserving and managing this great resource for posterity.

I wish to thank the World Heritage Centre at UNESCO, the African World Heritage Fund, the National Museums of Kenya, the Community of Nations and the Permanent Delegation of Kenya at UNESCO for supporting the development of the nomination dossier. We look forward to more successful nominations as we strive to conserve and preserve our national heritage.

Finally, Excellencies and Chairman, we welcome you to experience this great site as well as our other heritages in Kenya.

Thank you. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

We'll wait for some time before we go to the next item.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

May I invite the Committee members to take their seats, please, so that we can start the examination of the next nomination. I also want to remind everyone that there is an available space outside for the celebration. Thank you. I invite all Committee members to take their seats, please.

Thank you.

8B.11 Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites (South Africa) // Droits de l'homme, libération et réconciliation : les sites de mémoire de Nelson Mandela (Afrique du Sud)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Human rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy sites, South Africa. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites, South Africa. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 294 of the English version, and page 323 of the French version.

The legacy of the South African liberation struggle for human rights, liberation and reconciliation is represented by the serial nomination of 14 component parts. These sites reflect key symbolic events in the long struggle against the Apartheid State that had fostered oppression and racial discrimination. The influence of Nelson Mandela in promoting reconciliation, understanding and forgiveness, and belief systems based on philosophies of non-racialism, Pan-Africanism and Ubuntu, a concept that implies humanity is not solely embedded in an individual.

This nomination was submitted in 2022 and was subject to the moratorium that was established by the World Heritage Committee regarding sites associated with the memory of recent conflict.

This is a serial proposal of 14 component parts located in different parts of South Africa. Some of these sites are locations where key events occurred in the 20th century liberation struggle. Some are memorials and others

represent symbolic aspects of the liberation and reconciliation processes that span the 20th century, including the history of the African National Congress.

The justification for inscription of this property is based on the ability of the selected sites to represent the legacy of the South African liberation struggle in the 20th century that resulted in the end of the apartheid system and the emergence of the post-colonial nation, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

The State Party has structured the nomination according to three interrelated tenets or thematic strands. These are: the loss or denial of human rights, liberation and reconciliation. The nomination celebrates the contribution of the South African struggle within a global context. It also recognises the selected sites as representing the legacy of Nelson Mandela, a clearly globally respected leader of the liberation and of the reconciliation processes that formed the new nation.

The comparative analysis was augmented by the State Party during the evaluation process through dialogue with ICOMOS. It considers a wide range of World Heritage and Tentative List sites throughout the world. The most relevant are those in Africa, along with the 20th century liberation struggles in the United States and India. The State Party has also provided information about many sites in South Africa that relate to the selected themes of this nomination.

ICOMOS considers that the South African struggle against apartheid is characterised by its underpinning ideals that became widely recognised through the leadership and influence of Nelson Mandela. Criterion (vi) is potentially justified for the serial proposal, although ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis did not justify inclusion of all 14 of the nominated component parts. The key issue for the authenticity and integrity of this nomination has been the rationale for the selection of the component parts. In essence, ICOMOS considers that eight of the component parts contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value, and that a further three component parts have the potential to do so, but currently have issues impacting on their integrity and authenticity. There are three component parts where ICOMOS considers that the links with the key themes of the nomination are too generic to justify their inclusion. They are Ohlange, Fort Hare University and the Z.K. Matthews House. For most component parts, ICOMOS considers that the boundaries and buffer zones are adequate. However, it is strongly recommended that buffer zones be provided for two components, most especially for the site labelled 16th June 1976, The Streets of Orlando West and also the Sharpeville Police Station.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection of the nominated property is adequate, although further work is needed to ensure that the effective legal protection for buffer zones is in place for all components.

There is an integrated Conservation Management Plan and individual management plans for each component part. Some issues require further attention, including conservation planning, resourcing for conservation and the local level capacities for management. While some of the nominated component parts have good interpretation and visitor management, others are lacking these elements at present.

The State Party has done a commendable job of engaging with associated communities and stakeholders. Because of the nature of these sites, sustaining this strong engagement will be essential to their future protection and presentation. Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

ICOMOS considers the Criterion (vi) has the potential to be demonstrated for 11 of the nominated component parts, once issues impacting on the integrity and authenticity of three of them are addressed. As noted before, ICOMOS recommends that buffer zones should be provided for two of the component parts, particularly the 16th June 1976, The Streets of Orlando West, and that conservation work is needed at three component parts. In relation to protection, this is generally adequate, although the mechanisms for protection of buffer zones need further attention, as already mentioned. The management of the nominated property is satisfactory, adequate, although some recommendations have been provided to help with the further work that the State Party will be undertaking, particularly for interpretation.

To conclude, ICOMOS considers, recommends, that Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites, South Africa be referred back to the State Party for the following reasons. As I've already mentioned, to reduce the serial nomination to include 11 of the nominated component parts; to undertake necessary repairs and conservation to three of them, namely the Walter Sisulu Square, the Sharpeville Police Station and the Great Place at Mqhekezweni; to provide a buffer zone to the two components, as I've already described; and to ensure adequate protection of all the buffer zones. ICOMOS has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property. These are outlined in full in the evaluation report and on this and the following slide.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination.

Lebanon, followed by Zambia.

La Délégation du Liban :

Ce bien a été nommé en adéquation avec la Décision **18 EXT.COM 4** du Comité du patrimoine mondial concernant les sites associés à la mémoire de conflits récents. Nous avons trois questions que nous souhaiterions poser à l'ICOMOS.

La première question concerne leur questionnement concernant le nom du bien, concernant le nom de Nelson Mandela. Le nom de Nelson Mandela est directement lié à la mémoire de ce que ce site veut dire, à la signification de ce bien. Nelson Mandela c'est la légende, non seulement pour les peuples d'Afrique du Sud, non seulement pour les peuples d'Afrique, mais pour l'ensemble de l'humanité. Nous avons, si nous regardons un peu la Liste, nous avons énormément de noms de personnes associées à des biens inscrits sur la Liste : Luther, Le Corbusier, Auguste Perret, Victor Horta, Roberto Burle Marx, Luis Barragán. C'est-à-dire qu'il est possible d'insérer dans la Liste des noms de personnages, et dans le cas de Nelson Mandela, nous pensons que c'est tout à fait approprié. Ça, c'est notre premier point.

Le deuxième point que je voudrais poser à l'ICOMOS, et ça, à nous tous, c'est dans quelle mesure les notions traditionnelles d'authenticité et d'intégrité peuvent être appliquées à ce type de bien ? Ne faudrait-il pas imaginer de pouvoir lancer une réflexion sur comment interpréter les notions d'authenticité et d'intégrité par rapport à des biens associés à la mémoire de conflits récents ? Nous pensons que c'est très difficile de pouvoir appliquer de façon, disons, traditionnelle ces notions-là, telles qu'on l'a fait sur d'autres types de biens dans la Convention.

Notre troisième question est une question de détail. Il est dit dans les annexes "Ensuring that the proposed hotel development in Liliesleaf (007) is located outside the nominated component part". Est-ce que cela signifie qu'il n'existe pas de plan précis qui indique la localisation de cet hôtel, qu'il n'existe pas de plan des « nominated components parts » ? C'est une question.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Since a large number of Member States have raised their plates, Committee members, and we are about 18 minutes from 1:00 pm, not all may be accommodated in this morning session. So, we will be continuing it in the afternoon session. But before that, I will request the Director to read the names of the Member States, so that they can at least lower their plates.

Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

The following Committee members have requested to take the floor, and I will read in the order of intervention: Zambia, Mexico, Jamaica, Greece, India, Rwanda, Belgium, Republic of Korea, Italy, Qatar, Japan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Kenya, Argentina, Senegal and Viet Nam. And I think, and now I see Kazakhstan.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Zambia, followed by Mexico.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Honourable Chairperson, Distinguished members of the World Heritage Committee,

I'm honoured to speak on behalf of Zambia, representing the State Party of South Africa. I would like to thank ICOMOS for their wonderful work. Today I present our case for the inscription of Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites, with all 14 components as initially proposed.

As regards the Outstanding Universal Value and integrity, each component, including the Z.K. Matthews House, Fort Hare and Ohlange, is crucial to the roles, are crucial to the site's Outstanding Universal Value, reflecting human rights, liberation and reconciliation. South Africa has committed resources to ensure the integrity and authenticity. On the *Operational Guidelines*, paragraphs 24 of 78 and 96, these emphasize the importance of integrity, authenticity, and conservation for inscription.

Relating to the legacy and policy framework of the buffering mechanism, South Africa's comprehensive buffering mechanism policy effectively protects sites like the Sharpeville Massacre Site and Orlando West. This aligns with paragraphs 103, 107 and 104, which emphasize buffer zones and alternative protection measures and protection methods, and also 1972 UNESCO Convention, Article 5, that advocates integrating heritage protection into planning

programmes. Meaning the State Party of South Africa has complied with these paragraphs in the *Operational Guidelines* and in the Convention.

We also note the State Party's commitment to stakeholder engagement, Mr Chairman. South Africa's strategy integrated within the management plan and legislated through the World Heritage Convention Act, ensures effective engagement, aligning with *Operational Guidelines*, paragraph 40. In short, the State Party of South Africa has gone further as compared to most States Parties by having a World Heritage Convention Act which guarantees protection of their heritage sites.

In terms of adequacy of resource allocation and legal protection, South Africa has committed financial and technical resources for the site management and conservation, fulfilling the obligations under the 1972 Convention, Articles 4 and 5.

In terms of case studies, in case we may say that we are speaking from without. We have case studies which include Historic Centre of Rome, Old City of Jerusalem and the Machu Picchu. All these demonstrate effective use of regulatory mechanism and buffering mechanism.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, South Africa is committed to preserving Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites, reflecting the State Party's legacy in human rights, peace and cultural dialogue as well as its dedication to cultural heritage, Mr Chairman.

As I conclude, Mr Chairman, the State Party of Zambia would like to ask a question to both the State Party of South Africa and ICOMOS.

To South Africa: We wish to find out whether or not a consensus has been reached with ICOMOS on the different issues raised by the Advisory Body.

And for you, ICOMOS, we would like to find out: Are there any specific paragraphs of the *Operational Guidelines* which the State Party of South Africa may not have complied with in crafting their nomination dossier?

Thank you, Mr Chairman. *Que sera, sera*. What will be shall be.

The Chairperson:

Mexico, to be followed by Jamaica.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

Mr Chairman, this nomination on Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites, as tabled by South Africa, is a site of memory which we think will help the South African community to address the understanding of the events in the post-apartheid era. It is with this recognition and the public authorities, promotion of understanding this passage of history, and has done much to promote reconciliation and justice and the universal culture of human rights.

Mexico believes that the elements and their buffer zones are actually adequate, and that they comply with the requirements of the Convention when it comes to the protection, legal protection at the national level, protection mechanisms and management plans.

We think that it is important to understand the importance and role of sites of memory such as this one. We should never forget that World Heritage is actually a cultural right, and it has a role in consolidating and understanding identities.

Ultimately, we think that this property should be seen as a site of conscience because it shows the importance of working towards human rights and peace.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Jamaica, followed by Greece.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair.

Jamaica thanks to State Party of South Africa for the submission of the significant serial nomination. We are heartened by this nomination and the extensiveness of its components.

The 14 component and sub-component parts of this nomination adequately demonstrate the events and ideas that were at the core of the liberation struggle in South Africa, and how liberation, forgiveness and reconciliation has

effectively taken place and continue even to today. We appreciate the evaluation of the Advisory Body for this site of recent conflict, which confirms the site's OUV, authenticity and integrity.

In relation to the concerns raised regarding the buffer zones, repairs to components, and removal of component parts, the State Party has adequately addressed these concerns by effecting the repair of the Sharpeville Police Station, funding support for the repair of the two other sites, and providing information on the significance of the University of Fort Hare, Z.K., Matthews and Ohlange. We are satisfied with this, with these explanations and the commitment of the State Party of South Africa to the serial nomination.

We would also want to support the inscription of this nominated property.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Greece, followed by India.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Chairperson.

Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites is an inspiring nomination. It draws on the universal themes of human rights, liberation and reconciliation. Human rights have emerged worldwide as one of the most powerful values of the 20th and 21st centuries. This universal recognition, however, was challenged by the excesses of colonialism in Africa and in particular in South Africa with apartheid, which ranked as one of the most oppressive and racist in the world.

The serial nomination of the 14 component parts demonstrates the ideas, beliefs and events that were at the core of the liberation struggle in this country, which is linked with the personality, the emblematic personality of Nelson Mandela, an exceptional African leader and an international symbol.

In view of the above, and taking into account both the tangible and intangible attributes of the nominated property, Greece strongly supports the amendment proposed by Zambia for inscribing Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites on the World Heritage List on the basis of the Criterion (vi). This nomination merits to be, after those presented and approved last year, the fourth inscription of the World Heritage List of the important new category of sites of memory.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to India, to be followed by Rwanda.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving us the floor again.

Following the decisions of the UNESCO General Assembly that African roads to independence are part of the heritage of humanity, in the spirit of the global strategy for a balanced, credible and representative World Heritage List, and recalling the conclusions of the works of the Open-ended Working Group on the sites of memory of recent conflict that unanimously agreed to the lifting of the moratorium, South Africa's liberation struggle is globally recognized. The struggle tested and helped define humanity's stance on human rights, liberation, and even post-conflict reconciliation.

We believe, Mr Chair, that this nomination is a valuable addition to the World Heritage List, carries the spirit of the Convention, is aligned to the UN Charter, and is timely at this moment in history.

The nomination resonates with our long-shared heritage with the State Party and the people of South Africa. Our own Babu, Mahatma Gandhi, was incarcerated at one of the sites in the serial nomination, the Constitution Hill, formerly the hated Fort Prison, a dungeon of torture and suffering, a site which is now a primary safeguard of human rights and constitutional values.

We are encouraged by the explanations provided by the State Party of South Africa, demonstrating their adherence to the recommendations provided by ICOMOS. India welcomes the State Party, that the State Party has already implemented some of the recommendations and has put in place plans to address the other matters as reflected in the supporting information provided to us and as advised by ICOMOS. India recognises the need for protective measures to align to specific situations.

Having examined the reasons provided by the State Party and considered the outline of their buffering mechanisms, India supports the submission of the State Party on these mechanisms. India is also informed of the repairs, as

recommended by the ICOMOS, to the Sharpeville Police Station Memorial and Cemetery, that they have already begun, and other sites the work has also, is going to progress.

India therefore believes that fundamentally everything is in place to inscribe the Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: The Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites nomination put forward by South Africa at the current 46th session of the Committee. Therefore, we support the change of the decision from referral to inscription.

And last, you know, I perfectly align with the opening remarks given by my senior Distinguished Delegate from Lebanon that, how, if a site is being ascribed on Criterion (vi) alone and this is again, you know, repeating the question to ICOMOS, that in such a scenario how authenticity and integrity is to be measured?

And we also support that the name of Nelson Mandela, the towering figure, should remain a part of the nomination, name of the nomination, because there have been several instances where the names feature in the names of the property. And I can think of Le Corbusier, Victor Horta, Confucius, Antoni Gaudí, Frank Lloyd Wright, and there are many other names which are also on the List. And in the same way this name can also feature on the List.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Rwanda and then we'll take a call depending on the time left.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président.

M. le Président, site de mémoire associé à des conflits récents par excellence, le Site des droits de l'homme, libération et réconciliation : les sites de mémoire de Nelson Mandela témoignent d'une valeur universelle exceptionnelle dans la mesure où la quête des droits de l'homme a trouvé son âme lorsque la Charte de la liberté, élaborée par des représentants de tous les habitants de l'État partis d'origines différentes, a été lancée à Kliptown, un des éléments constitutifs du bien. L'histoire de la libération de l'Afrique du Sud immortalise la lutte contre les violations des droits de l'homme, la conquête de la liberté et la magnanime réconciliation raciale grâce aux efforts tenaces des dirigeants et de la société civile.

Comme il en est défini, les sites associés à des conflits récents sont des sites spécifiques possédant des témoignages matériels en conformité avec les Articles 1 et 2 de la Convention qui se rattachent à leur aspect mémoriel et commémorent les victimes de ces conflits. Ainsi, le site proposé représente pour l'État partie un lieu de réconciliation, de recueillement et de réflexion apaisée, jouant un rôle pédagogique afin de promouvoir la culture de la paix et du dialogue.

M. le Président, l'authenticité du site se manifeste dans sa capacité à diffuser, préserver et ancrer dans la conscience publique les événements et les souvenirs collectifs liés à son histoire et à son symbolisme. La diversité des éléments constitutifs du bien illustre pleinement les associations clés avec le processus de libération et la conquête de la liberté, ainsi que la réalisation des droits de l'homme et la réconciliation en Afrique du Sud.

C'est pour cette raison, M. le Président, que le Rwanda considère que les éléments recommandés pour retrait devraient être inclus en raison de leur profonde réflexion des valeurs des droits de l'homme, de la liberté et de la réconciliation, constitutifs de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du site. Individuellement et collectivement, les quatorze éléments du site expriment avec force les valeurs, le courage et la persévérance qui ont conduits à un triomphe mondialement reconnu contre l'adversité.

Comme cela a été mentionné un peu plus tôt dans la matinée, le bien ne devrait pas être amputé d'une partie ou d'un élément constitutif de sa valeur universelle exceptionnelle.

Le Rwanda soutient donc l'inscription du bien sur le critère (vi) et accueille favorablement la recommandation de l'organe d'évaluation de poursuivre les ateliers avec les parties prenantes concernées, en particulier les communautés environnantes du bien et les autorités locales, afin de les sensibiliser à la nécessité de renforcer la protection de ces éléments.

Je vous remercie, M. le président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. It's 13:00, 1:00 pm now, so I give the floor to the Director of the WHC to make some announcements.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

This is just to inform the Delegates that there will be three side events during the lunch break. The first side event is organised by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, ICCROM and the Arab Centre for World Heritage, Category 2 Centre, and it's entitled "World Heritage Capacity Building in Saudi Arabia". This side event will start at 1:30 pm in Room

MR15. The second side event will start immediately after the break, and is organised by Brazil, IUCN, and UNESCO, and it is entitled "World Heritage, Biodiversity and Climate: mobilising action and finance" and this will take place in Room MR17.

Lastly, the third side event, which is co-organised by ICCROM, ICOMOS India and UNESCO, and entitled "Preserving World Heritage amidst Climate Change: Exploring the Intersection of SDG 13, Climate Vulnerability, and World Heritage Sites in the Asia-Pacific Region". It will take place immediately after the break, and it would be in MR 19.

Thank you, Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, this meeting will reconvene at 3:00 pm.

The meeting rose at 12:59 am. // La séance a été levée à 12h59.

SIXTH DAY
Saturday, 27 July 2024
TWELFTH PLENARY MEETING
3:08 pm – 6:35 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

SIXIÈME JOUR
Samedi 27 juillet 2024
DOUZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h08 – 18h35
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

Can I request delegates to please take your seats?

Dear Committee members, dear colleagues,

Let's resume our session. I hope you had a pleasant lunch break. As explained this morning, the Secretariat has worked on a revised schedule for today.

I would like to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to update the Committee on this aspect. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Good afternoon to all.

After talking to various Delegations concerned, I am pleased to inform you that they have agreed to move all their nomination files scheduled tomorrow morning to this afternoon in order to allow the Committee to possibly consider having a day off tomorrow, as was suggested this morning during the Bureau. And so it will all depend on how we advance.

The order of examination this afternoon will therefore be as follows, Mr Chairperson. So, we will continue with the nomination of South Africa, Human Rights Liberation and Reconciliation; and then we will follow with Malaysia, Niah National Park's Caves Complex; and then Germany, Schwerin Residence Ensemble; and then Italy, Via Appia, *Regina Viarum*; and followed by then the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia nomination file, The Al-Faw Archaeological Area; and we'll continue with the two nominations from Romania, Brâncusi Monumental Ensemble first and then Frontiers of the Roman Empire- Dacia second; and after that we'll continue with the nomination of Iran, Hegmataneh and Historical Centre of Hamedan.

And then, if we finish, we will also, we will examine the 13 minor boundary modification and the 11 provisional statements of OUV to adopt. Once we have exhausted all the files under Item B, it is suggested, Mr Chairperson, to start examining the related Items 8D 8E 8C and to close general Item 8 this afternoon.

Thank you very much.

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

CULTURAL SITES (Ct'd) // SITES CULTURELS (suite)

AFRICA (Ct'd) // AFRIQUE (suite)

8B.11 Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites (South Africa) (Ct'd) // Droits de l'homme, libération et réconciliation : les sites de mémoire de Nelson Mandela (Afrique du Sud) (suite)

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

As explained this morning, we are going to resume the examination of our Agenda Item 8B. As we had indicated before we adjourned for lunch, we will start the session this afternoon with the remaining speakers on the pending nomination of the Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation, South Africa.

I will ask the Secretariat to read the list of speakers. Mr Director, you have the floor, sir.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

So, the list of speakers to take the floor in the following order are: Belgium, Republic of Korea, Italy, Qatar, Japan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Kenya, Argentina, Senegal, Viet Nam and Kazakhstan.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Belgium, to be followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Belgium is of the opinion that the Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites nomination put forward by South Africa is similar to other referrals that we discussed during this session, where the Advisory Body's arguments to refer the nomination back to the State Party relate to issues that all seem relatively easy to solve. While the comments made by ICOMOS seem largely valid, Belgium also feels that fundamentally everything is there to inscribe the proposal today.

It is also a matter of principle, as we believe that inscribing rather than referring back would relieve the overloaded World Heritage system. Of course, such a step can only be discussed when all fundamental conditions are met. This is crucial. So, you've demonstrated convincing comparative analysis. No major concerns about authenticity and integrity. When only small, relatively easy to solve issues remain, Belgium prefers to proceed with inscription immediately, with a recommendation to the relevant State Party or States Parties to pick up those loose ends quickly and report back in the short term.

In this case, we feel there is no doubt about OUV. In fact, it is hard to underestimate the importance of this nomination. For Belgium, the Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites represents a part of our contemporary history that must continue to be told to present and future generations. And that is exactly what an inscription on the World Heritage List can help achieve.

Belgium, therefore, suggests that we look at the smaller issues mentioned in the Advisory Body's recommendations today. Are they of such nature that we should indeed revisit this nomination at a future session, or can we include them as recommendations in the decision to inscribe?

Chair, one of the great benefits of having meetings in person is that we were able to discuss the recommendations with the State Party of South Africa. And based on that discussion, we would like to ask the Advisory Body something about their recommendation that a buffer zone should be provided. Our South African colleagues mentioned that wherever there is no buffer zone, a buffering mechanism will automatically come into effect from the time the properties are inscribed on the World Heritage List. This is so foreseen in South African law. We seem to be reassured and even impressed by this alternative mechanism, but we would like to know how, more about ICOMOS's position on this.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Your request to know about the position of ICOMOS on this has been noted.

I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the Republic of Korea, to be followed by Italy.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites is a heritage that demonstrates the progress from the denial of the human rights and the struggle for liberation, culminating in reconciliation. This nominated property has symbolic significance as the longest sustained struggle involving the global community in modern history.

Republic of Korea acknowledges the evaluation and concerns of ICOMOS regarding the restriction of the name of denominated properly to the specific person, Nelson Mandela, and the recommendation on the component part and buffer zones that can contribute to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value. However, given that Nelson Mandela's name is already in common use by international organizations such as the United Nations Nelson Mandela International Day, the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit, and the Nelson Mandela Decade of Peace,

Republic of Korea supports the use of Nelson Mandela in the name of the nominated property, along with other Committee members.

However, we hope that the management system will be strengthened so that the property of Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites proposed by the State Party can be effectively protected. We hope that the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies and the State Party will maintain the value of the heritage through continuous protection measures achieved through sufficient dialogue.

The Republic of Korea supports the inscription of the nominated property on the World Heritage List, together with other Committee members.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Italy, to be followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Outstanding Universal Value of this site has been fully demonstrated in this dossier. Italy would like to express its sincere appreciation for this important nomination and for the provided detailed dossier prepared with full commitment.

The nominated property, through all its 14 components, testifies the ideas and the ideals of reconciliation together with human rights and liberation, which entirely satisfied Criterion (vi).

Dear colleagues, I believe that for each of us it is an honour today to speak in this session about one of the most influential figures of our time, Nelson Mandela. His legacy extends far beyond the borders of South Africa, touching the hearts and minds of people across the globe. Nelson Mandela's life and work have left an indelible mark on history, and this influence continues to inspire and guide us today. Mandela's unwavering commitment to the fight against apartheid is a testament to his extraordinary character and leadership. The importance of Mandela's influence is recognised at this memorial site, which, through material evidence, helped to ensure that the fundamental values of freedom and reconciliation are not forgotten. Beyond his political achievements, Nelson Mandela's legacy endures years through his advocacy for human rights, education and social justice. From today, we will honour the legacy of Nelson Mandela also through this memory site, which through all its components, will help transmit this message to future generations and inspire and guide them.

Therefore, Italy strongly supports the amendment proposed by Zambia. We share the reflections suggested by the Distinguished Representative of Lebanon about the objective difficulty to adopt the usual evaluation criteria for this specific typology of sites and recommend the inscription of this property in its entirety.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Qatar, to be followed by Japan.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Let me start by highlighting that South Africa's struggle for human rights, liberation and reconciliation holds profound significance not only for South Africans, but for all of us. The sites associated with this struggle are symbolic for the enduring pursuit of peace and justice. The nomination of these sites under Criterion (vi) is particularly fitting, as they are tangibly associated with the ideas of outstanding universal significance as widely recognised. Also, these sites commemorate the participation of South Africans in the quest for liberation and reconciliation, as well as humanity's broader struggle for these values, symbolised by the iconic figure of Nelson Mandela.

Mr Chair, having examined the evaluation report, the State Party's responses to the concerns raised and the presented management plan, I would like to state that we support the inscription of the Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites on the World Heritage List. We also echo the concerns raised by other Distinguished Member State Delegations. And we would like also to support the amendment proposal submitted by the Distinguished Delegation of Zambia.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Japan, followed by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

Japanese Delegation thanks to the State Party as well as ICOMOS for their hard work.

Chair, we all understand this nomination has outstanding importance for all humankind. Now, carefully reading the nomination dossier and related documents, as with other members of the Committee, we also have several comments and a question.

ICOMOS raised four points that constitutes the reason of referral decision: Reducing the component sites from 14 to 11; Conservation of three sites; Buffer zone issue on two sides; And on the issue of protecting surrounding area.

Concerning the condition of several sites, we understand and we believe the State Party, South Africa, also recognised that the situation is not 100% perfect, but the commitment by the State Party and other relevant authorities is quite clear.

About the buffer zone and protection of surrounding area. While we acknowledge the continuous effort by ICOMOS for mutual communication, we still feel that this issue could be solved with the dialogue between Advisory Body and the State Party during the evaluation process. But it will take not so much time to settle down because certain protection mechanism has been already introduced.

On the first point, reducing the component size from 14 to 11. If you allow us, Chair, we would like to hear the State Party's voice concerning this point. Why these three sites are included? How they support the overall OUV of this nomination? We raise this question, because this point is deeply related to the recognition of the value of the site.

Japan finally supports inscription of the site at this session. But we also like to hear State Party's opinion.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Japan.

Once I am going to give the floor to the State Party, I will give the floor to you initially to repeat your questions at that point in time. Thank you so much.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to be followed by Kenya

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Chair, we have reviewed the file of Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites, which was submitted for examination as a serial nomination under Criteria (vi). We have also held discussions with the State Party.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines acknowledges the Outstanding Universal Value of this site, as presented through its 14 components. Indeed, the heart of the modern struggle for human rights, liberation and reconciliation is embedded in South Africa and is recognised universally as such. The State Party of South Africa was faced with the huge task of capturing in a single frame this globally significant movement. They have opted to represent this through the selected collection of places where the most universally known figures in this struggle nurtured the ideas which formed the foundation of the struggle. It is accurate to say that the oppressed of the world look to South Africa in general, and to sites such as these in particular for guidance and inspiration on these three tenets of human existence: human rights, liberation and reconciliation.

The Advisory Bodies have submitted 14 points of recommendation, and the State Party has responded with clarifications, justifications and agreements. We note that the issues of conservation and management are being addressed by the State Party, and that applicable legislation is already in place to address those concerns expressed by the Advisory Bodies.

Above all, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is of the opinion that the Outstanding Universal Value of this site is nevertheless sufficiently demonstrated in all the components submitted. We therefore strongly support the proposed amendment presented by Zambia to inscribe the Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites on the list of World Heritage sites.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Kenya, followed by Argentina.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Okay. Thank you, Chair.

The Delegation of Kenya wishes to thank the State Party of South Africa for nominating the Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation for possible inscription on the World Heritage. The site, Mr Chair, is prominent when we speak about the history of colonialism and the need for societies to liberate themselves.

From the proposed referral, in our own understanding, paragraph 159 of the *Operational Guidelines* and I quote, "the referral means that requested additional information is necessary to determine the Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property". In our opinion, the site was put forward for inscription under Criterion (vi), and collectively these proposed serial nomination demonstrates the events, the ideas that were, the ideas that were core to the liberation struggle in South Africa. And in this case, all the proposed component parts connect the dots in the liberation movement in South Africa, from the University of Fort Hare, which has been proposed to be removed. And it is our considered view that the removal of any of these component parts would indeed interfere with the site's integrity, which is about the wholeness of the property.

In our opinion, integrity and authenticity has already been taken care of from the documentation that we have received from the State Party of South Africa. We have seen documentation of a call for tenders, for repairs of some of the sites which could have been deteriorated.

But Kenya again notes that Criterion (vi) is not necessarily about the built infrastructure, but rather is based on the story of nationalistic movement, the ideas, principle and principles towards the emancipation of black Africans.

Mr Chair, the Delegation of Kenya looks at authenticity and integrity on this property being born by the completeness of the story, right from the hatching of the nationalistic ideas at Fort Hare University, all the way to the signing of the Freedom Charter, and the healing process championed by the Truth and Justice Reconciliation Commission led by Desmond Tutu. The whole story, therefore, is complete, and it is truthfully told. There is a wealth of documentation to affirm that narrative.

Kenya therefore aligns itself to Zambian Delegation's proposed amendment that the site be inscribed under Criterion (vi).

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Kenya.

I now give the floor to Argentina to be followed by Senegal.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

Promoting culture, science and education are not just the mandate of UNESCO. They are our tools. Our ultimate objective is to achieve peace. And there is no more important synonym of peace than the name of Nelson Mandela. You'll have seen his name in places where very important events happened. And this is the case with this site.

South Africa could address some of the changes as recommended by ICOMOS, and we recommend that the entire site be inscribed with all of its components. We need to have Nelson Mandela's name on this. That is what the legacy is. It's synonymous with the liberation struggle.

When I began my career, I had the privilege of discussing peace with Nelson Mandela himself, and it's something that I'll keep with me and carry with me throughout my career. And I'd like to share this with all of you because it changed me forever. And this is why we as a country wish to see Nelson Mandela's name in full, because it's that legacy we're talking about here.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Senegal, followed by Viet Nam.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci M. le Président.

Le Sénégal tient à remercier l'Afrique du Sud pour la proposition du bien Droits de l'homme, libération et réconciliation : les Sites de mémoire Nelson Mandela. Ce site résume les bases de la nation Sud-Africaine qui repose sur le pardon et l'impérieuse nécessité de renforcer un dispositif d'éducation nationale adossé sur des repères tangibles de son histoire. Il s'agit d'un ensemble cohérent et unique par la disposition des espaces et la complémentarité du contenu mémoriel. Il porte la trace de la trame de l'histoire de ce pays qui a administré au monde une des plus grandes leçons de vie, c'est-à-dire le pardon. C'est ce que représente cet ensemble. En Afrique quand une figure importante disparaissait, elle était accompagnée des symboles matériels de son existence. C'est encore le cas dans certaines contrées de l'Afrique. Leur unité spirituelle était une condition du repos de leur âme. Le monde spirituel et le monde matériel sont ainsi appelés à ne faire qu'un, M. le Président. L'État partie ne peut amputer une partie de cet ensemble sans compromettre la mémoire vivante qui s'attache à ces lieux par leur unité et le lien symbolique ombilical qui les lie à notre illustre Mandela.

M. le Président, quelqu'un a dit hier, je pense que c'est le Délégué de l'Argentine qui m'a précédé, que notre Convention est victime de son succès. Et nous pensons, nous, que la question liée à l'appropriation de la valeur universelle, exceptionnelle et riche d'une diversité qui reflète l'âme de l'Afrique du Sud.

Voilà pourquoi, tout en félicitant les organes consultatifs pour le remarquable travail accompli, nous les invitons à davantage considérer les rapports des communautés soumis à leur évaluation. Car la valeur universelle exceptionnelle est un facteur d'unité des communautés que nous représentons.

Pour cette raison, monsieur le Président, le Sénégal recommande l'inscription du bien dans son ensemble tel que demandé par l'État partie.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Viet Nam, followed by Kazakhstan.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Viet Nam wishes to thank the State Party of South Africa for submitting Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites, which is of great importance. The property not only encapsulates the legacy of the South African liberation struggle of the 20th century, but also commemorates and celebrates the contribution of the struggle to human rights in a global context.

The 14 serial nominations demonstrate the events, ideas and belief systems at the centre of liberation struggle in South Africa, which gave rise to exceptional African leaders such as Nelson Mandela. And even now, Nelson Mandela legacies continue to inspire humanity to adopt reconciliation. And the Outstanding Universal Values have been clearly demonstrated in the dossier. And we thank the evaluation report by ICOMOS experts. And we also welcome the State Party for taking appropriate measures as recommended by ICOMOS as well.

And with this in mind, Viet Nam fully supports the inscription of Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites on the World Heritage List in its entirety, and we wish to support the amendment proposed by the Distinguished Delegate of Zambia.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

I thank you.

I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Kazakhstan, followed by Ukraine.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Distinguished Chair, honourable members of the World Heritage Committee.

Kazakhstan is glad to join fellow members of this Committee in support of the amendments proposed by the Distinguished Delegate of Zambia to inscribe the Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites on the World Heritage List. The legacy of Nelson Mandela Madiba is not just a cornerstone of South African history, but a symbol of hope and resilience for the entire humanity. The nomination encompasses key sites that embody the spirit of human rights, the fight for liberation and the enduring pursuit of reconciliation. Its inscription on under Criterion (vi) would highlight the exceptional significance of these sites, as they symbolize the triumph of human rights and reconciliation over systemic oppression and injustice.

Such a remarkable property on the World Heritage List will not only honour the legacy of Madiba and the countless individuals who fought for freedom along with him, but also serve as a powerful reminder of the struggle for human rights and justice.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

I thank you. I now give the floor to the distinguished Representative of Ukraine.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

Human rights lie in the core of the values of the international community. This serial nomination takes an unusual approach to the matters of the elevation of human rights and the highest social value, perceiving it through the liberation struggle that took place in South Africa. Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites altogether demonstrate the interconnectedness of the idea of human rights with the liberation processes and reconciliation after the fall of the oppression regime.

The complexity of the value of the nomination is further proved by its linkage to the Road to Independence African Liberation Heritage Programme, which tells a very important story of the 20th century history of Africa. We believe that the nomination bears a huge potential to significantly contribute to the preservation of the knowledge regarding the history of human rights movements in global context. It showcases South Africa's pioneering approach to reconciliation as a basis of building the nation.

Given the significance of the nomination as such, we would see necessary to emphasise the need for the State Party to further enhance the level of protective measures and provide the official management structure and conservation plans along the lines with the ICOMOS recommendation. To conclude we endorse this nomination and will be happy to support it.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Now we have reached the end of the 19 Committee members that had requested the floor.

I would now like to request ICOMOS to respond to the questions raised. ICOMOS you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Okay. Thank you, Chair.

And thank you to all the Committee members who spoke on this important and inspiring nomination. I think we had several questions directly addressed to ICOMOS. I'll try and respond to those only.

The first was a question asked of us from the Distinguished Delegate from Lebanon, but other people spoke on this issue as well, about our views about including Nelson Mandela's name in the name of the property. This has been a matter of discussion with the State Party throughout the evaluation process. ICOMOS does not, of course, question at all the importance, influence and global esteem held for President Mandela. ICOMOS also acknowledges the connections between Nelson Mandela's life and achievements, and a number of the nominated component parts. As several Committee members have noted, there has been a caution exercised by the World Heritage Committee from the very beginning to focus on the values of properties rather than the lives of famous people. In this case, a key issue is that the century of struggle, liberation and reconciliation that is the focus of this nomination was achieved through the efforts and sacrifices of many leaders, some of whom came before Nelson Mandela and others who worked alongside him. ICOMOS considers that it is important for this breadth to be recognised. However, ICOMOS is also aware of the State Party's firm desire to keep the name as it is, and has respected this view, which has now also been expressed by some Committee members.

A second question asked by Lebanon and also echoed I think in a question from India, concerned Criterion (vi) and the requirements of authenticity and integrity. These are not the first properties to be inscribed in the World Heritage List on Criterion (vi) alone. There have been others, as I'm sure everyone well remembers. Each of them was inscribed according to the *Operational Guidelines* that were in place at the time of their inscription, including the requirements for authenticity and integrity, the reflection that led to the adoption of the Guiding Principles concerning Sites of Memory of Recent Conflict, which was adopted at the World Heritage Committee's Extraordinary Session in 2023, was intended to introduce the possibilities for including sites of memory within the existing framework of the Convention. According to those Guiding Principles, point B says in part that the nomination text will include the assessment of the authenticity of the physical site and of the link to the associated memories. It also requires States Parties to ensure factual accuracy as part of the requirements for authenticity. It should be briefly noted here, because I'm sure our colleagues from South Africa will quickly remind us all, if I do not, that this nomination was submitted prior to the adoption of the Guiding Principles for Sites of Memory, adopted in January 2023, and that the Guiding Principles were not to be applied to it. Despite this, the State Party's nomination is closely aligned to its key points in the opinion of ICOMOS. In future, nominations of sites of recent memory are required to identify clear attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, which South Africa has also done, in this case. The authenticity and

integrity to be applied in future nominations according to the Guiding Principles, are in relation to the attributes identified in relation to the Outstanding Universal Value of each individual property and are evaluated case by case. These can be tangible and intangible and must be truthfully presented. The key lesson of the Nara Document was to ensure that authenticity is evaluated according to the values that are claimed, and we do not have a standardized or template approach to the way in which this is considered.

For integrity of this nomination, there were three problems. The first is that the inclusion of three of the nominated component parts did not seem well justified in relation to the thematic framing of the Outstanding Universal Value, which I have already explained and will not take further of your time about that now. The second issue was that for three other component parts, or four if the Z.K. Matthew's House is to be included today, there is currently a very poor state of conservation.

In relation to Zambia's query. We have had constructive discussions with the State Party here in Delhi, and we welcome their advice that new work has commenced to address the condition of the components that ICOMOS found needed to have an improved state of conservation before they were inscribed. However, as you all well understand, it is not possible for us to assess this information at this stage.

Finally, the last issue for integrity, which was also then raised after lunch by Belgium, relates to the recommendations for providing and strengthening the buffer zone, particularly those in urban settings that are subject to dynamic and needed processes of revitalisation. The wider settings of these component parts are fragile and need an extra layer of protection in our view. The State Party has advised ICOMOS that a process of reflection is underway to further consider the best ways of providing adequate buffering mechanisms. ICOMOS welcomes this advice and is able to assist and advise the State Party as this process advances if needed.

Given the comments made by the Committee members with the intention to inscribe all 14 component parts, ICOMOS suggests that the overarching interpretation strategy and its implementation will be an important factor for strengthening the integrity. The crucial importance of interpretation is also recognised in the Committee's Guiding Principles, and is well recognised by the State Party of South Africa for this case.

And finally, Lebanon asked a question about why we had recommended a heritage impact assessment for the component part of Liliesleaf. In relation to this recommendation for a heritage impact assessment for a possible hotel development near this component part, we were advised of this possibility by the State Party during the course of the evaluation. As far as we are aware, its location has not yet been finalised. And so, no, we do not currently have any maps. We have been reassured by the State Party that it will be located outside the buffer zone. ICOMOS has been advised by the State Party that HIA or heritage impact assessment processes are part of the national laws, making sure that there are no adverse impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value from this future development is therefore the purpose of our recommendation.

I think that answers all the questions addressed to ICOMOS, Mr Chair.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

Having heard ICOMOS, I think we can already say that we commend the Advisory Body and the State Party of South Africa for the continuing dialogue, and we appreciate the offer of ICOMOS to continue this dialogue, to resolve the open issue dealing with buffer zones or buffering mechanisms.

We are also convinced right now that we should inscribe the site today. We feel it would be more than fitting and even symbolic that the site would be inscribed in India.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Belgium, for the beautiful sentence. Your last sentence was beautiful, that it would be all the more fitting if the site were inscribed in India. And we thank you for that beautiful sentence, Belgium.

I now give the floor to Lebanon.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you. No. It's a mistake.

The Chairperson:

Okay.

India, would you like to reply to that beautiful sentence? And about? This is such an important site and of course, South Africa and Mahatma Gandhi. When Mahatma Gandhi was a young man, he had spent a considerable amount of time in South Africa. So, of course, there is a very deep connect. India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair. We echo your sentiments. Yes, indeed. It's very poignant and very beautiful.

We wouldn't want to stretch the discussion any further, but we listened to the remarks, or the detailed justification given by ICOMOS. A couple of things, which I thought I'll just put it on, you know, for on record. One is that we realize that as far as the name to be included in the, you know, the name of a personality to be included in the name of the property. We have, we still have a feeling that this approach is actually not consistent, because in certain instances ICOMOS has included the name, but in certain instances it was almost categorical not to include the name. So, there is that, there is that dichotomy I think, that we need to look into.

And second is, yes, we agree that that any fulfilment of any criteria or criterion is based on attributes. And we have to demonstrate the authenticity and integrity, you know, based on those, those attributes. Only thing is that for, while it is easily discernible in case of tangible attributes, but in case of intangible, because herein the values are, almost all values are intangible. Therein, of course, there are certain difficulties. But as I said, I rest our case here. This is a beautiful nomination. It should be inscribed.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

There were a couple of questions for the State Party, and had said Japan, at that point in time, I think Zambia had asked the State Party, as well as Japan. Japan, could you please rephrase your couple of questions?

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to hear the State Party's opinion about the reducing the component parts from 14 to 11. More precisely, why these three sides are included or important, how they support the overall, how they support the overall OUV of this nomination.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And then Zambia had asked the State Party about.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

The consensus.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Yes.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the State Party of South Africa to please respond to these questions. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

The reason why there are 14 components is for completeness in respect of justifying the contribution of each component to human rights, liberation and reconciliation, and also in further enhancing the Outstanding Universal Value of the site. We believe as a State Party that removal of any of the components will not contribute to completeness in respect of the listing of this particular site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. That is the response of the State Party.

If there are no more questions and comments, I would now like to invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.11**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decisions proposed.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

As presented during the discussions, we did indeed receive an amendment submitted by Zambia regarding the Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites. This amendment was submitted by Zambia, co-written by Rwanda, Kenya, Senegal and Qatar, and received an impressive amount of support, totalling 19 countries. I will name them: Lebanon, Greece, Jamaica, India, Japan, Mexico, Belgium, Republic of Korea, Italy, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Argentina, Viet Nam and Kazakhstan.

The amendment goes as follows. Part 2, deletes the referral for "Inscribes Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites, South Africa, on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criterion (vi)". Further deletes the previous paras a), b), c), and d).

New para 3, "Takes note of the following provisional Statement of Outstanding Universal Value" and a brief synthesis is available in English language.

New para 4, "Notes the completion of repairs at the Sharpeville Massacre Site: Police Station (003) and progress made towards the repairs and conservation at Walter Sisulu Square (002) and the Great Place at Mqhekezweni (014)".

Next, para "Notes the State Party's existing buffering mechanisms as provided for in the relevant legislation, and requests that the State Party undertake workshops with stakeholders, including surrounding communities and local authorities, on these mechanisms, including heritage areas, to further strengthen their protection".

Old para 3 becomes para 6 with the recommendations. "Recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following". First recommendation, number a), deletes the mention "and the provision of financial and technical resources".

You have the consecutive deletion of the word "nominated" from paras c) to j), resulting in an inscription and not a referral anymore.

Sub-para i), "Linking interpretation of the component parts with the continuing development of the Liberation Heritage Route, Resistance and Liberation Heritage Route programme" and not "initiative".

Para 7, "Requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre by 1st of December 2025, a report on the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations for review by the World Heritage Committee at its 48th session".

I thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Para 1. There is no.

Yes. Bulgaria. Sorry, we didn't see that. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

After listening to the Committee members and the response of the evaluation body, we would like to add Bulgaria's name in the list of co-authors.

Thank you. Chair.

The Chairperson:

Lebanon and then Türkiye.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

No. Excuse me, Chair, I just wanted to comment on para 6, when we arrive to para 6.

The Chairperson:

So, noted.

Türkiye, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We would also like to add our name to the amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Rapporteur, could you let us know how many countries are there, that have, whose names appear on the screen? So please let us know the number of countries whose names appear on the screen.

The Rapporteur:

Mr Chair, we have reached the total number of Committee members, 21 countries have supported the amendments for inscribing the Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Is there any objection to paragraph 2? Obviously not, because everyone has added their name. We go next down.

Similar for para 3. Copy paste all the names from top para 2 and paste it in para 3. And we go down.

Same thing would be for para, all the remaining paras.

No objection to para 5.

We go to para 6, wherein Lebanon had expressed a desire to take the floor. You have it, sir.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Excuse me, Chair, we have some remarks on paragraph 6. On point a), for example, I don't know why we remove "and the provision of financial and technical resources". I think this is part of conservation. I mean, there is no harm to say that "further developing the Integrated Conservation Plan, etc., and the provision of financial and technical resources", there is no harm in doing this.

Then at the end we would like to add a paragraph saying, we would add, first of all, to add a paragraph saying, "ensure adequate repairs and conservation of property components and more particularly those which integrity is fragile". This could be point h) or something of this sort. "Ensure adequate repairs and conservation for all properties, components and more particularly those which integrity is fragile". That's all.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Mr Rapporteur, can you capture what the Lebanese Delegate has expressed?

The Rapporteur:

Ensure adequate repairs and conservation for all property components and more particularly for those. Is it where, which or whose integrity is fragile, please?

Thank you.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

I don't know. Ask somebody whose English is the mother language.

The Rapporteur:

I guess "where" is okay. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

All right. Is there any objection to the Lebanese suggestion? I don't see any objections.

We go down, para 7. I don't think there is any objection to this either.

Is there any objection for the adoption of the entire decision as a whole? I see no objections.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.11** adopted as amended. [gave!] [applause]

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate South Africa on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property. And I will do that in the Zulu language. [speaks in Zulu] [applause].

I'll give you some time for your celebrations and photos, and then we'll go to the next agenda item.

The Observer Delegation of South Africa:

I have to speak.

The Chairperson:

Sorry. Yes, I forgot. You know, I was so impressed by my Zulu that I forgot everything else. So, South Africa, you have the floor for up to a four-minute statement.

The Observer Delegation of South Africa:

[speaks in Zulu], Mr Chairperson,

Since I'm taking the floor as the leader of the Delegation of the State Party of South Africa, let me allow. Let me also thank the Government and the people of incredible India for the wonderful reception and warm hospitality we are experiencing in this beautiful metropolis of New Delhi. [applause]

It is with great humility, profound gratitude and unreserved appreciation to the World Committee of this World Committee members of this 46th session for the support and confidence in the people of South Africa with the inscription of Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites to safeguard and protect its Outstanding Universal Value.

As Nelson Mandela once said, "it looks impossible until it's done". However, a journey of a thousand miles begins with small steps. It is today, on the cusp of 30 years of democracy in South Africa, 27 years after South Africa became a member of the World Heritage Convention, and 21 years after the 33rd General Conference of UNESCO, where South Africa's contribution on the Roads of Independence African Liberation Heritage Programme was recognised, that we sit here with this inscription.

It is therefore not only an important contribution to placing the struggle, heritage and culture at the centre of the global ideal for sustainable development, but also to the vision of 2063 of the Africa we want. The South African liberation struggle was not only an inspiration for a just world, it also became a struggle on all humanity and also produced exceptional African leaders. The 1994 Historic Breakthrough was a victory for all humanity and an opportunity for never again.

Excellencies,

This inscription is opportune and historic as it takes place a week after the celebration of Nelson Mandela International Day on the 18th of July, in line with the UN General Assembly Resolution of 2009 to recognize his contribution to the struggle of democracy internationally and the promotion of peace throughout the world. We have therefore chosen this name to symbolize his legacy for human rights, liberation and reconciliation.

This serial property, with 14 components, is located in four of our nine provinces and seven municipalities across the country that have marks of the footsteps of Nelson Mandela, and it demonstrates the world events, ideas and belief systems that were once at the core of the liberation struggle of South Africa.

The inscription follows that on the footsteps of Argentina, Rwanda, Belgium and France at the 45th session. South Africa therefore deeply appreciates the constructive engagement with ICOMOS, which has paved the way for the successful inscription, and we will continue to meticulously preserve the integrity and authenticity of these sites, supported by international expertise through the African World Heritage Fund, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. Our national heritage legislation and comprehensive management frameworks will ensure these sites are protected for future generations. The journey of this inscription has involved a number of numerous stakeholders, and we would like to recognize specifically the Africa Group, the AWHF, and many contributors to the nomination dossier. We register our special appreciation to the team that was drafting this and the stakeholders. And, on behalf of my Delegation, I invite you to join us for our side event on Monday at 6:30.

And in conclusion, this inscription invites us each to be the new generation of leaders in our respective countries and the world. As Nelson Mandela said, "it is still in our hands to fight poverty, protect human rights, freedom and reconciliation". May the sun never set on so glorious a human effort. [speaks in a language of South Africa]. These are the many, one of the 12 languages of South Africa.

Namaste. [speaks in a different language] **Amandla.** [applause]

The Chairperson:

I love to hear "Namaste" from a South African. It sounds so wonderful.

I now give the floor to the two Committee members who have raised their plates. Rwanda followed by Zambia.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair.

On behalf of the people and Government of Rwanda, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Government of South Africa for the inscription of the Human Rights, Liberation and Reconciliation: Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites on the World Heritage List. This momentous achievement is a testament of the enduring legacy of the people of South Africa extraordinary contribution to justice, equality and freedom.

Similarly to our memorial site of the genocide from Rwanda, the consideration of this nomination filed by the Committee was also delayed by the moratorium on the validation of sites of memory associated with recent conflicts, only lifted last year. We could not be more delighted to witness today the inscription of this serial nomination, which demonstrates the events, ideas and belief system that were at the core of the liberation struggle in South Africa, and which occurred a century afterwards, continues to inspire humanity to engage in peace building and reconciliation process.

The development of this serial of 14 properties has been a long and complex endeavour for South Africa. The State Party has been working on this nomination since its inscription on the country's Tentative List in 2009. We therefore would like to commend South Africa for its determination in developing and successfully submitting a complete and technically sound nomination file.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to the African World Heritage Fund. For all the technical support provided in the development of this nomination file, with the potential to add substantial value to the incipient category of sites of memory in Africa. This, Mr Chairperson, constitutes a great contribution not only towards improving the representation of Africa on the World Heritage List, but to but also to fill the existing gaps concerning the representation of sites of great significance for the African people. But its Outstanding Universal Value is not recognised by the international community.

We celebrate with you, South Africa and honour this recognition of your rich cultural heritage. May this site continue to inspire future generations and strengthen the bonds of unity, human rights and reconciliation.

Thank you so much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Zambia, followed by India.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

This is a great day, not just for the World Heritage Committee, but for Zambia, in the sense that South Africa and the rest of southern Africa, they owe their liberation to Zambia. We were home of all these struggles.

For your own information, Nelson Mandela, upon release from Robben Island, that is a prison, he first flew to Zambia aboard Zambian Airways because of the good relationship that he enjoyed with our founding father, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, who we are also celebrating his 100 years after his birth this year. And again, this year, we are also celebrating 60 years of independence and bilateral relations with the Republic of India. And Mahatma Gandhi is also a name that you cannot erase on the history of, that is, Africa. India. Indira Gandhi is also not a name that you can erase from the history of Africa. So, this inscription is not just for the World Heritage community. It is for Zambia. It is for southern Africa. It is for Africa, and it is for the world.

Amanda. [applause]

The Chairperson:

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair, for giving India the floor.

We would like to congratulate South Africa for inscription of the property.

The nomination with respect to Nelson Mandela heritage sites covers the Constitutional Hill site as well. In the information dossier, it is mentioned that Mahatma Gandhi was also briefly imprisoned at the Constitutional Hill. We

currently have a museum commemorating Mahatma Gandhi's stay there and also a bust of Mahatma Gandhi. One other site which is included in this section is a launch Ohlange site, associated with John Langalibalele Dube, who was a contemporary of Mahatma Gandhi and had linkages with him. John Langalibalele Dube was the founder of the ANC and like Mahatma Gandhi, published a newspaper. This site is very near to Phoenix Ashram of Mahatma Gandhi. Collectively, this proposed, this serial nomination demonstrates the events and ideas that were at the core of the liberation struggle in South Africa, and which continues to inspire humanity to embrace reconciliation.

We once again congratulate, congratulate South Africa on inscription of this property.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

ASIA-PACIFIC (Ct'd) // ASIE-PACIFIQUE (suite)

8B.19 The Archaeological Heritage of Niah National Park's Caves Complex (Malaysia) // Le patrimoine archéologique de l'ensemble des grottes du parc national de Niah (Malaisie)

The Chairperson:

We now go to the next agenda item.

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Archaeological Heritage of Niah National Park's Caves Complex, Malaysia.

But, ICOMOS, I think I'll let the celebrations continue for one more minute.

ICOMOS:

This is the Presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Archaeological Heritage of the Niah National Park's Caves.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

May I invite Committee members to take their seats, please? Just to remind that there is a space outside for celebrations. Thank you very much. We will continue with the examination of the next nomination dossier. I invite Committee members to take their seats. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

ICOMOS, please continue.

ICOMOS:

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Archaeological Heritage of Niah National Park's Caves Complex, Malaysia. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 120 of the English version, and page 120 of the French version. Next slide.

The Archaeological Heritage of Niah National Park's Caves Complex is located near the west coast of Borneo Island and the four-kilometre-wide limestone massif at the centre of Niah National Park. This system of colossal, interconnected caverns and numerous caves contains the longest known record for human interaction with rainforests, covering at least 50,000 years. Next slide.

The original area of the nominated property, as proposed in the nomination dossier and before changes were made, was 3,690 hectares and with a buffer zone of 163 hectares. The nominated property comprises 30 archaeological sites in the park, including excavated archaeological sites, the caves complex at the Bukit Bekajang Massif consists of four caves, namely the Trader's Cave, the Niah Great Cave, the Moon Cave (Gan Kira), and the Painted Cave (Kain Hitam). Next slide.

The Niah Caves Complex contains archaeological evidence that represents an exceptional testimony of the cultural traditions of two disconnected populations who existed from the Pleistocene to the mid-Holocene, exhibiting the rainforest lifestyle, forest management systems, and elaborate funerary practices of prehistoric humans. It contributes significantly to the existing knowledge of human development, adaptation and dispersal in Southeast Asia and in a global context.

The Niah Caves complex is an outstanding example of very early human settlement and land use in the southern Asian region, and for human interaction with a changing environment during prehistoric times.

The findings of archaeological excavations and research at the Trader's Cave could result in substantial grounds for revisiting the southern dispersal route theory and the human migration out of Africa in general. Archaeological excavations have been conducted at the West Mouth and the Trader's Cave. The major excavations were conducted from 1954 to 1967. Future planned research are considered. Next slide.

ICOMOS considered that logic behind comparative is sound, and that the selection of the sites to be compared is adequate within the geo-cultural region. Improvement could have been made to better position the nominated property in its global context by comparing additional important sites outside Southeast Asia.

Criteria (iii) and (v) have been demonstrated, but criterion (vi) has not been met. Next slide.

Conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met. The nominated property is of adequate size and contains all the attributes necessary to convey its Outstanding Universal Value, including the entire rock massif and its complex of caves within which the excavated sites, rock paintings and boat shaped coffins are located, as well as the sites identified as having archaeological potential.

The physical fabric and significant features of the nominated property are in good condition, and the negative factors affecting the nominated property are under control.

The geomorphological features of the massif and caves have not changed significantly, despite the slow dissolution of the limestone over time as a result of natural processes. The excavated sites are well preserved without backfill or other forms of later alterations, testifying to their authentic state at the time of their excavation. Although the locations of the objects extracted from these sites have been changed, these archaeological findings have been appropriately conserved, stored and displayed in museums. The rock paintings are in their original locations without any interventions. Next slide.

The nominated property is state-owned and is legally protected at the national and state levels. The Sarawak Forestry Corporation and the Sarawak Museum Department are the main governmental institutions responsible for implementing the legislative provisions. The buffer zone and a one-kilometre radius zone from the nominated property boundaries provide additional layer of protection.

The management system is collaborative and coordinated between the main stakeholders, with the Sarawak Forestry Corporation taking the lead, while the Sarawak Museum Department is responsible for the conservation of the cultural heritage. The local communities are involved in the management of the site in numerous ways.

The Integrated Conservation Management Plan frames management activities for the archaeological heritage of Niah National Park's Caves Complex. Long-term attention should be given to secure sustainable funding and expertise of the staff working on site. Conservation of rock painting and the growth of algal should also be closely monitored. Next slide.

Here is a summary of ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. Next slide.

ICOMOS recommends that the Archaeological Heritage of Niah National Park's Caves Complex, Malaysia, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii) and (v). ICOMOS has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS.

Before we proceed, I would like to make an announcement. There were a lot of requests to give you the Sunday free. It was said that I have been keeping you here from morning to night, morning to night, and you have not been able to go shopping. You have not been able to even see the exhibitions. And many people are so tired. But we have agenda items listed for Sunday. So, if you want to have the Sunday free, then I'll have to push the agenda items and change the gear, and from, and become like a Ferrari a little bit. So, we'll keep the congratulations less, so only one State Party should take the floor. The State Party to which whom the nomination concerns. And if we can keep our interventions to a minimum, then we can move ahead. Okay.

I want to know if there are any comments concerning this nomination after the ICOMOS presentation.

Ukraine, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Research on the matter of the various stages in the development of humanity is an ongoing process for several centuries now that calls together their professionals from around the world. The complexity of the records and evidences the scholars and scientists would be able to gather directly impact the accuracy of the global knowledge about our origins. The multitude of the rock paintings, archaeological sites and elements of the burial traditions that are located within the borders of the nominated property, creates a vivid illustration for the evolution of the human settlements in the region during the Palaeolithic, Neolithic and metal ages.

Ukraine cordially recognizes the importance of the establishment of a proper protection framework for the sites bearing the indispensable knowledge about the prehistoric times, especially in the light of our own site from the Tentative List, Kamyana Mohyla, that also testifies about the origins of human civilization. The novelty that the Niah Complex brings in comparison with other sites already in the World Heritage List is the evidence of the human adaptation in the tropical rainforest environment and, moreover, the exceptional contribution to the universal debate over the early dispersal of ancient humans, not only regionally but also globally.

We perceive the inscription of the Niah National Park's Caves Complex at a crucial and consistent step for the Committee that follows the general policy of preserving and protecting sites that enrich our knowledge about the, preserve the memory of the early stages of the development of human society.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I give the floor to India.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

India congratulates Malaysia on the inscription of the Niah Caves Complex.

The Niah Caves Complex is an extraordinary site that has significantly advanced our understanding of human development, adaptation and dispersal in Southeast Asia. The site's long history of human interaction with the rainforest and the climatic evolution is of global significance. The dossier effectively demonstrates the site's Outstanding Universal Value, meeting the criteria (iii) and (v) and attesting to its integrity and authenticity.

We also commend the strong state of conservation of the Niah Caves Complex, which has benefited from the continuous legal protection and effective management since the early days of its archaeological discovery. The active participation of local communities in the site's management is particularly commendable.

Although we acknowledge that the ongoing need for improvements, particularly in securing adequate funding and enhancing in-house expertise, India appreciates the efforts detailed in the Integrated Conservation Management Plan to address the challenges posed by increased tourism, fading rock paintings and algal growth on excavated sites. These proactive measures, supported by ongoing research and monitoring, are crucial for site's preservation.

The inscription of the Archaeological Heritage of Niah National Park's Caves Complex is a significant achievement for Malaysia, and we look forward to witnessing the continued preservation and study of this remarkable site.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

It's a pleasant change to see a new face after seeing the legendary face of Janhwi Sharma, who has been the face of India's 1972 representation since the past 12 or 15 years. So, it's nice to see young faces. I get a sense as if the mother bird, Janhwi Sharma, is training the baby birds to take forward. Thank you.

If nobody, if no further States Parties want to take the floor, I will ask the Rapporteur.

I will invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.19**. But before doing so, I'll ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments to the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le projet de décision pour l'inscription du Patrimoine archéologique de l'ensemble des grottes du Parc national de Niah en Malaisie.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Are there any comments? There are no comments.

Is there any objection for the adoption of the draft decision as a whole? I see no objection.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.19** adopted. [gavel] [applause]

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate Malaysia on the behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of their property. And I will speak a line in the Malay language. Please bear with me. *[speaks in Malay]*

Thank you.

Malaysia, you have the floor to make a statement up to four minutes.

The Observer Delegation of Malaysia:

[first speaker] [speaks in Malay] Your Excellency, Chairman,

Thank you for this opportunity. All the necessary protocols observed. For the sake of brevity, on behalf of the Government of Malaysia and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, I wish to thank the following: The World Heritage Committee, the Advisory Body, the Secretariat of the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and the host, the Government of India, incredible India and how incredible it is. Thank you for all the excellent work in ensuring this meeting runs smoothly.

This is a significant decision for Malaysia as it is the fifth inscription of heritage site in Malaysia after the ratification of the Convention in 1988.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Niah National Park and its Cave Complex provide an outstanding example of the complex prehistoric adaptation and manipulation of the tropical rainforest environment towards the understanding of human evolution, adaptation and dispersal in both the mainland and island of the Southeast Asia geo-cultural regions.

We are delighted to invite all Member States to Malaysia to explore Niah National Park in Sarawak, as well as our other heritage sites. Malaysia will be hosting the Visit Malaysia Year in 2026, and we warmly welcome all our friends to come and discover the beauty of our nation.

Malaysia is committed to work closely with all Member States in the protection of world cultural and natural heritage.

Your Excellency Chair, please allow me to invite the Honourable Datuk Hj Len Talif Salleh, Deputy Minister for Urban Planning, Land Administration and Environment of Sarawak, to say a few words.

[second speaker] Chair, *Namaste*. Good afternoon.

Being the first time given the floor to speak, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of India for the remarkable hospitality and excellent hosting of the 46th session of World Heritage Committee. A special thanks also goes to the Excellency Chairperson for your exemplary leadership in conducting the meeting. Your expertise and guidance have been invaluable and instrumental for the smooth conduct of this meeting.

27th July 2024 is a significant historic and momentous day for the State of Sarawak, Malaysia and marks the second World Heritage site in Sarawak, of which the first one is Gunung Mulu National Park, which was inscribed in the year 2000, 24 years ago. With this recognition, it is a start of a long journey of our commitment, responsibility and shared value. We will be jealously safeguarding the Outstanding Universal Value of Niah National Park Complex, as prescribed, for the present and future generations to embrace. We have invested a lot of time to come to this inscription with a strong mandate from the Right Honourable Premier of the State of Sarawak, Abang Johari, and his cabinet team.

Additionally, on behalf of the State Government of Sarawak, I would like to thank the Ministry of Tourism and Arts and Culture, Department of National Heritage, Permanent Delegation of Malaysia to UNESCO in Paris and the local communities in Niah, for making this journey possible. In the interest of time, I cannot possibly mention all the names, but nevertheless their contribution did not go unnoticed. Finally, I would like to thank ICOMOS for their professionalism and objectivity and the World Heritage Committee for supporting our nomination.

With this remark, Your Excellency, Chair, I conclude. *[speaks in Malay]* Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

To save time, we will now move on to the next item. The celebrations can take place outside if you require.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (Ct'd) // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD (suite)

8B.21 Schwerin Residence Ensemble (Germany) // Ensemble de la résidence de Schwerin (Allemagne)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Schwerin Residence Ensemble, Germany.

But before that, I give the floor to Mr Balsamo. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

We received a notification of factual error for the evaluation of the Schwerin Residence Ensemble nomination. And this is to be found on page 12 of both the English and French version of INF.8B.4. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Schwerin Residence Ensemble, Germany. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 143 of the English version, and page 173 of the French version. In this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors. Next slide.

The Schwerin Residence Ensemble comprises buildings, parks, lakes, gardens and ponds constructed or designed during the 19th century in the heart of the capital of the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. It is specially staged with the centrepiece of the Ensemble's landscape being the Palace Residence, situated on an island in Lake Schwerin, and with remaining buildings comprising cultural, sacred, administrative and military buildings and infrastructure and residences of staff and officials. This architectural and landscape ensemble reflects the historicist spirit of the time, ranging from neo-renaissance to neo-baroque and neo-classical, and draws on the regional Johann Albrecht style, a regional variation of Italian Renaissance. Next slide.

The nominated property contains a total of 38 elements, with the Residence Palace as its central figure. The palace has two main axes. One linking to the Old Garden Square, around which stand an ensemble of prestigious buildings like the museum, the Court Theatre, the Old Manor, the Governmental Administration Buildings 1 and 2, and the State Archives. The other axis links to its park, on whose edge stands the Artillery Barracks, the Officers Mess, and Grand Ducal Hunters Lodge. The other elements are located in the old city centre, near the two main poles of the composition. Next slide.

The property is an outstanding example of an architectural and landscape ensemble that, within the context of the emergence and development of the historicist style in Europe, particularly in the German kingdoms and principalities in the 19th century. The character of the ensemble is well preserved. It contains a substantial use of a historicist architectural style buildings that contribute strongly to its cultural identity and remarkable landscaping, in which the architecture and gardens are reflected in the water. It illustrates the importance and architecture of urban planning as a vehicle to legitimize the power and brilliance of monarchic power. This is particularly evident in the outstanding staging of the Residence Palace and the rest of the ensemble in its lakeside landscape, and the constant references to European national and regional architectural traditions. Next slide.

The comparative analysis and additional information provided by the State Party highlights that the architectural and landscape elements of the Schwerin Residence Ensemble exemplify the emergence and development of the historicist style in Europe during the 19th century. This style is enriched by the regional Johann Albrecht style, which was inspired by the Italian Renaissance. ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for the World Heritage List.

While the nominated property meets criterion (iv), it does not fulfil criterion (iii) because it does not sufficiently demonstrate how the property embodies the concept of the monarchy, or contributes significantly to understanding the monarchy as a political or socio-cultural system. Next slide.

The conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met. Well-preserved elements represent the functions and activities of a 19th century monarchic residence in a lakeside landscape. Despite alterations in occupancy, use and adaptations that affect authenticity to varying degrees, the Ensemble's fundamental attributes, including forms, materials, and relationships with its landscape setting, have been largely preserved.

During the course of the evaluation procedure, exchanges between ICOMOS and the State Party resulted in changes to the boundaries of the nominated property and the buffer zone. The boundaries of the nominated property have been revised in February 2024 to include a significant portion of both Schwerin Lake and Fauler Lake, as well as the Pfaffenteich. The buffer zone has been expanded to the south, east and northwest to take into consideration control over the landscape qualities of the site. Next slide.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection and management of the nominated property are adequate. The management plan that has been prepared will need to be periodically assessed and updated. The World Heritage Coordination Office is a crucial element to ensure the coordination and effectiveness of the management of the nominated property. A rigorous strategy for the conservation of the buildings, the interior layouts of those open to the public and for the management of tourist flows inside the nominated property is essential to ensure the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of Schwerin.

The City of Schwerin is actively addressing urban development pressures through its strategic plan, which aims to prevent city centre abandonment, renovate urban structures, tackle climate change and address social issues. Next slide.

Here is a summary from the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. Next slide.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Schwerin Residence Ensemble, Germany, be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criterion (iv) and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property. Next slide.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much ICOMOS for your presentation.

After seeing the thorough work that these Advisory Bodies do, internally I am being changed from a Chair into an Advisory Bodies' fan, you know. But thank you so much for the hard work that you put into this.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination.

Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

And we also would like to thank ICOMOS for their hard work and this excellent presentation. And we also would like to thank Germany for submitting the nomination file of the Schwerin Residence Ensemble, an exceptional and well-preserved ensemble of monarchic architecture.

Belgium fully supports the inscription based on criterion (iv), and I would like to commend the hard work of everyone involved. It should be noted that it was a process of over 20 years that led up to this very moment. It is therefore no surprise that this dossier is rock solid, and that the Outstanding Universal Value is proven without any doubts. The file includes a rigorous strategy for the conservation of the buildings, as well as for the management of tourist flows.

The Schwerin Residence Ensemble will be a valuable addition to our List, and we wholeheartedly congratulate Germany. We also would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the State Party of Germany, as well as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America on yesterday's inscription as well of the Moravian Church Settlements. *[speaks in German]*. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Yes. *[speaks in German]*.

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Chair.

India would like to extend its heartfelt congratulations to the State Party of Germany on the successful inscription of the Schwerin Residence Ensemble on the World Heritage List.

India commands the remarkable efforts that went into preparing a dossier of exceptional quality and precise content. The Schwerin Residence Ensemble is a remarkable testament to European national and regional architectural traditions. The dossier eloquently demonstrates that the Ensemble is an outstanding representation of the emergence and development of the historicist style in Europe during the second half of the 19th century.

We also commend Germany's diligent efforts in preserving the key elements of this property, including its forms, materials, situation and setting. India particularly applauds the strong involvement of the local communities in the management processes related to this newly inscribed site.

The Schwerin Residence Ensemble is yet another feather in Germany's diverse World Heritage cap. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to visit this extraordinary property in the near future.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I don't see any other request to take the floor. I'll now go to the Rapporteur.

I now invite you to adopt draft Decision **46 COM 8B.21**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le projet de décision pour l'inscription de l'Ensemble de la Résidence de Schwerin, Allemagne.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We have the draft decision on screen. Are there any comments? I see none. Is there any objection for the draft decision to be adopted as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.21** adopted. *[gavel] [applause]*

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate Germany on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property. And let me say one sentence in the German language. *[speaks in German]*.

Germany, you now have the floor for up to four minutes for your statement.

The Observer Delegation of Germany:

[first speaker] Thank you, dear Chair,

With so many words in perfect German heard in this room since yesterday, I really felt I had to make an effort to give something back in your language. And this is my try. Please bear with me. *[speaks in Hindi]. [applause]*

On behalf of Germany, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to India for hosting this conference and for the excellent organization and warm hospitality kindly extended to us by you, dear Chair and dear friend of my country, and by all the people taking care of our well-being so wonderfully here in Delhi. I would also like to thank the World Heritage Committee for inscribing the Schwerin Residence Ensemble on the World Heritage List today.

It is the third site inscribed in the Federal State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and it is especially impressive and outstanding in architecture and in the way it fits into the landscape, as you could witness from the beautiful pictures shown in this room today.

I would also like to highlight two aspects of this nomination that are particularly memorable. The first one is that the restoration of this property is a good example of successful conservation, post-reunification of Germany in 1990. Over 30 years, experts from all over the country have contributed with their expertise to the exceptional state of conservation the property shows today. This effort would not have been possible without the support and engagement of the local community and authorities. This spirit of cooperation provides a solid basis for the future sustainable management of the site. The parties involved are fully committed to the necessity to follow up on this and reinforce measures of sustainability as also recommended by the Committee today.

With warmest congratulations to the city of Schwerin, capital of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and its people, I would like to hand the microphone over to the Minister of Science, Culture, Federal and European Affairs of this Federal State, Bettina Martin, to briefly address the conference.

[second speaker] Mr Chair, Honourable Members of the World Heritage Committee, Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and its capital city, Schwerin, I would like to thank you for inscribing the Schwerin Residence Ensemble on the World Heritage List. This is a great honour. It makes us proud and it's tremendously making us happy. I would also like to thank ICOMOS for the professional and constructive evaluation and the positive recommendation.

The Schwerin Residence Ensemble was largely formed in the 19th century together with the wonderful Palace. It is set in a beautiful lake landscape, and it shapes the City of Schwerin to this day, with its more than 30 buildings and parks, that shows all functions of a monarchic residence of this era in a very exceptional way, from palace and manor houses to cultural, sacred and administrative buildings.

We are determined to protect this exceptional World Heritage for future generations, and we are very happy that our efforts to preserve, restore and document our heritage, especially in the years after the unification in Germany. And we're very happy that this has been recognized throughout the nomination process.

I would also like to take a moment to thank all partners in the nomination – we just heard it took almost 24 years. But especially I want to thank the citizens of Schwerin, who have for so many years so wholeheartedly supported this nomination. My heart goes out to them. *[speaks in German]* Greetings to Schwerin, where our Minister President Manuela Schwesig, and our, the mayor of the city, Rico Badenschier, are following this right now, live. We will be all working together on implementing the recommendations from the decision, and I can promise you : we will continue

to raise the awareness for the Outstanding Universal Value of the Schwerin Residence Ensemble in order to preserve our shared heritage as a heritage of the world, for now and for future generations.

And last but not least, I would like to invite you all to come and visit our beautiful city, Schwerin, to see the beauty of the World Heritage.

Thank you very much. *Namaste*.

The Chairperson:

Namaste. And thank you, Prime Minister.

8B.22 Via Appia. *Regina Viarum* (Italy) // Via Appia. *Regina Viarum* (Italie)

The Chairperson:

Please switch off your microphone.

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Via Appia, *Regina Viarum*, Italy. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Via Appia, *Regina Viarum*, Italy. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 154 of the English version, and page 200 of the French version.

Via Appia is a Roman road more than 800 kilometres long, comprising 22 component parts. The road was built from 312 BCE onwards to connect Rome to Capua along the Tyrrhenian Coast. It was originally conceived for the conquest and territorial control of the south of the Italian peninsula, and the Roman Empire's expansion towards the east and Asia Minor. Extended in 191 BCE as far as the ports of Taranto and Brindisi, the road became a route for cultural contact and trade. It was completed by 109 CE by the Emperor Trajan, who added the *Via Traiana* connecting Benevento to Brindisi along the Adriatic coast. This map shows the extent of the nominated serial property. Hope you can see it at that scale.

The 22 component parts include linear sections of the road, engineering and infrastructure elements, as well as monuments, towns and landscape features. The road component parts are demarcated by a strip 70 metres wide, with the road itself typically 12 metres wide. Some revisions to boundaries and buffer zones were made by the State Party during the evaluation procedure, in response to the advice of ICOMOS.

The Via Appia is a fully developed ensemble of engineering works illustrating the advanced technical skill of Roman engineers in the construction of carriageways, civil engineering, drainage and development works. The road is associated with a monumental ensemble of temples, funerary monuments, aqueducts, villas, triumphal arches, gates and amenities such as theatres, amphitheatres and baths.

The Via Appia is a remarkable example of a road which, through its construction, infrastructure and functioning, illustrates the history of the Roman Empire's development. It facilitated cultural, social, political and religious interchanges, as well as trade among the civilizations of the Mediterranean, Asia Minor, and the Arabian Peninsula for more than a thousand years. The Via Appia was a major vector for the spread of ideas and beliefs, was celebrated by artists of the Renaissance, and has been an object of study and fascination for generations of visitors.

The comparative analysis considered Via Appia within the context of properties in the World Heritage List and Tentative Lists associated with the ancient Roman world. In dialogue with ICOMOS, the State Party widened this analysis to include consideration of the network of all Roman roads.

The nominated property demonstrates criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi).

The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met for the whole series and for each of the component parts, with the exception of component parts 3, 4, and 15. Based on the proposed justification for Outstanding Universal Value and additional information provided by the State Party, ICOMOS considers that the property should be limited to the sites along the main road structure, and falling within the period between 300 and 12 BCE and the fourth century CE. Accordingly, ICOMOS does not consider that the inclusion of component parts 3 and 4 are justified because these are roads that branch off the main road, and that the cities of Lanuvium and Norba were not specific stages along the Via Appia. ICOMOS has also recommended the omission of component part 15, on the basis of its weak justification in relation to the proposed Outstanding Universal Value

Due to the vast extent of the nominated property, the main factors affecting the component parts vary according to their physical and land use contexts. These are well identified by the State Party. Most component parts have a good or very good state of conservation, and funding is provided for their conservation. Maintenance and corrective measures are planned for the few component parts that present a state of conservation ranging from fair to very poor. There is an excellent level of inventorying and documentation of attributes for the nominated serial property, and a database has been established to support the monitoring of the state of conservation.

Legal protection is in place for all nominated component parts, and management plan and associated action plan are in place, and the coordinating governance structure for its implementation is currently being established. Heritage impact assessment processes are also under development.

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Via Appia, *Regina Viarum*, Italy be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi), with the exception of component part 3 (the Via Appia from the 14th to the 24th mile with a branch to Lanuvium); number 4 (the Via Appia in the Pontine Plain, with a brief branch to Norba); and 15 (the Via Appia on the Tarantino sheep track). ICOMOS has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt draft Decision **46 COM 8B.22**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le projet de décision pour l'inscription de la Via Appia, *Regina Viarum*, Italie.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? Is there any objection to adopt this draft decision as a whole? I see no objection.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM B8.22** adopted. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate Italy on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property. And with your permission, if you'd like me to speak in Italian, as a mark of my deep appreciation, I will. *[speaks in Italian]*
[applause] **Bravo, bravo, bravo.**

Italy, you have the floor for up to a four-minute statement. Thank you.

The Delegation of Italy:

[first speaker] Thank you, Mr Chair.

Italy would like, first of all, to express its sincerest gratitude to the Government of India for the impressive hospitality allowing all States Parties to experience the millennia-old culture of this fascinating country. We also want to highlight our profound acknowledgment to the World Heritage Centre for its unwavering dedication to preserving our shared heritage, and we cannot but extend our appreciation to ICOMOS too, for the ongoing dialogue carried out with concerned States Parties on matters of cultural preservation. Last but not least, let me convey our heartfelt thanks to the members of the Committee for the renewed trust placed in Italy and in the Italian people during this session.

The nomination of Appia Antica *Regina Viarum*, the Queen of the Roads, is the outcome of an extensive and comprehensive participatory process engaging 4 regions, 13 provinces, 74 municipalities, in total more than 100 entities, including other local institutions. It also involved numerous Italian and international universities, as well as associations operating within the territories traversed by the ancient Roman route. In our view, this collective effort represents the genuine spirit and values of UNESCO, exemplifying the involvement of a broad array of communities in heritage preservation and in the promotion of values such as participation and peace.

The configuration of this property in itself embodies the ancient and well-respected Roman values, which led to the Italian approach to the world. Built through an inclusive process supported by ideals of connection, shared development and awareness of a common heritage that is fully part of the territories of Southern Italy and from today on, of the whole humanity.

This site has been witnessing throughout the centuries innovations, revolutions in engineering and architecture, as well as inclusion, solidarity, resilience and the hard-working spirit of my people. Thank you for having honoured this

great legacy. From 2,300 years on, Appia Antica keeps on being a model, a symbol of encounters, dialogues with other people, and an opportunity of continuous exchange to ensure future and new freedom horizon for all.

In this spirit, I invite you to listen to the messages from the Italian Minister of Culture, His Excellency Gennaro Sangiuliano and the Deputy Minister competent for UNESCO, His Excellency Gianmarco Mazzi. Thank you.

[second speaker] [speaks in Italian – no interpretation]

[third speaker] [speaks in Italian – no interpretation] [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. Congratulations, Italy.

I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Hegmataneh and Historical Centre of Hamedan, Islamic Republic of Iran. But before that, I give the floor to M. Balsamo, please.

I think the order has changed. Sorry Iran, it's not right now, it will be later, because the presentations are lined up. I will ask the Director of the World Heritage [Centre] to kindly read the list again.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

The order of examination, which I read this afternoon, was that after Italy it would be Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, followed by the two site nominations of Romania, and Iran at the end.

Thank you, Chairperson.

ARAB STATES (Ct'd) // ÉTATS ARABES (suite)

8B.14 The Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area (Saudi Arabia) // Le paysage culturel de la zone archéologique d'Al-Faw (Arabie saoudite)

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The next one is Saudi Arabia, the Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area, draft Decision **46 COM 8B.14**. I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of the Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area, Saudi Arabia. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area, Saudi Arabia. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 62 of the English version and page 146 of the French version. Next slide.

The Cultural Landscape, Al-Faw Archaeological Area is located between the vast alluvial plain and the Jabal Tuwayq Plateau in southern Saudi Arabia, at one of the most important strategic points of the ancient trade routes leading from Najran to central and eastern Arabia. It is an organically evolved relict landscape encapsulated by the extremely arid desert environment, since its abrupt abandonment around the fifth century C.E. Nearly 12,000 archaeological remains have been found, spanning from prehistoric times to the late pre-Islamic era, testifying to the successive occupation of three different populations and their interactions, with some adaptation, to the evolving climate conditions and landscape. Next slide.

The nominated property area covers 4,847.73 hectares, and its buffer zone is 27,548.33 hectares. The addition of a Respect Zone provides another layer of protection to the visual quality of the landscape. Next slide.

The rich collection of the archaeological findings and inscriptions encountered at Al-Faw is a tangible manifestation of the role of the site as an important meeting place for different groups of people who built the caravan city of Qaryat Al-Faw, and the influences and cultural exchanges between the tribes of the desert and the trading groups that occupied and resided in the area over time. The discoveries varied from hundreds of artifacts to funeral practices and water management system and shows the richness of inhabitants. Future research is planned on both the archaeology of the nominated property and the artifacts retrieved during the excavations. Next slide.

ICOMOS considers that the methodology adopted for the comparative analysis is overall sound, and that the logic and scope of the selected comparators are adequate. The comparative analysis has demonstrated that the nominated property is a rarely well-preserved cultural landscape that possesses a complete record of human occupation and settlement from the Palaeolithic to the fifth century C.E. Led by both national and foreign researchers, excavations and surveys at the nominated property began in the 1970s and revealed what composed

today the nominated property: Palaeolithic and Neolithic stone tools, the temple structures, cairns and circular constructions, rock inscriptions, paintings and engravings on the cliff of the sacred mountains of Khashm Qaryah and other parts of the nominated property; the huge number of tumuli and cairns in the valley, forts, caravanserais, the oasis and its water management system, and the ruin of the city of Qaryat. These elements manifest the richness of the place narrative that was once the home of prehistoric people, the territory of transhuman population, and the regional economic and political centre along an important ancient trade route of the Arabian Peninsula.

The nominated property meets criteria (ii) and (v), but ICOMOS considers that criterion (iv) has not been demonstrated. Next slide.

Preserved by the desert environment, since the site was abandoned in the fifth century C.E., the archaeological resources have remained intact. Factors affecting the nominated property are under control thanks to preventive interventions and legal provisions.

Encapsulated by the desert environment, the nominated property remained as it was after its abrupt abandonment, with all the archaeological structures and remains undisturbed by human activities. Only slow natural deterioration occurred over time. ICOMOS therefore considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been met. Next slide.

The nominated property is entirely state-owned and registered as a national heritage site. Tribal law helps to protect the landscape from disturbance. The vast buffer zone encompasses a significant stretch of the cliff, escarpment and desert, and is mostly composed of public lands. A joint management framework is being established to coordinate the efforts of the cultural and natural conservation sectors. The management plan is a contractual agreement and a collective commitment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Culture, the Heritage Commission, the National Centre of Wildlife and the local authorities concerned. It is a guiding document for the medium- and long-term protection, conservation, management and monitoring of the nominated property. The Heritage Impact Assessment mechanism has been embedded in the management system, and the decision-making process is accessible to local communities. Next slide.

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property. Next slide.

ICOMOS recommends that the Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area, Saudi Arabia, be inscribed as a cultural landscape on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii) and (v). ICOMOS has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property. Next slide.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this nomination. I see none.

I will therefore invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.14**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any recommendation. And if you can just say yes or no, that would help us.

Le Rapporteur :

M. le Président, nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le projet d'inscription du Paysage culturel de la zone archéologique d'Al-Faw, Arabie Saoudite.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none. Is there any objection for the draft Decision to be adopted as a whole? I see no objections.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.14** adopted. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Let me congratulate Saudi Arabia on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property. And yes, a sentence in the Arabic language. *[speaks in Arabic]*

Saudi Arabia, you have the floor for an up to four-minute statement. Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:

[first speaker] Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. *[speaks in Arabic]* Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to represent my country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, at this historic moment, as we celebrate the inscription of the Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area as a World Heritage site. I am pleased to

thank the States Parties and the Advisory Bodies who cooperated with us to inscribe this file. I would like also to thank India for the host, the host of this assembly.

We are proud of this inscription, in addition to the seven Saudi World Heritage sites that we previously inscribed. These sites align with the Kingdom's Vision 2030, highlighting the Kingdom's deep history and authentic culture.

I extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman and His Royal Highness the Minister of Culture, Prince Badr Bin Abdullah Bin Farhan, for their support in the preservation of cultural and natural treasures that our country possesses.

Thank you very much and I would like now to give the floor to the representative of Heritage Commission, the authority responsible for the site. Please.

[second speaker] Thank you. We are both delighted and honoured to be joining you today, and we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the Committee's and Advisory Body's tireless and dedicated efforts in this year's meeting. We extend our sincere appreciation for the successful inscription of the Cultural Landscape of Al-Faw Archaeological Area on UNESCO's World Heritage List, making it the eighth Saudi site to achieve this distinguished recognition.

Located at the northwestern edge of the Empty Quarter, Al-Faw reveals human occupation spanning millennia, from early nomadic settlements to a prosperous urban centre and a thriving caravan relay in the first millennium BCE. The site bears witness to the skilful interaction of humanity with the environment over almost a millennium, until the irreversible depletion of water resources. The significance of the site relies on the remarkable completeness of the cultural remains from at least three successive civilizations that based their living on the richness of water that categorized the area, showing the ability of human beings to adapt and evolve in the face of drastic and changing natural conditions. Saudi archaeologists discovered the presence of ancient springs and vast irrigation networks, testifying to the existence of a relict cultural landscape. Across this extensive territory, Al-Faw also presents a wide array of prehistoric remains, including a spectacular avenue of tapered stone structures, an impressive number of Bronze Age funerary features, proving sustained human presence in the area.

With the continuous guidance and support of His Highness Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan Al Saud, Minister of Culture and Chairman of Saudi Heritage Commission, we are dedicated to protecting, conserving and promoting awareness of our cultural heritage that serve as a living testament to the remarkable human civilization that have successively thrived in our land.

Inscribing Saudi heritage sites in UNESCO's World Heritage List is one of the central missions of the Heritage Commission, in line with objectives the Saudi Vision 2030 and the National Cultural Strategy. This global recognition underscores the importance of these sites, enhancing their preservation development as sources of cultural pride. In preparing the nomination file, the Heritage Commission collaborated closely with the Saudi National Committee for Education, Culture and Science, the Emirate of Riyadh Province and Wadi al-Dawasir Government, National Centre for Wildlife, King Saud University and the local communities that have been so eager to see Al-Faw in the World Heritage List. Finally, I'd like to express my gratitude to the team behind this nomination. Their dedication to ensuring that Al-Faw is conserved and protected is a testament to the Heritage Commission's values. Thank you all and we hope to welcome you one day soon in our beautiful site of Al-Faw. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA (Ct'd) // EUROPE ET AMÉRIQUE DU NORD (suite)

8B.24 Brâncusi Monumental Ensemble of Târgu Jiu (Romania) // Ensemble monumental de Brâncuși à Târgu Jiu (Roumanie)

The Chairperson:

To save time, I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Brâncusi Monumental Ensemble of Târgu Jiu, Romania. But before that, I'll give the floor to Mr Balsamo.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the nomination of Brâncusi Monumental Ensemble of Târgu Jiu. And this is to be found on page 34 of Document INF.8B.4 in its English and French version.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo.

I now give the floor to ICOMOS for their presentation.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Brâncusi Monumental Ensemble of Târgu Jiu, Romania. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 310 of the English version, and page 340 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

The nominated property is a monumental ensemble located in the city of Târgu Jiu along the River Jiu, south of the Carpathian Mountains in the Oltenia region of western Romania. Austere, solemn, contemplative, yet accessible, the monumental ensemble was created in 1937-1938 by Constantin Brâncusi, an influential pioneer of abstract sculpture, to commemorate those who died defending the city during the First World War. It is the only known large-scale artistic work by Brâncusi.

The nominated property comprises interrelated sculptural installations aligned on a 1.5-kilometre-long axis in central Targu Jiu. It has two monumental focuses situated in two city parks – Constantin Brâncusi Park and the Park of the Column – at either end of the axis. The ensemble has been nominated for its innovative character and the originality of the artistic language and abstract form, deeply inspired by early and traditional arts, and as a revolutionary demonstration of public art that achieves a synthesis of the arts by merging sculpture, architecture, engineering, and environmental and urban planning. It has also been nominated as a deeply unconventional war memorial that transcends the Western canon's religiosity and spirituality, addressing the whole of humanity.

The Endless Column is a 29-metre high, extremely slender metal sculpture intended to evoke infinity. It is located at the highest point of the city and surrounded by a low-height skyline, reinforcing the sense of its verticality. The other focus of the monumental ensemble is located on the west, in the park bordering the Jiu River, subsequently renamed after Brâncusi. Here stand, aligned, the Gate of the Kiss, the Alley of the Chairs and the Table of Silence. The Gate of the Kiss is a portal with classical proportions and inspiration. The artist carved the gate elements on site to distil his concept of "The Kiss" to its essence and render it as a gateway. The thoroughly revised nomination has brought forward the exceptional artistic qualities of the nominated ensemble as a monumental artwork of urban and landscape breadth.

The comparative analysis has demonstrated that the nominated property justifies consideration for the World Heritage List under criteria (i) and (ii), which are the most appropriate to reflect its outstanding importance. However, criteria (iv) and (vi) have not been demonstrated. After careful consideration, ICOMOS does not consider that the nominated property can be seen as a site of memory associated with recent conflicts under the purpose and scope of the World Heritage Convention. The semantic and symbolic diversity of this artistic work transcend the event it commemorates and gives it a spiritual, universal significance that adds to criterion (i).

The boundaries encompass the whole nominated property in one single element, supporting its integrity and authenticity, despite some changes to its setting, which have been and are being mitigated through careful urban rehabilitation projects.

Protection and management requirements regulate activities in the immediate setting of the nominated property and appear adequate to sustain its proposed Outstanding Universal Value.

Protective mechanisms exist to assess impacts of development on the nominated property. They can be strengthened by referring to the attributes of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value in all planning instruments and documents required to approve the projects, and by integrating the methodology of the guidance and toolkit for impact assessment in a World Heritage context. The steps undertaken to involve local communities are welcome and should be sustained over time.

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposal Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Brâncusi Monumental Ensemble of Târgu Jiu, Romania, be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (i) and (ii) and does include a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS for your presentation.

Are there any comments concerning this nomination? Lebanon. No, sorry. Any other comment? Any comments regarding this nomination? I see none. I will go to the Rapporteur.

I now like to invite you to adopt Decision **46 COM 8B.24**. Mr Rapporteur, have you received any amendments on the draft position proposed?

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le projet d'inscription de l'Ensemble monumental de Brâncusi à Târgu Jiu, Roumanie.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? Any objections for the draft decision to be adopted as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.24** adopted. *[gavel]* *[applause]*

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate Romania on behalf of the entire Committee. And permit me to speak a line in the Romanian language. *[speaks in Romanian]*

Romania, you have the floor to make a statement for up to four minutes. Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of Romania:

Hello, everyone. Mr Chairperson, Distinguished Ambassadors, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The inscription of the Brâncusi Monumental Ensemble of Târgu Jiu in the UNESCO World Heritage gives us an overwhelming sentiment of joy, pride and responsibility.

Today, through its outstanding value, the masterpiece of monumental art left by the great sculptor Constantin Brâncusi to all Romanians, gains international recognition of the highest level part of the cultural heritage of humanity. In simple and memorable forms, the ensemble created by Constantin Brâncusi represents human limits and transcendence, honouring the moral values of sacrifice and heroism. We, the Romanians, highly love and appreciate the art of Constantin Brâncusi. But today, from today, this art is shown and will be appreciated worldwide.

Distinguished Audience,

Today's recognition obliges us to protect the Brâncusi Monumental Ensemble of Târgu Jiu, to preserve, to be intact for the future generations and for the cultural memory of humanity. It is a commitment that our country takes very seriously to ensure the conservation and protection of the site. This endeavour implies not only the participation of central and local authorities, but also the involvement of the local communities and society as a whole.

I am very happy to cherish this moment with the experts who worked on the files, but also with some very important partners, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – and I have here beside me the Secretary of State – the Permanent Delegation of Romania to UNESCO – and I am accompanied by Her Excellency Mrs Simona Miculescu – and the local authorities – and I have here beside me the mayor of Targu Jiu, Marcel Romanescu. And he is here because we count on the support of the local authority and for a closer cooperation. And the support of local authorities is crucial for a good implementation of a sustainable plan in protecting the Ensemble.

On behalf of Romania, I would like also to thank very much for this recognition to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS for their constant dialogue and close cooperation with Romania. And I congratulate also from my heart, my colleagues from the Ministry of Culture in Romania, the National Institute of Heritage, as well as the actors who have worked intensively for today's success. We hope that from today, the whole world will enjoy more of Romania's cultural heritage and the work of Constantin Brâncusi.

Thank you all. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

8B.25 Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Dacia (Romania) // Frontières de l'Empire romain - Dacie (Roumanie)

The Chairperson:

To save time, I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination Frontiers of the [Roman] Empire – Dacia, Romania.

But before, I'll give the floor to Mr Balsamo.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

We received a factual error on the nomination – factual error notification, sorry – concerning the nomination of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Dacia, from Romania. And this is to be found on page 35 of the Document INF.8B.4, in both versions English and French. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor now to ICOMOS for its presentation.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation. The report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 180 of the English version and page 227 of the French version.

On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors and has acknowledged some of these errors.

This is a serial nomination of 277 component parts along an intensely militarized frontier, traversing over a thousand kilometres of diverse landscapes within Romania. It operated from 106 to 271 CE. The Dacians were an important foe to the Romans. Under Emperor Trajan, Rome conquered the Dacian Kingdom after two wars and established the province. There was a rapid transition from military occupation to Roman province, but in the third century, sustaining the province became untenable and the Romans withdrew to the Danube.

The frontier of the Dacian Limes is defined by a network of individual sites of different types. The frontiers protected Dacia, as well as controlling movements and securing access to valuable gold and salt resources.

The Dacian Limes extend for more than 1,000 kilometres, divided into eight sectors. Seven of these follow the alignment of the frontier, moving north from the Danube River to Transylvania and the Carpathian Mountains into open lowland plains and returning to the Danube. An eighth sector comprises the temporary mountain camps that relate to the military campaign of conquest. The Danube frontier is part of a different transnational segment, which is in the Tentative List for Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia.

The 277 nominated component parts represent diverse site types, including legionary fortresses, auxiliary forts, earthen ramparts, watchtowers, temporary camps and secular buildings. The Dacian frontier represents the longest land border and the most complex frontier of a former Roman province in Europe. It is a physical manifestation of the Roman Empire's imperial ambitions and the expertise and versatility of Roman engineers. The relatively short period of use, the wide diversity of landscape contexts in which the frontier was established, and the range of military, defensive and secular structures are distinctive and exceptional.

A thematic study to guide nominations of segments of the frontiers of the Roman Empire was developed in 2017.

The comparative analysis includes consideration of the other segments of the Roman frontiers in Europe and beyond, and includes the three transboundary segments in Europe already inscribed in the World Heritage List, and four segments in Tentative Lists in Europe and the Arab States regions. The comparative analysis established both common qualities and the distinctive aspects of the Dacian Limes. The State Party has also provided detailed justifications for the selection of the 277 component parts.

The nominated property demonstrates criteria (ii), (iii), and (iv).

The requirements for authenticity and integrity have been met. In general, the sites demonstrate a very high degree of authenticity, due in part to the relatively short time span of their use and the relatively undisturbed rural locations.

The State Party has responded to issues raised by ICOMOS during the evaluation procedure, adjusting the boundaries and/or buffer zones of a number of component parts to create a more coherent basis for their designation, presentation and management. Most of the component parts are below ground archaeological sites in rural contexts. Structural remains, such as stone walls, have been exposed at some sites, many of which have been previously excavated and consolidated.

The State Party provided a detailed annex that identifies the pressures and state of conservation for each component part. These vary due to the large number of components and the diversity of urban and rural landscape contexts in which they occur.

Building and development pressures, including transport infrastructure and agricultural cultivation, have been identified as the main factors affecting the property.

Legal protection is in place for all 277 component parts through their inclusion in the national archaeological record, and the designation of all the component parts as National Historic Monuments is in progress. Protection is also supported by local spatial planning through the general urban plans for each municipality. There is a National Limes

Commission, responsible for coordinating research and monitoring, and the State Party participates in the Transnational Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage cluster.

The management system is in place, although there are a number of key elements that are still under development by the State Party, such as the formal provisions for Heritage Impact Assessments and strategies for tourism, interpretation and archaeological research.

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated serial property.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that the Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Dacia, Romania, be inscribed in the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv), and has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentation.

I would like to know if there are any comments concerning this nomination. I see none.

I now invite you to adopt draft Decision **46 COM 8B.25**. But before doing that, Mr Rapporteur, have you received any amendments to the draft decision proposed?

Le Rapporteur :

M. le Président, nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendements concernant le dossier des Frontières de l'Empire romain - Dacia, Roumanie.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments before we adopt the draft decision as a whole? I see no comments. Is there any objection to adopt the draft decision as a whole? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.25** adopted. ^[gavel] ^[applause]

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate Romania on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property. Romania, you have the floor for an up to four-minute statement.

Thank you.

The Observer Delegation of Romania:

Thank you, Mr Chairman, to give me the floor once again.

Distinguished Audience,

We are both delighted and grateful that Romania has been successful in the inscription of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Dacia in the UNESCO World Heritage List. This achievement has a profound meaning for us. The territory of ancient Dacia became part of the Roman world, and thus the genesis of our nation is closely linked to Rome and its empire. We therefore experience this moment as one with deep cultural significance, a ^[unclear] reflection of our identity, to make us more aware of our past and at the same time to recall Rome's major influence in the ancient world.

This new inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List will help us, I am sure, to better understand this crucial period in our history. Romania proudly joins the growing family of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire.

Thank you very much on behalf of Romania for this international recognition. And I thank UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS for their constant dialogue with Romania. I want to congratulate the experts of the Romanian Ministry of Culture – and I have here the best, the best expert in the world. And also to the National Institute of Heritage, the National Museum of Transylvanian History, with the Director, Mr Felix Marcu, and the National Limes Commission, as well as the Museum and Culture Directorate from the 16 involved counties, as well as all central and local actors who contributed to the successful nomination process for the inscription of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Dacia in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

I am pleased to have by my side, as I said, the Manager of the National Museum of Transylvania and the National President of the Limes Commission and my colleagues from the National Institute of Heritage. And I am certain that without their support, their expertise, this file wouldn't have been completed like it is now. And also, I would like to thank to all those involved in the management of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire on the territory of Romania.

Driven by today's success, we will better research, preserve and promote our cultural heritage from the Roman period.

Good luck all and thank you all. *[applause]*

ASIA-PACIFIC (Ct'd) // ASIE-PACIFIQUE (suite)

8B.17 Hegmataneh and Historical Centre of Hamedan (Iran (Islamic Republic of)) // Hegmataneh et centre historique de Hamedan (Iran (République islamique d'))

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

To save time, I now invite ICOMOS to present the nomination of Hegmataneh and Historical Centre of Hamedan, Islamic Republic of Iran.

But before I give the floor, I would like to call Mr Balsamo. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

We received a factual error notification concerning the evaluation of the Hegmataneh and Historical Centre of Hamedan. This is to be found on page 20 of both the English and French version of Document INF.8B.4.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of Hegmataneh and Historical Centre of Hamedan, Islamic Republic of Iran. The ICOMOS report can be found in Document INF.8B.1 on page 97 of the English version, and page 94 of the French version. On this evaluation, ICOMOS has received a letter on factual errors.

Located at the foot of the Alvand subrange of the Zagros Mountains in northwestern Iran, the nominated property is comprised of the hillside archaeological site of Hegmataneh and the adjacent Historic Centre of Hamedan. Ancient Hegmataneh bears witness to nearly three millennia of human habitation, providing evidence of the major civilization in the seventh and sixth century BCE, later serving as a capital, as a summer capital of Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanian rulers. Key historical trade and pilgrimage routes crossed this gateway to the Iranian plateau, testifying to its importance as a geopolitical, cultural and trading node. The nominated property has an irregular shaped area encompassing the Hegmataneh Hill, the Historic Centre of Hamadan, and the bazaar to the south of the hill, core parts of the 20th century radial city plan, including Imam Khomeini Square as well as Ecbatan and Abu Ali Sina Streets as far south as the Abu Ali Sina (or Avicenna) Tomb.

The property has been nominated for it would represent one of the oldest capital cities and the rare testimony of the early Medes civilization. For its strategic location as a gateway to the Iranian plateau, the city thrived for more than two millennia as an important trade and government centre for different civilizations. It would also demonstrate the creativity and innovation of the Parthian civilization, which established modular urban planning and regular city architecture as early as the first millennium BCE.

ICOMOS has concerns on the proposed justification when it comes to the continuity and evolution of the city from ancient times up to the present day. The continuity between cultures or civilisation does not in itself hold universal significance unless the traces left by this process demonstrate the outstanding achievements of its time. While the archaeological remains provide important evidence of early civilizations such as the Medes, Achaemenids and Parthians, the successive stages of development in Hamadan city cannot be considered to stand out in its geo-cultural context.

The augmented comparative analysis and the additional information suggest that the archaeological evidence is comparable with major centres of the Median, Achaemenid, Seleucid and Parthian periods discovered in the geo-cultural region. However, archaeological evidence cannot confirm that the nominated property was the capital of the Medes State Empire. Similarly, the justification that the nominated property served as an important government

seat of Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian rulers would need to be strengthened to establish how the nominated property stands out in comparison with other sites from the respective periods.

For the reasons explained above, ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity of the nominated property could possibly be met only for the archaeological remains of a Hegmataneh. This would imply the revision of the boundaries of the nominated property to reflect a refocused proposed Outstanding Universal Value. The current proposed boundaries include elements that do not support a potential revised justification for inscription, based solely on the archaeological remains of Hegmataneh.

The nominated property is under the highest level of national legal protection. The management plan describes the existing management structures and the duties and responsibilities of stakeholders. However, none of these duties specifically link to the policies and actions in the management plan, and so its formal status has not been clarified. So it remains unclear whether stakeholders' commitment also extends to the implementation of the actions outlined in the management plan.

Here is a summary of the ICOMOS evaluation of the proposed Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property.

ICOMOS, for the reason explained before, does not consider the comparative analysis justify consideration of the nominated property for the World Heritage List at this stage. Criterion (iv) is not justified, while criterion (ii) and criterion (iii), although not justified at this stage, might be demonstrated for the archaeological remains of Hegmataneh only. The boundaries will need to be revised to focus only on the relevant attributes, supporting a revised nomination based on a narrative that revolves around the archaeological value of Hegmataneh.

To conclude, ICOMOS recommends that Hegmataneh and the Historic Centre of Hamedan, Islamic Republic of Iran, be deferred to the State Party for the following main reasons:

- develop a more coherent argumentation based on the archaeological values of Hegmataneh to demonstrate how its archaeological remains stand out compared to other similar properties;
- develop an appropriate comparative analysis and revise the nominated property and buffer zone boundaries in light of a refocused justification.

ICOMOS has also included further recommendations in the draft decision to aid the long-term conservation of the property. ICOMOS also considers that such a revised nomination would need to be considered by an expert mission to the site.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS.

Are there any questions or comments before we go to the Rapporteur to ask if there are any amendments? Can we see the amendments and then make the comments?

Yes. Lebanon, can we first see the amendments and then I'll give you the floor to make the comments, please. Thank you.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.17**. But before that, I'll ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments to the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous avons bel et bien reçu un amendement soumis par le Qatar et co-écrit par le Kazakhstan, concernant le site précédemment nommé Hegmataneh et Centre historique de Hamedan, République islamique d'Iran.

L'amendement débute avec le paragraphe 2, proposant le passage d'un différé à une inscription, « diffère » – non, pardon – « inscrit Hegmataneh » et non plus « diffère l'examen de proposition d'inscription de Hegmataneh et Centre historique de Hamedan ». Donc nous avons également noté le changement de nom du projet d'inscription « Hegmataneh, République islamique d'Iran sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sur la base des critères (ii) et (iii). »

Paragraphe suivant, « prend note de la déclaration de valeur universelle exceptionnelle provisoire suivante », avec le texte, la synthèse disponible en langue anglaise.

Paragraphe 4, « recommande que l'État partie prenne en considération les points suivants : a) soumettre des cartes des limites du bien révisées à la lumière d'une justification recentrée sur la base des vestiges archéologiques ; b) développer différentes actions de recherche et de conservation dans un programme de conservation complet qui permette la recherche, la conservation et la présentation à long terme des découvertes archéologiques ; c) redéfinir le rôle et le statut juridique du plan de gestion et envisager l'identification des attributs, l'intégration de la population locale et du plan de conservation dans le plan de gestion ; d) développer davantage la recommandation et améliorer le système de suivi. » – cette recommandation est inchangée – « e) soumettre au

Centre du patrimoine mondial d'ici le 1^{er} décembre 2025 le plan de gestion intégrée pour examen par les Organisations consultatives. »

Dernier paragraphe, « demande à l'État partie de soumettre au Centre du patrimoine mondial d'ici le 1^{er} décembre 2025 un rapport sur la mise en œuvre des recommandations susmentionnées pour examen par le Comité du patrimoine mondial à sa 48^e session ».

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We have seen that the original nomination is for Hegmataneh and the Historical Centre of Hamedan. But in the report of the nomination ICOMOS had said that if the Historical Centre of Hamedan is removed, then Hegmataneh, the evaluation of Hegmataneh, can be considered. However, there are certain more requirements there, and I've seen that in the amendment presented by Qatar, that is precisely being done, and the component of Historical Centre of Hamedan is being removed. And of course, if you remove one component, then the boundaries also have to be modified. But this is what I have observed from the, what I've heard from the ICOMOS presentation and what the Rapporteur just explained and the screen in front of me.

But as I had said, I'll give the floor to Lebanon to be followed by Qatar. You have the floor, sir.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Looking at the various nominations we examined today, we noticed that besides the present nomination, we had three other nominations, of which ICOMOS recommended to exclude several components. The first is the Sado Island Gold Mines presented by Japan, which we inscribed this morning, but where ICOMOS had recommended to refer the property to the State Party in order to exclude post-Edo components, including Aikawa-Kamimachi town. The second is Via Appia, presented by Italy, which we have just inscribed following ICOMOS recommendation, but where ICOMOS had recommended to exclude components 3, 4 and 5 due to their lack of integrity. And finally, Nelson Mandela Legacy Sites presented by South Africa, where ICOMOS considered that out of 14 components, 3 do not satisfy the conditions of integrity and 3 others do not contribute to the OUV of the property, and ICOMOS recommended to refer the nomination back to the State Party.

We are deeply concerned about what appears as a lack of consistency in ICOMOS recommendation. A property is recommended to be inscribed, namely Via Appia, while several components do not justify conditions of integrity and authenticity. Two properties are recommended to be referred back to the State Party, namely Sado Island and Nelson Mandela Sites, and the present property is proposed to be deferred.

So, we would like to hear from ICOMOS the rationale behind these conflicting recommendations.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

And that was precisely why I had said that ICOMOS very clearly said in its presentation that if you remove the Historical Centre of Hamedan and modify the boundaries, you could go ahead with Hegmataneh. So ICOMOS was very clear on that point, but I will give the floor to ICOMOS after I have given the floor to Qatar.

Excellency, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I would like to thank, first of all, ICOMOS for the thorough evaluation of this nomination dossier.

We have carefully studied this evaluation report and the related factual errors presented by the State Party. I would like to highlight that in the same evaluation report, ICOMOS has also studied, under the current circumstances, the site of Hegmataneh without the Historic Centre of Hamedan as eligible for inscription of the World Heritage List. According to ICOMOS, criteria (ii) and (iii) are made for inscription of Hegmataneh on the World Heritage List. Moreover, the studies also prove the continuity, integrity and authenticity of the archaeological remains in the nominated site. And worth noting that the State Party had positive measures for the management and maintenance plan of the archaeological site of Hegmataneh, which have also been well evaluated in the ICOMOS report.

The site, as ICOMOS has also confirmed, shows priceless evidence of urban development in the Parthian period, as well as series of valuable works from the Achaemenid and Sasanian periods, which are kept in major museums around the world. In addition, Hegmataneh, the place where the Persian civilization was born, is one of the first and exceptional urban planning practices experiences in the West Asian region.

References in the world literature underlining the importance of the city date back to ancient times, and evidenced in famous ancient Greek historian Herodotus narrative by the name of Ecbatana, which is the ancient Greek form of Hegmataneh, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, therefore, considering the significance of the World Heritage inscription of Hegmataneh, regarding the Historic Centre of Hamedan from the dossier, as well as confirming the scope of the property to the archaeological site of Hegmataneh, while keeping and reconfirming the buffer zone boundary in the current situation. We would like to propose the possibility of inscribing the site on the World Heritage List in this session.

Mr Chair, the inscription of the Archaeological Site of Hegmataneh, only without the Historic Centre of Hamedan, will provide the State Party with more effective tools for preserving, maintaining and presenting Hegmataneh as a shared common heritage of all humanity. For this proposal, we have submitted a draft amendment proposal for the consideration and support of the Secretariat and the Committee members.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Viet Nam, followed by Türkiye.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

We have carefully studied the original file, ICOMOS evolution and additional documents provided by the State Party, and viewed Hegmataneh as an archaeological site that enjoys authenticity in terms of materials, form, setting and techniques throughout history. It has also an exceptional structural, functional and visual integrity. Moreover, the objects unearthed from the excavation are well preserved in the on-site museum, and its conservation has also been evaluated as acceptable by ICOMOS. This very important site is also the birthplace of Median, Achaemenid and Parthian dynasties, to name a few. In fact, the city of Hegmataneh or Ecbatana, as attested by Herodotus, the famous Greek historian, was among the oldest cities of the world, comparable to Susa and other cities in the western Asia.

We thank the evaluation report by ICOMOS experts, and we also welcome the State Party for taking appropriate measures as recommended by ICOMOS. And in this regard, Viet Nam supports the inscription of Hegmataneh on the World Heritage List, and we wish to join the list of supporters of the amendment proposed by the Distinguished Delegate of Qatar.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

I thank you.

I now give the floor to Türkiye, to be followed by Kazakhstan.

And before that, Mr Rapporteur, please fulfil the desire of Viet Nam to have its name added. Thank you.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We congratulate Iran for the nomination dossier and thank ICOMOS for the precise presentation.

The idea of defining the boundary only with the archaeological site boundary and proposing the remaining area as a buffer zone seems both logical and practical. There is detailed identification, mapping and reporting of activities to be carried out within the buffer zone. Moreover, the compliance, integrity and authenticity of the archaeological site within the defined boundary have been explained very clearly with an identified Outstanding Universal Value. Therefore, we believe that the proposed area with the boundary narrowed down to the archaeological site is sufficient for the nomination of Hegmataneh to be accepted as an inscription and, in this respect, we support the amendment proposal submitted by Qatar.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Please add Türkiye's name.

I now give the floor to Kazakhstan, followed by Kenya.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Thank you, Mr Chair. Distinguished colleagues,

Actually, I would like to echo our Lebanese colleague that we face a somewhat challenging task that includes four main issues.

Firstly, an extraordinary object, the site, a city with a history spanning several thousand years, boasting numerous unique materials, testimonies of the historical pages of many peoples, countries and cultures. At the core of this complex, and I dare to say here organism, lies an archaeological monument, a living witness of centuries-old history.

Secondly, we have the territory of the modern city, or more precisely, the historic urban landscape with its unique charm and brilliant architectural monuments, whose visit is, without exaggeration, breathtaking. Several years ago, I had the privilege of visiting Hamedan and witnessing this unique charm myself, which only strengthened my conviction in its significance.

Thirdly, there is the clearly formulated logical position of ICOMOS, which, as we all know, states that the archaeological site of Hegmataneh presented in nomination this year meets criteria (ii) and (iii). Moreover, studies also provide the integrity and authenticity of the archaeological remains at the site. The management and maintenance of the archaeological site of Hegmataneh have also been well evaluated in the ICOMOS report. At the same time, the Historic Centre of Hamedan, as presented in the nomination dossier and according to ICOMOS, does not meet criterion (iv).

Fourthly, dear colleagues, we have a clear position stated by the State: the State Party of Iran is ready to continue collaboration with World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, and ready for inscription of the Hegmataneh Archaeological Site without the Historic Centre of Hamedan on the World Heritage List according to the specified criteria. Additionally, the State Party of Iran is willing to continue working on either expanding the nomination to subsequently include the Historic Centre of Hamedan as a component of the series, or as a separate nomination in the future.

The complex calculations of the equation, consisting of four mentioned above main components, which our Delegation has conducted over many days, have led us to support the position expressed by our honourable Qatari colleagues.

In this regard, we would like to draw your attention to the addition of the draft decision. We propose that our esteemed Iranian colleagues prepare an integrated management plan, as is mentioned in the amendment, to the World Heritage Centre by the 48th session of the World Heritage Committee for review by Advisory Bodies. This plan should detail the State's strategy and approach to preserving the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of the unique site known to all of us from school years.

The Chairperson:

Please conclude

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Yes. As Ecbatana, a witness of the glorious periods of Median, Achaemenid, Persian and Sasanian empires.

Thank you so much Mr Chair. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Kenya, followed by Rwanda.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

We join to support the amendment proposed by the Distinguished Delegate from Qatar, but also take note that in the paragraph where there is a state of brief synthesis, there are a number of minor typos which we would actually plead that the Secretariat, with the help of the Rapporteur, can be able to fix.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Sir.

I now give the floor to Rwanda. Rwanda, followed by Belgium.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Rwanda a examiné attentivement le rapport de l'ICOMOS ainsi les rapports des erreurs factuelles. Les conclusions indiquent que la partie du site archéologique de Hegmataneh possède une valeur universelle exceptionnelle et est reconnue pour son authenticité et son intégrité, les incertitudes de l'ICOMOS résidant dans la partie du Centre historique de la ville de Hamedan. Étant donné que le plan de la ville démontre que ces parties peuvent être facilement séparées et compte tenu des recommandations de l'organe d'évaluation, nous pensons que l'étendue de la zone de Hegmataneh pouvait être inscrite au cours de cette session.

En ce qui concerne la zone tampon, l'État partie a mis à disposition des nouvelles cartes suite au rapport de l'ICOMOS. Il n'y aura aucun changement dans cette zone, éliminant ainsi toute ambiguïté. Il y est écrit, « il convient de noter que le sujet de notre discussion et la région de Hegmataneh, mère des anciennes villes de la civilisation Perse, un point très important à retenir dans ce contexte. Nous disposons de preuves exceptionnelles de la civilisation Mède, dont très peu de vestiges survivent de cette période historique. En outre, des œuvres uniques des périodes Achéménide, Parthe et Sassanide ont également été découvertes dans cette région ». Il semble donc que ce site aurait dû être inscrit sur la Liste de patrimoine mondial depuis des années.

M. le Président,

Notre discussion se porte sur la région, berceau de cette ancienne ville de la civilisation Perse, un point crucial à retenir dans ce contexte. Ce lieu dispose de preuves exceptionnelles de la civilisation Mède, dont très peu de vestiges subsistent. En outre, des œuvres uniques des période Achéménide, Parthe, Sassanide ont également été découvertes dans cette région.

Par conséquent, M. le Président, le Rwanda soutient l'amendement proposé recommandant l'inscription de la partie du site antique de Hegmataneh sur la Liste du patrimoine mondiale de l'UNESCO.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Rwanda.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Belgium, followed by India.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président.

La Belgique remercie l'ICOMOS pour l'analyse pertinente de ce dossier. Nous avons pris connaissance avec intérêt des documents et cartes soumis très récemment par la République islamique d'Iran pour réviser la proposition en excluant les parties urbaines et historiques, anciennes mais néanmoins plus récentes, et se concentrant sur le site archéologique pour lequel la valeur universelle et l'intégrité paraissent établies dans l'évaluation actuelle.

La Belgique ne voudrait cependant pas que des mécanismes accélérés remplacent de manière systématique les procédures de renvoi mises en place par la Convention. Nous souhaitons dès lors que des mécanismes de dialogue soient envisagés dans le cadre du groupe de travail à composition non limitée, instauré par la Décision **45 COM 11** afin d'encadrer ce genre de situation.

Vu les changements considérables proposés dans l'amendement que nous avons reçu, nous soumettons, avec votre permission M. le Président, une question à l'ICOMOS. L'ICOMOS pourrait-elle nous confirmer si les adaptations du dossier tant au niveau de son étendue que de son titre sont suffisantes et paraissent adéquates pour correspondre à la valeur universelle exceptionnelle identifiée dans l'analyse actuelle et au potentiel du bien ?

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Thank you, Belgium, for that very specific question. Because if that question is answered in the affirmative, then we have an inscription.

India, you have the floor to be followed by Italy.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson, for giving India the floor.

Since several Committee members have already spoken before me, I shall not repeat things said already. Though we too would like to understand the rationale behind the inconsistency that was just pointed out by the Distinguished senior colleague from Lebanon.

India has carefully examined the nomination dossier of Hegmataneh and the Historical Centre of Hamedan, and has thoroughly studied the ICOMOS report and also the brief presentation that was just made. The factual error analysis indicates that there is a technical alignment between the State Party and ICOMOS on the evaluation issues.

This alignment demonstrates that our discussion in the Committee, while agreeing on an expert matter, facilitates, in our opinion, the process of inscribing a property on the World Heritage List. In fact, while accepting the ICOMOS' technical report, the Committee has the authority to facilitate the inscription process if it feels so, in cases where there is a technical consensus, in order to promote a broader and better understanding of the proposed nomination within the framework of the 1972 Convention.

The Hegmataneh dossier represents such a case. There is no doubt that the proposed Archaeological Site of Hegmataneh is of Outstanding Universal Value, and as ICOMOS has also stated, and meets criteria (ii), criteria (iii) for inscription, as there are no specific concerns regarding the management and conservation of this portion or part of the site, overall it is acceptable.

Therefore, India, like Qatar and several other members of the Committee, proposes that the World Heritage Committee inscribes this part of the property, namely the Archaeological Site of Hegmataneh, at this stage, with the recommendations it deems necessary in order to further contribute to the understanding of the Convention, especially since the property and buffer zone boundaries are clearly defined in this situation.

In addition to these points, I would like to remind that the subject of our discussion is a site from where exceptional heritage from some of the most important ancient civilizations of the Western Asia have been excavated, and renowned archaeologists have expressed precise opinions about the importance of this site. Therefore, based on the spirit of the 1972 Convention, which calls for the protection and conservation of the world's outstanding cultural and natural heritage, the inscription of this property is desirable and vital.

Last, we hope that the State Party at a later date considers the Historical Centre of Hamedan also to be added to the historic archaeological site of Hegmataneh, which also exhibits many layers of history.

Mr Chair, we would like, we would request India's name to be added to the list of Committee members supporting the inscription of Hegmataneh to the World Heritage List.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, India. That was pretty educational.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Italy, followed by Greece.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The documents provided by the ICOMOS evaluation clearly show the importance of the Archaeological Site of Hegmataneh, the ancient Ecbatana. The nominated property, particularly the archaeological remains already identified, contain significant evidence of ancient civilizations and the development of early Iranian culture. As stated in the ICOMOS evaluation report, the archaeological remains located into the property could potentially meet criteria (ii) and (iii), and the Outstanding Universal Value would be justified in a proposal solely based on this archaeological area.

This ancient city testified to the central role in the history of civilization since the seventh and sixth century BCE, especially for the history of Medes and of the following people living in that area, also for their influence, continuing all over the centuries until the construction of the modern city.

Italy supports and commends the efforts made by the State Party, and the positive assessment by ICOMOS on the archaeological remains. The recognition of the Outstanding Universal Value serves as a further motivation to continue and enhance the protection of the site, in order to preserve and improve this exceptional evidence for its conservation and transmission. This property would be an inspiration for future archaeological excavations, which are crucial for uncovering the rich cultural heritage and ancient civilizations of the region. These discoveries provide invaluable insights into human history, art and innovation, fostering a deeper understanding of our past.

Therefore, Italy believes that no impediments exist for the inscription of the archaeological part of the property solely, as proposed in the amendment presented by Qatar and accepted by the State Party.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Greece, followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

We would like to commend the State Party's readiness to fully respond to the ICOMOS concerns and recommendations. It is in this light of the above, it is in the light of the above that we would like to join our voice to those Delegations having expressed their support in favour of the inscription of the Hamedan Archaeological Site on the World Heritage List.

At the same time, I have to say that we...

The Chairperson:

Excellency, it's not Hamedan, it's Hegmataneh. Hamedan is the other part which is not being accepted. Thank you. Sorry. Sorry to interrupt you. Please continue.

The Delegation of Greece:

I always admire your readiness to come and give the right perspective in the debate, Mr Chairman.

So, we support, as other Delegations, the inscription of the Hegmataneh Archaeological Site on the World Heritage List. And I was saying that at the same time, we consider of particular importance the answer, the response that ICOMOS will give to the question raised by the State Party of Belgium to the Advisory Body.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

I thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the Republic of Korea, followed by Zambia.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Hegmataneh Archaeological Site exhibits the cultural interchanges among the cultures and civilizations of the Middle East in the first millennium BCE, and serves as internationally significant site, providing important and rare evidence of the Medes civilization. Recalling ICOMOS's evaluation that this historical significance can possibly be justified for the archaeological remains of the Hegmataneh site, Republic of Korea welcomes the State Party's revision of the nominated property boundaries to the archaeological remains of Hegmataneh, complying with the Advisory Body's recommendation, and supports the inscription of the nominated property on the World Heritage List, together under the criteria (ii) and (iii), with other Committee members.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Zambia, followed by Senegal.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Chair.

We would like to join the State Party of Qatar and other members of the Committee in supporting the amendments to the draft decision for inscription of Hegmataneh in Iran. We are convinced that this is a very important historical site which also served as the birthplace of Iranian civilization.

Even as we value the recommendations and guidance of ICOMOS, we are glad to note that ICOMOS agreed with the State Party of Iran that the archaeological site does have OUV meeting criteria (ii) and (iii), although we understand from a question raised from another State Party that we need to get confirmation from ICOMOS, if indeed they believe that the archaeological site does contain OUV.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Zambia.

I now give the floor to Senegal, followed by Mexico.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci, M. le Président.

Après avoir étudié le dossier, et tenant en compte l'attitude favorable de l'État partie, à poursuivre la collaboration avec les organes consultatifs, le Sénégal se joint à ses prédécesseurs pour appuyer le classement du site d'Hegmataneh sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO au titre des critères (ii) et (iii).

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Mexico, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Mexico: 28.05

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

My Delegation would also like to thank ICOMOS for its report and for the extraordinary work done. I would also like to recognise the State Party that is nominating this property, Iran, and thank it for its disposition to be open to ICOMOS's proposal.

So, I think we have responded to the concerns made by Lebanon and respond to the question made by Belgium. We believe that we should be able to inscribe the Archaeological Site of Hegmataneh and, at a later stage, for the second part, if OUV is established, to present the Historical City of Hamedan. And it's important to work on the integrated and comprehensive management plan of the archaeological site and to provide the corresponding maps along with the changes in the buffer zone. We would be, in that case, supportive to the inscription of the Hegmataneh site.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give now the floor to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr Chair,

The archaeological remains of this ancient city, known as Hegmataneh, is testimony to the existence of successive Middle Eastern civilization from the first millennium BCE onwards. Evidence of these successive human habitations suggests that of a capital city rich in its architecture, urban planning and intermixing of cultures. The State Party has submitted evidence to demonstrate the authenticity of Hegmataneh in its forms and materials, for example, the integrity of which is also evident in the archaeological remains.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines acknowledges the work to be carried out by the State Party in the areas of site management and monitoring, and considers there is a need to resubmit the revised boundaries in an updated nomination text to better align with the property to be inscribed as early as possible.

We therefore support the inscription of Hegmataneh as proposed by Qatar, subject to the confirmation from ICOMOS.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

This exhausts... Oh, there's one more speaker. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

We thank to the State Party for this nomination. We also thank to ICOMOS for their evaluation.

Carefully hearing the opinions by the distinguished members of the Committee and with the understanding of the archaeological values recognized outstanding as well as the protection mechanism installed, we have no difficulty to go along with the majority and support the proposed amendment in light of the spirit of joint work of our Committee.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Japan.

This has exhausted the list of Committee members that wanted to take the floor.

At this point in time, I'll give the floor first to ICOMOS and then to the Secretariat to answer the questions raised. You have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

ICOMOS has received two different questions. One proposed by the Distinguished Delegate of Lebanon concerning the rationale for the different approach that ICOMOS has adopted. One recommending the exclusion of subcomponent parts in nominations across this cycle of evaluation.

In the case of the previous nominations discussed, these were serial properties where the exclusion of certain components were not impacting the proposed justification of OUV, and where ICOMOS had recognized the criteria, maybe not all of them, but at least some of them, justified. Therefore, the exclusion of certain component parts could – were – considered coherent by ICOMOS to go with referral back, either inscription because the criteria were fine justified and there was no impact in the removal of certain components on the proposed justification for inscription.

The other question that was raised to ICOMOS, I think, was from the Delegate of Belgium and echoed by the Distinguished Delegate of Greece, where the ICOMOS could confirm that the changes proposed by the State Party... the ICOMOS can agree with this proposal. ICOMOS is obliged to remind that it cannot assess and evaluate any additional information following 28th February. Therefore, ICOMOS is not in a position to assess the material that has been proposed by the State Party, and we suppose has been submitted to the Committee members. ICOMOS has met the State Party, has received information about its intention to promote the inscription of the site, but could not be in the position to evaluate this material. So, we cannot respond whether we can confirm. ICOMOS would need to go back to its desk reviewers, its panel, who is the body that takes decision about what is the ICOMOS official position about documentation, evaluation and nominations.

Perhaps it's important to clarify, because it has been heard also from the Committee members, that the criteria have been found justified by ICOMOS, criterion (ii) and (iii). ICOMOS has identified potential for this criterion that might be justified with strength, and in fact, the recommendation is for strengthening the case for the proposal, develop a more coherent argumentation based on the archaeological values of the nominated property. So just to perhaps to clarify that ICOMOS has not found none of the criteria justified at this stage, only two might be justified in the future. So just to explain the rationale for a deferral in this case. And it is not just a matter of removing some part of the property that doesn't seem to match the potential for the property to be inscribed. I hope I made clear ICOMOS' position in this regard.

The Chairperson:

I now give the floor to the Secretariat.

Le Secrétariat :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je vais répondre à la question de la Belgique sur les besoins, éventuellement, d'aligner les dossiers aux changements. Effectivement, je crois que nous sommes ici devant un cas dans lequel la proportion, le poids et l'étendue des changements apportés par le Comité ici sont dans une telle proportion par rapport au dossier originel, que la demande d'aligner avec ces changements, et un nouveau dossier se justifie. Je crois que la réponse aussi de l'ICOMOS va dans ce sens-là, et on vient aussi d'entendre une proposition de la Délégation de Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines allant dans le même sens.

Et juste pour terminer sur ça, je pense que la différence, on peut se référer aux différences qui sont présentes – présentées – dans les Orientations entre une modification mineure, quand il s'agit d'une modification mineure et certains composants sont retirés par le Comité d'une série de dossier et ces changements n'a pas un grand impact, on n'a pas d'impact sur la déclaration de valeur universelle exceptionnelle, tandis qu'il y a des modifications plus importantes. Donc, comme le paragraphe 165 des Orientations présente, et dans ce cas-là, cette demande d'un dossier aligné avec les sites que le Comité est en train d'inscrire serait plutôt justifiée.

Merci, Monsieur le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We now go to para 1. Are there any objections for the adoption of para 1? I see none.

We go to para 2. Are there any objections to the adoption of para 2? I see none.

We go to para 3. Are there any objections to para 3?

Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Yes, Mr Chair, it's not an objection. It's just a small question to ICOMOS. In para. 3, there is protection and management requirements, and it is said, "the component parts of the property". To my knowledge, we use the term "component" when we have a property in series, which is not the case here. Can you just tell me if we can use, in this case, the component parts? Thank you.

The Chairperson:

ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

No. In fact, this, from what we have understood, this is just one element, continuous, so the wording should be "property". But the Committee members know the maps of the proposed revised property. So, if it is just one component, we should use "property".

The Chairperson:

I give the floor to the Director of the WHC.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

No. Thank you, Chairperson.

No, what I'm just trying to say is that what you're doing here is that you're only taking note of the provisional statement of OUV, which then is going to be reworked in between the... with the State Party in order for you to adopt it later, in the final one.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

All right. Thank you.

The suggested provisional corrections are already there.

We go to para 3. Are there any objections for the adoption of para 3?

I see... Yes, Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Sorry to take the floor. This will be the last time.

When we read paragraph a), "submit the revised nominated property boundaries officially in light of a refocused justification", we have just inscribed the property. If we say, "in light of a refocused justification", it is as if we inscribed a property where the justification of its OUV is not clear and should be refocused. I propose to remove this phrase and to say, "submit the revised nominated property boundaries officially", point; that's all. And remove the "in light of refocused justification" because, I mean, the Committee accepted the justification because it's inscribed the property.

The Chairperson:

Excellency, please don't say "this is the last time I'm taking the floor". Because if you do that, then I do not get to witness your wisdom again and again. And I very much look forward to it.

Qatar, is this okay? Qatar? You're the presenter. Is it okay? The justification of Lebanon. Okay.

We now go back to the para we just approved, and we go to the subsequent para thereafter. Right. Para 3, there was no objection to para 3.

Now para 4 how it appears on the screen. The names of the countries supporting will be copy pasted. Yes. Please scroll down.

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Now, I think if we scroll back to the para a), I think we should let this portion, "in light of the refocused justification", of course should go, but we should say that "submit the maps of the revised property boundaries of the archaeological remains". So, we know that we are defining the boundaries of the archaeological remains, so that part.

The Chairperson:

Yes. So just remove the word "based on" and replace it with the word "of". And remove the hyphen. Yes. Thank you.

We go to para b). Is it acceptable?

We go to para c). Scroll down.

d), e). All right. Is there any objection to para 4 as a whole? I see none.

We go to para 5. Is there any objection to para 5? I see none.

Is there any objection to the adoption of the entire decision as a whole, as amended? I see no objections.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.17** adopted as amended. *[gavel] [applause]*

Thank you very much. Let me congratulate the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the entire Committee for the inscription of this property. Iran, you have the floor for up to four minutes. Unless, of course, you want me to speak something in the Persian language.

The Observer Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

[first speaker] [interpretation from Persian] Can we please ask the speaker to wait a second? We're missing the person who can interpret from Persian.

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Mr Chairman, Esteemed members of the World Committee, greetings.

I would like to thank you for agreeing to inscribe Hegmataneh, an exceptional site of global value on the World Heritage List. This decision will undoubtedly encourage us to redouble our efforts to protect this invaluable site in Iran.

Iran is a land of history with a civilization dating back more than 7,000 years. We are committed to preserving historical sites like Hegmataneh and passing them on to further generations. Hegmataneh is a remarkable relic from the glorious eras of the Medians, Achaemenids, Parthians, Sasanians and Islamic civilizations. Archaeologists interpret Hegmataneh as a place where various peoples gathered and assembled, making it a prominent testament to the development of urban planning and culture in Iran, dating back 3 millennia. It can be considered a harbinger of the birth of the Persian civilization in ancient Iran.

However, it is important to note that Hegmataneh, now known as Hamedan, is a city where world renowned figures such as Avicenna worked and lived. Therefore, the inscription of Hegmataneh signifies the registration of an ancient city that stands as a beacon of culture and civilization in the region.

Once again, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the esteemed members of the World Heritage Committee, especially in the State of Qatar, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and all members of the Committee for their support in inscribing Hegmataneh on the World Heritage List.

Finally, I convey the greetings of the people and Government of Iran to you and express our sincere appreciation to the Government of India, its officials and the friendly people of India for hosting this important meeting. I now invite you to listen to the address of the esteemed Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to UNESCO. *[end of interpretation]*

[second speaker] Excellencies, dear colleagues,

The inscription of the Hegmataneh Archaeological Site fills the Iranian people with immense pride, celebrating their rich history and cultural heritage. This recognition by UNESCO honours Iran's ancient civilization and strengthens our national identity and solidarity. Meanwhile, the most important is understanding this inscription through the spirit of UNESCO World Heritage Convention. This Convention plays a crucial role in fostering mutual understanding and solidarity among nations by identifying and preserving sites of cultural and natural significance. It highlights our shared heritage, transcending national borders and cultural differences. This collective effort to protect our global heritage fosters respect and appreciation for diverse cultures, promoting international cooperation. The Convention encourages dialogue and collaboration, creating a sense of global community. Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you and our congratulations.

Dear Committee members, we have reached the end of a plenary meeting today. As announced earlier, we will therefore reconvene on Monday morning at 10:00 am to continue the examination of our agenda items as planned in the timetable enclosed in Document 3B. There will be no Bureau and no plenary meetings tomorrow.

I wish you a pleasant evening and a restful day tomorrow, but the Secretariat informs me that they would like to take the floor one more time.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

This is just to inform you that we only have one side-event immediately after the session and the side-event is entitled "Fortifications and military landscapes of Asia", organized by the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Fortifications and Military Heritage (ICOFORT). And it will take place in Room MR 19. Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much. The Host Country, India, would like to make some announcement. You have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

I just want to make a small announcement on behalf of the Ministry of Culture and Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India that since tomorrow is an off, I'm certain many delegates would be wanting to go and visit the monuments. Delhi has 3 World Heritage properties and nearby Agra has also 3 World Heritage properties, including the Taj Mahal. So anybody who is wishing to go to these World Heritage properties, if you could kindly let us know so that we can make adequate arrangements for their visit, and, you know, ensuring that their visit to these monuments is a memorable one. So if you could please let us know so that we can to the necessary preparations accordingly. Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. The word "off" may not be appropriate because we said there would be no Bureau meeting and no plenary meetings tomorrow from 10 to 1 and from 3 to 6. However, if anybody wants to come for the exhibitions, 1 to 3 there will be still some events and 6 to 8 also if somebody would like to come for the events, they are most welcome. So as far as we are concerned, there is no plenary morning and evening sessions. The meeting is adjourned. ^[gavel]

The meeting rose at 6:35 pm. // La séance a été levée à 18h35.

SEVENTH DAY

Sunday, 28 July 2024

Chairperson:

H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

SEPTIÈME JOUR

Dimanche 28 juillet 2024

Président :

S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

No plenary session / Pas de session plénière

EIGHTH DAY
Monday, 29 July 2024
THIRTEENTH PLENARY MEETING
10:16 am – 12:30 am
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

HUITIÈME JOUR
Lundi 29 juillet 2024
TREIZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h16 – 12h30
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues, please take your seats. We are about to begin.

Dear colleagues, *Namaste*.

I hope you all enjoyed your day off yesterday and had the opportunity to visit some of the fantastic cultural attractions New Delhi offers.

Before we resume our session, I would like to inform you of the outcomes of the seventh meeting of the Bureau. The Bureau recommends that today we resume the examination of the agenda items as they are indicated in Document 3B, namely Item 8B with the review of minor boundary modifications and retrospective statements of Outstanding Universal Value, then items 8D, 8E, 8C and the closing of general Item 8. We will also close general Item 7 on the state of conservation, and will examine Item 9A and Item 10A with the presentation of the report on the results of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting exercise in Europe and North America. Should time allow, the Committee might also wish to proceed with the examination of Items 10B, 12 and 13, initially foreseen for tomorrow. A request was also placed in the Bureau for all the recommendations to be considered under Item 11, related to the work of the Open-ended Working Group to be adopted all together as a package. Please also note that the State Party of Bulgaria informed the Bureau that it is considering being the Host Country next year, and a formal announcement might be made tomorrow morning. Thank you very much.

Dear colleagues,

While we will be examining Item 7 related to general issues on the state of conservation of World Heritage properties, I would like to recall that through the reactive monitoring process, the aim of the Committee is to provide, on the basis of the analyses made on its behalf by the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies, the best possible advice to States Parties to the Convention to ensure the long term protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage properties.

I would also like to recall what has always been the method of work of the Committee on this matter, in conformity with paragraph 176 of the *Operational Guidelines*. When the Committee decides that a property has not seriously deteriorated to the extent that it meets the criteria set out in paragraphs 177 to 182 for the inscription in the List of World Heritage in Danger, it still encourages the concerned State Party to implement the necessary corrective measures to address the identified threats in close collaboration with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.

8B. NOMINATIONS TO THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST (Ct'd) // PROPOSITIONS D'INSCRIPTION SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL (suite)

MINOR BOUNDARY MODIFICATIONS OF PROPERTIES ALREADY INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST // EXAMEN DES MODIFICATIONS MINEURES DES LIMITES DE BIENS DÉJÀ INSCRITS SUR LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

8B.31 W-Arly-Pendjari Complex (Benin / Burkina Faso / Niger) // Complexe W-Arly-Pendjari (Bénin / Burkina Faso / Niger)

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We will now proceed with the examination of the 13 minor modifications to the boundaries of properties already inscribed on the World Heritage List. You will find the related draft decisions in Document WHC/24/46.COM/8B.Add.

We will first examine the minor boundary modification of one natural property. Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, draft Decision **46 COM 8B.31**. I now invite IUCN to present the minor boundary modification of W-Arly-Pendjari Complex, Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger. IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN :

Merci, M. le Président.

Cette modification mineure du complexe W-Arly-Pendjari est proposée par l'État partie du Niger, appuyée par le Bénin et le Burkina Faso. Elle a été soumise au Comité sur la base de l'évaluation de l'IUCN en 2017. Elle permet d'ajouter une zone tampon de plus de 230 000 hectares en incluant la réserve totale de faune de Tamou et une partie de la réserve de faune de Dosso.

Monsieur le Président,

L'IUCN considère que cette zone tampon, protégée par la législation et gérée par un organe efficace, renforcera l'intégrité du bien par la protection de ses écosystèmes en augmentant la superficie totale des zones tampons à plus de 1 300 000 hectares. En conclusion, M. le Président, l'IUCN recommande au Comité d'approuver cette modification des limites telle que proposée dans le projet de Décision **46 COM 8B.31**.

J'en ai fini, M. le Président. Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, IUCN, for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none. Let's proceed then. Thank you.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.31**, but before doing so I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendment on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Bonjour M. le Président. Bonjour à toutes et à tous.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendements concernant ce point.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Good morning to you as well.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.31** adopted. *[gavel]*

8B.32 Maloti-Drakensberg Park (Lesotho / South Africa) // Parc Maloti-Drakensberg (Lesotho / Afrique du Sud)

The Chairperson:

We will now examine the minor boundary modification of one mixed property. South Africa, Maloti-Drakensberg Park, Lesotho. Draft Decision **46 COM 8B.32**. South Africa and Lesotho. Thank you.

I invite ICOMOS and IUCN to present the minor boundary modification of the Maloti-Drakensberg Park, Lesotho, South Africa. ICOMOS and IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN :

Merci, M. le Président.

Sur la base de l'évaluation de l'IUCN de 2013, le Comité avait demandé à l'État partie d'Afrique du Sud d'officialiser les zones tampons qui entourent le bien. Cette zone tampon s'ajouterait à celle de Lesotho, portant la superficie totale à près de 329 000 hectares. Cette modification des limites du bien renforce sa protection contre les menaces telles que la construction d'un téléphérique et l'exploitation pétrolière.

En conclusion, M. le Président, l'IUCN considère que cette modification mineure améliorerait la protection du bien et recommande au Comité de l'approuver telle que proposée dans le projet de Décision **46 COM 8B.32**.

M. le Président, avec votre autorisation, l'ICOMOS va compléter ma présentation du fait du caractère mixte du bien.

Merci.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair and good morning.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS component of the evaluation of this minor boundary modifications of the Maloti-Drakensberg Park of Lesotho and South Africa. As my colleague has explained, this is a transnational mixed property. Its cultural heritage includes the largest and most concentrated groups of paintings in caves and rock shelters in Africa, south of the Sahara, associated with the San people for 4,000 years.

As explained in 2013, a partial buffer sign was defined for the Lesotho part of the property. The World Heritage Committee requested the States Parties to cooperate to extend the buffer zone into the territory of South Africa and this proposed minor boundary modification responds to that request.

In addition to the information already provided by my colleague from IUCN, ICOMOS notes that the buffer zone objectives address nature conservation requirements but provide little information about how the buffer zone acts as an additional layer of protection for the cultural values. South Africa suggests that the buffer zone has been defined on the basis of the location of archaeological sites, but no maps were provided to demonstrate their distribution. While the proposed buffer zone responds in principle to the World Heritage Committee's recommendations and can be welcomed, ICOMOS considers that the adequacy of the information cannot be assessed for cultural, on the basis of cultural value due to these issues.

As a consequence, ICOMOS recommend that the examination of the proposed buffer zone of the Maloti-Drakensberg Park, in Lesotho and South Africa be referred back to the State Party of South Africa in order to allow to provide more detailed maps showing the two sub-zones of the buffer zone and the locations of archaeological sites and to indicate how the buffer zone will specifically provide additional protection for the cultural heritage of the mixed property.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentations.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.32**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement du Comité.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.32** adopted. [gave!]

8B.33 Himā Cultural Area (Saudi Arabia) // Aire culturelle de Himā (Arabie saoudite)

The Chairperson:

We will now continue with the minor boundary modification of cultural properties: Saudi Arabia, Himā Cultural Area, draft Decision **46 COM 8B.33**.

I invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modification of Himā Cultural Area, Saudi Arabia. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you. Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for the Himā Cultural Area in Saudi Arabia. Located on an ancient caravan route, this is a serial property of six component parts with a substantial collection of rock art images depicting hunting, fauna, flora and lifestyles in a cultural continuity of 7,000 years. The component parts share a single buffer zone.

Inscribed in 2021, the World Heritage Committee recommended that the buffer zone be expanded to include Jabal al-Kawbab and part of Jabal al-Qara, based on the advice of ICOMOS. The red line on the map is the previous buffer zone and the proposed revision is shown in yellow on this map. You can see that it is a substantial expansion from a total of 31,000 hectares to more than 77,000 hectares for the buffer zone.

Legal protection for the area is in place, and the State Party intends to further enhance the protection of the property by proclaiming the inscribed area and buffer zone as an archaeological park.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed minor boundary modification to the buffer zone is a significant improvement, adding to the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the inscribed property. Smaller, further adjustments to the buffer zone to the south and southeast of the property are recommended.

In conclusion, ICOMOS recommends that the proposed modification to the buffer zone of the Himā Cultural Area, Saudi Arabia be approved.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would now like to know whether there are any comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.33**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité sur ce dossier.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.33** adopted. ^[gavel]

8B.34 Hallstatt-Dachstein / Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape (Austria) // Paysage culturel de Hallstatt-Dachstein / Salzkammergut (Autriche)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modification of Hallstatt-Dachstein / Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape, Austria. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chair. Good morning, everyone.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for Hallstatt-Dachstein / Salzkammergut, Austria. The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1997 under criteria (iii) and (iv). At the time of the inscription, the map submitted together with the nomination dossier was one drawn by hand. The State Party later submitted a digitalized version of it, which was approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2008. In 2009, the Austrian Environmental Impact Assessment Act was modified, taking into account World Heritage properties as Special Protected areas. This required that the existing map be transferred to the cadastral map in 2017. A number of irregularities appeared during this process, such as inaccuracies in the boundaries of the buffer zone or important attributes being located in the buffer zone, instead of within the boundaries of the property.

All attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are now within the property's boundaries, and Environmental Impact Assessments are in place, considering World Heritage properties as Specially Protected Areas. The proposed adjustments of the property and buffer zone will therefore enhance the management of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone.

In conclusion, ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor boundary modification of Hallstatt-Dachstein / Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape, Austria, be approved, the proposed minor modification to the boundary of the buffer zone for Hallstatt-Dachstein / Salzkammergut Cultural Landscape, Austria, be approved. ICOMOS has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS for your presentation.

Are there any comments? I see none, let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt draft Decision **46 COM 8B.34**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité sur ce dossier, M. le Président.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.34** adopted. ^[gavel]

8B.35 Wachau Cultural Landscape (Austria) // Paysage culturel de la Wachau (Autriche)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modifications of the Wachau Cultural Landscape, Austria. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for Wachau Cultural Landscape, Austria. The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2000 under criteria (ii) and (iv). The map submitted together with the nomination dossier, was first drawn by hand and then redrawn by GIS system in 1999. In 2009, the Austrian Environmental Impact Assessment Act was modified, taking into account World Heritage properties as Special Protected areas. This required that the existing World Heritage boundaries be transferred to the cadastral map. This version of the map was used as a reference for the boundary modification done in 2016, in the process of drafting a new management plan for the World Heritage property. During this process, some unclear situations were resolved, with boundaries adapted to more recent conservation plans, resulting in the widening of the property at the cost of the buffer zone.

All attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are now contained within the property boundaries. The proposed clarification of boundaries with the revised map will therefore better support the management of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone.

In conclusion, ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of Wachau Cultural Landscape, Austria, be approved, the proposed minor modification to the boundary of the buffer zone for Wachau Cultural Landscape, Austria, be approved. ICOMOS has included a number of further recommendations in the draft decision to support the long-term conservation of the property.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none, let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.35**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.35** adopted. [gavel]

8B.36 The Great Spa Towns of Europe (Austria / Belgium / Czechia / France / Germany / Italy / United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) // Les grandes villes d'eaux d'Europe (Autriche / Belgique / Tchèque / France / Allemagne / Italie / Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modification of the Great Spa Towns of Europe, Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for the Great Spa Towns of Europe, Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. This transnational property of 11 spa towns in 7 countries was inscribed in 2021. Developed around natural mineral water springs, the towns demonstrate European spa culture that developed from the 18th century.

This proposal responds to the recommendations of the World Heritage Committee at the time of inscription, to submit minor boundary modifications for a number of the component parts. The first is an adjustment to the boundaries of areas in Baden bei Wien, Austria, and to extend the protection zone to include the entirety of the component. This has been addressed. For Montecatini Terme, Italy, several adjustments to the boundaries were recommended during... including extending the boundaries on the western edge of the component part to include the buildings on each side of the street. The proposal is a partial response but does not include all the areas recommended for extension in 2021. For Karlovy Vary in Czechia, it was recommended to extend the northern part of the buffer zone to ensure adequate protection from future development. This has been addressed. Finally, the recommended extension of the buffer zone for Vichy in France around the train station has been included in this proposal.

In conclusion, ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor boundary modifications to the boundaries and buffer zones be approved. A recommendation for further work to continue to extend the conservation area in Montecatini Terme in Italy has also been provided.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.36**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.36** adopted. [gavel]

8B.37 Frontiers of the Roman Empire – The Danube Limes (Western Segment) (Austria / Germany / Slovakia) // Les frontières de l'Empire romain – le limes du Danube (segment occidental) (Autriche / Allemagne / Slovaquie)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modification of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire - The Danube Limes, Western Segment, Austria, Germany, Slovakia. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for Frontiers of the Roman Empire - The Danube Limes, Western Segment, in Austria, Germany and Slovakia. There are proposed revisions to 12 of the component parts that are shown – one at a time on the slides that follow – with the component boundaries shown in red, and the proposed buffer zones shown in blue.

The serial transnational property of 77 component parts was inscribed in 2021, and extends almost 600 kilometres along the Danube River. This segment of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire formed a continuous chain of military installations along the Danube that functioned between the first and fifth centuries CE.

Based on the advice of ICOMOS, the World Heritage Committee recommended that the States Parties give consideration to establishing buffer zones for component parts that did not have them. Accordingly, minor boundary modifications are proposed for 12 of the component parts; they are located in Germany and Austria. ICOMOS considers that these proposals provide stronger protection to archaeological materials associated with the inscribed component parts, as well as their setting.

In conclusion, ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor boundary modifications to provide buffer zones for 12 component parts of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire - the Danube Limes, Western Segment, Austria, Germany and Slovakia, be approved.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.37**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.37** adopted. [gavel]

8B.38 Abbey Church of Saint-Savin sur Gartempe (France) // Abbatiale de Saint-Savin sur Gartempe (France)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modification of the Abbey Church of Saint-Savin sur Gartempe, France. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for the Abbey Church of Saint-Savin sur Gartempe, France. Known as the Romanesque Sistine Chapel, the Abbey Church of Saint-Savin contains many beautiful 11th and 12th century murals that are still in a remarkable state of preservation. The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1983 on the basis of criteria (i) and (iii), without any buffer zone. The World Heritage Committee approved the buffer zone in 2007. In 2015, the boundaries of the property were

extended to encompass parts of the ancient abbey convent structures and its gardens. In 2018, the World Heritage Committee adopted a retrospective statement of Outstanding Universal Value.

A minor boundary modification request for the property, submitted in 2020, proposed extending the existing buffer zone to 4,214 hectares. The limits of the proposed buffer zone have been established based on an assessment of landscape sensitivity, and further informed by historical analysis of the land settlements around the commune of Saint-Savin. Legal protection is ensured through the Heritage Code and the respective municipality's urban planning regulations.

The existing protection will need to be adapted and appropriate management tools introduced to manage the extended buffer zone as a whole. At its 44th session, the World Heritage Committee referred back the proposed minor boundary modification of the buffer zone, requesting maps at an adequate scale, a timetable for adopting planning and heritage protection tools and clarification about the management. The State Party has addressed the request made by the Committee, providing additional information. ICOMOS considers that the proposed buffer zone seems adequate as an added layer of protection to the property. Its effectiveness would need to be assessed after the existing protection and management tools are adapted and the management plan completed.

In conclusion, ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Abbey Church of Saint-Savin sur Gartempe, France, be approved. ICOMOS has also provided additional recommendations to ensure the long-term conservation of the property.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none, let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt draft Decision **46 COM 8B.38**, but before doing so I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.38** adopted. ^[gavel]

8B.39 Paris, Banks of the Seine (France) // Paris, rives de la Seine (France)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modifications of Paris, Banks of the Seine, France. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Merci, M. le Président.

Il s'agit de la présentation de l'évaluation par l'ICOMOS de la modification mineure des limites du bien Paris, Rives de la Seine, France. Le bien est un ensemble architectural urbain exceptionnel, uni par un paysage fluvial qui reflète l'évolution et le développement de Paris et illustre la plupart des styles des arts décoratifs et des manières de bâtir utilisés dans la ville pendant près des huit siècles de son histoire.

Le bien a été inscrit en 1991 sur la base des critères (i), (ii) et (iv) et sans zone tampon. Une déclaration rétrospective de valeur universelle exceptionnelle a été adoptée en 2017. En 2020, une demande de modification mineure des limites du bien a été soumise par l'État partie, en même temps qu'une demande de création de zone tampon. La modification proposée envisageait d'ajouter à l'ensemble existant des monuments architecturaux et urbains et d'améliorer la cohérence des limites du bien par rapport à la valeur universelle exceptionnelle pour laquelle il avait été inscrit. Les limites de la zone tampon ont été définies à l'aide d'une étude de l'histoire et de la topographie du paysage, en prenant en compte les vues sur et depuis la Seine. Aucun plan de gestion de bien n'était disponible en 2021, et aucune mesure de gestion spéciale n'avait été exposée pour la zone tampon proposée. Simultanément, il était reconnu que l'intégrité urbaine et visuelle du site était vulnérable vis à vis des nombreux facteurs affectant le bien.

En 2022, le Comité du patrimoine mondial n'a pas approuvé la proposition de modification mineure de limites de Paris, Rives de la Seine, France, et a demandé à l'État partie de définir plus clairement la justification de la délimitation de la zone tampon et de préparer un plan de gestion.

La demande actuelle de modification mineure des limites répond à la décision du Comité du patrimoine mondial et suit largement l'avis fourni par l'ICOMOS dans son évaluation de 2020. L'État partie a expliqué que la zone tampon proposée vise à protéger les vues depuis le bien, prenant en compte de potentielles zones de densification urbaine. La protection juridique existante couvre déjà les zones incluses dans les limites nouvellement proposées. La réglementation en place assure que la conservation, la restauration et la valorisation du bien seront réalisées sous le contrôle de l'État. Le plan de gestion du bien est en cours de conceptualisation et sera élaboré par la Ville de Paris en collaboration avec les services de l'État une fois que les limites du bien et de la zone tampon auront été validées par le Comité du patrimoine mondial.

En conclusion, l'ICOMOS recommande que la proposition de modification mineure des limites du bien et de création d'une zone tampon pour Paris, Rives de la Seine, France soit approuvée. L'ICOMOS recommande également qu'un plan de gestion soit élaboré de toute urgence.

Merci pour votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.39**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision as proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.39** adopted. ^[gavel]

8B.40 The Loire Valley between Sully-sur-Loire and Chalonnes (France) // Val de Loire entre Sully-sur-Loire et Chalonnes (France)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modifications of the Loire Valley between Sully-sur-Loire and Chalonnes, France. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS :

Merci, M. le Président.

Il s'agit de la présentation de l'évaluation par l'ICOMOS de la modification mineure des limites du Val de Loire entre Sully-sur-Loire et Chalonnes, France. Le Val de Loire est un paysage culturel exceptionnel de grande beauté, comprenant des villes et villages historiques, de grands monuments architecturaux – les châteaux – les terres cultivées façonnées par des siècles d'interaction entre les populations et leur environnement physique, et la Loire elle-même. Le Val de Loire entre Sully-sur-Loire et Châlons a été inscrite en 2000 sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial sur la base des critères (i), (ii) et (iv). Sur la base des principes énoncés dans le dossier de proposition d'inscription, l'État partie a soumis une demande de modification mineure des limites en 2017 qui a été approuvée, afin d'inclure le Château de Chenonceau et l'Éperon de Marnay, la zone de confluence entre la Loire l'Indre. La déclaration rétrospective de valeur universelle exceptionnelle a été adoptée par le Comité du patrimoine mondial en 2018.

La modification actuelle des limites du bien propose d'étendre la zone du bien inscrite et sa zone tampon. La modification implique l'inclusion de la vallée de la Maine, un affluent de la Loire, du point de confluence avec la Loire jusqu'au centre historique d'Angers inclus. L'ICOMOS considère que la logique de la modification proposée est justifiée, mais les changements proposés devraient être évalués avec précision. Angers et la Maine n'ont pas été, lors de la soumission du dossier de proposition d'inscription, pris en considération pour inclusion dans le bien. Ils n'ont pas non plus été présentés comme faisant partie de la zone tampon à travers de laquelle leur relation aux biens pourrait être confirmée. La contribution d'Angers en tant qu'établissement urbain remarquable du Val de Loire à la valeur universelle exceptionnelle du bien inscrit et son potentiel pour justifier les critères (i), (ii) et (iv), exigerait

une analyse systématique de la modification proposée par le biais des consultations d'experts internationaux et d'une mission d'évaluation technique. Ce travail ne peut être entrepris dans le cadre d'une demande de modification mineure des limites.

L'ICOMOS en conclut que cette proposition ne peut être envisagée comme une modification mineure des limites et les informations fournies sont insuffisantes pour permettre de comprendre comment les nouvelles limites de la zone tampon ont été établies et en quoi elles soutiennent le bien.

En conclusion, l'ICOMOS recommande que la proposition de modification mineure des limites de la Val de Loire entre Sully-sur-Loire et Chalonnes, France ne soit pas approuvée. L'ICOMOS encourage l'État partie à soumettre une demande de modification importante des limites afin d'étendre le bien du Val de Loire entre Sully-sur-Loire et Chalonnes pour inclure la Vallée de la Maine du point de la confluence avec la Loire jusqu'au centre historique d'Angers inclus.

Merci pour votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none, let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.40**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.40** adopted. [gavel]

8B.41 Castles of Augustusburg and Falkenlust at Brühl (Germany) // Châteaux d'Augustusburg et de Falkenlust à Brühl (Allemagne)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modifications of the Castles of Augustusburg and Falkenlust at Brühl, Germany. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for Castles of Augustusburg and Falkenlust at Brühl, Germany. The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1984 under criteria (ii) and (iv). At the time of its inscription, neither specific boundaries nor a buffer zone were proposed. The World Heritage Committee adopted the boundaries in 2008, in response to the retrospective inventory, and a retrospective statement of Outstanding Universal Value was adopted in 2013. During this process, the importance of setting a buffer zone to support the long-term conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property emerged. The proposed buffer zone corresponds to the immediate surroundings of the property which define its historical setting. It has been developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders and taking into account all areas and features that contribute to the maintenance of the landscape setting of the property. It has been delineated to prevent any intrusive development into the urban layout on the scale of the city of Brühl, to preserve the views and sightlines of and between the palaces of Augustusburg and Falkenlust, and to integrate the property into the surrounding landscape.

The proposed buffer zone will be legally protected at a regional level, with a regulatory ordinance issued by the District Government of Cologne, and almost half of it falls into two landscape protection areas. In addition, a Heritage Impact Assessment mechanism is now in place to support the protection of the property when any proposed development within or outside of the proposed buffer zone presents a risk for its Outstanding Universal Value.

In conclusion, ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zone for the Castles of Augustusburg and Falkenlust at Brühl, Germany be approved. ICOMOS further recommends that the protection of the historical landscape setting

to the east and south of the property be reinforced by undertaking Heritage Impact Assessments on any proposed development in this area.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none, let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.41**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité sur ce dossier, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM B8.41** adopted. [gavel]

8B.42 Muskauer Park / Park Mużakowski (Germany / Poland) // Parc de Muskau / Parc Mużakowski (Allemagne / Pologne)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modifications of the Muskauer Park, Germany and Poland. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for Muskauer Park / Park Mużakowski, Germany, Poland. The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2004, on the basis of criteria (i) and (iv). A retrospective statement of Outstanding Universal Value was approved by the World Heritage Committee in 2014. In the framework of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, and as a follow-up to the Retrospective Inventory Project launched in 2004, the World Heritage Centre noticed the absence of maps clearly showing the delimitation of the property. It requested the two States Parties to submit adequate quality maps and geographic information for the property.

The proposed minor boundary modification concerns adjustments to the boundaries of the World Heritage property and its buffer zone. While the initial map submitted together with the nomination dossier was following the significant topographic features such as line of trees, roads, terrain and the like, the boundaries were reworked with a modern GIS software and now align with plot boundaries of the Muskauer Park / Park Mużakowski as per the cadastral data. Both the area of the property and the buffer zone have been expanded following the changes. The proposed minor boundary modification will contribute to the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and reinforce its management.

In conclusion, ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundaries of Muskauer Park / Park Mużakowski, Germany, Poland be approved; the proposed minor modification to the buffer zone of Muskauer Park / Park Mużakowski, Germany, Poland, be approved.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.42**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité sur ce dossier, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.42** adopted. *[gavel]*

8B.43 Colonial City of Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) // Ville coloniale de Saint-Domingue (République dominicaine)

The Chairperson:

I now invite ICOMOS to present the minor boundary modification of the Colonial City of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. ICOMOS, you have the floor.

ICOMOS:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

This is the presentation of the ICOMOS evaluation of the minor boundary modification for the Colonial City of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The Colonial City of Santo Domingo was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1990 under criteria (ii), (iv) and (vi), based on its significance as one of the earliest colonial settlements in the Americas, founded soon after the arrival of Christopher Columbus to Hispaniola.

The property's boundary and buffer zone were not defined at the time of inscription, but were clarified in 2013 through the retrospective inventory. In 2014, World Heritage Committee adopted a retrospective statement of Outstanding Universal Value. Considering the properties existing development threats, the World Heritage Committee initiated requests for the establishment of the buffer zone in 2006, and reiterated them in subsequent decisions in 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2023.

The two proposed buffer zones have been defined as a transition area between the historic centre and the urban fabric of the modern city of Santo Domingo. The delineation of the proposed buffer zones involves two municipalities, the National District and Santo Domingo East. The proposed buffer zones are conceived as an intermediate control zone between the property and the rest of the city, which safeguard the historic landscape setting. Their delineation is based on the study of the surrounding area of the Colonial City, considering future potential developments in order to provide restrictions in use and development. The buffer zone in the National District is included in the strategic plan for the Colonial City. Both buffer zones are supported by ordinances regulating uses and interventions, and protecting viewsheds towards and from the property. Since 2005, an interinstitutional agreement has been in place, including the Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Historic Centre, the City Hall of the National District, the National Directorate of Monumental Heritage and the Ministry of Culture as managers of the property, as well as the Committee for the Conservation of the Colonial City of Santo Domingo.

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed buffer zones for the Colonial City of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, be approved. ICOMOS has also provided additional recommendations for the long-term protection and management of the property.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you ICOMOS for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are comments concerning this minor boundary modification. I see none.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.43**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité sur ce dossier, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.43** adopted. [gavel]

We have now finished the examination of minor boundary modifications.

STATEMENTS OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE OF PROPERTIES INSCRIBED AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS AND NOT ADOPTED BY THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

The Chairperson:

We will now continue with our next Agenda Item 8B and proceed with the adoption of Statements of Outstanding Universal Value of properties inscribed at previous sessions of the Committee. I now invite M. Balsamo to present this point. M. Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chairperson.

The World Heritage Committee is called to adopt the finalized of Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for the following World Heritage properties inscribed at its previous sessions:

- Benin, Togo, Koutammakou, the Land of Batammariba
- Greece, Zagori Cultural Landscape
- Guatemala, National Archaeological Park Tak'alik Ab'aj
- India, Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas
- Iran, The Persian Caravanserais
- Italy, The Porticoes of Bologna
- Lithuania, the Modernist Kaunas: Architecture of Optimism, 1919-1939
- Russian Federation, Astronomical Observatories of Kazan Federal University
- Rwanda, Memorial sites of the Genocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi and Bisesero
- Tunisia, Djerba: Testimony to a settlement pattern in an island territory
- Türkiye, Wooden Hypostyle Mosques of Medieval Anatolia.

Draft Decision **46 COM 8B.30** is on page 69 of the English version of Document 8B and page 63 of its French version.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, M. Balsamo, for this presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 8B.30**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments to the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8B.30** adopted. [gavel]

Thank you very much.

8D. CLARIFICATIONS OF PROPERTY BOUNDARIES AND AREAS BY STATES PARTIES // CLARIFICATIONS DES LIMITES ET DES SUPERFICIES DES BIENS PAR LES ÉTATS PARTIES

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We shall now move to Item 8D devoted to the issue of the clarifications of property boundaries and areas by States Parties. Please refer to Documents 46.COM/8D and 8D.Add.

I invite Ms Luba Janikova, Project Officer at the Nominations Unit of the World Heritage Centre, to present briefly Documents 8D and 8D.Add. Ms Janikova, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Documents 8D and 8D.Add present cartographic and geographic information provided by States Parties regarding boundary clarifications of World Heritage properties. These documents present information related to maps and geographic information of properties reviewed and accepted through the Retrospective Inventory Project since the last session of Committee.

As you know, the retrospective inventory was initiated in 2004 with the aim to identify and collect data such as information on boundaries, serial component parts, and areas of World Heritage properties where the required information is missing or is not adequate. It involves an in-depth examination of nomination dossiers available at the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and IUCN.

During the latest analysis, out of all the properties inscribed, 557 were determined to be subject to clarification. Fifty two percent of the properties inscribed have adequate maps with clearly defined boundaries. The remaining 48% of properties are in need of a clarification, and out of these, 5% do not have cartographic information from the time of their inscription.

Great progress continues to be made in clarifying the boundaries of World Heritage properties, but many still remain unclear. The World Heritage Centre provides its continuous support to all States Parties in the preparation of boundary clarifications. Since the last session of the Committee, satisfactory boundary clarifications have been received for 36 World Heritage properties. Thirty four boundary clarifications are included in Document 8D and two clarifications are included in Document 8D.Add. These two clarifications have been received within the deadline but were delayed for technical reasons.

To be considered satisfactory, boundary clarifications must be consistent with the decision of the World Heritage Committee from the time of the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List. Maps must also meet the current technical requirements. As the budget allocated for the retrospective inventory is not sufficient to cover the costs foreseen for the current biennium, States Parties are invited to contribute financially for this activity.

The draft decision is included on page 2 of the English and French versions of the document. With the agreement of the Committee, the two properties presented in the Document 8D.Add, namely Maritime Greenwich and the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh, both from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, will be integrated into the list of those being noted in Decision **46 COM 8D**.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Ms Janikova, for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments on this agenda item.

Italy, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Italy wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the World Heritage Centre for the excellent work presented and for the significant efforts in the implementation of the Convention.

The Retrospective Inventory Project engages both the Secretariat and the States Parties with immense dedication. We would like to acknowledge the sites managers who, despite limited resources, strive to develop this crucial tool for the conservation and management of sites inscribed on the List. However, we regret that for the second consecutive year, these efforts have not been fully recognised. We note with concern that the limited number of maps verified to date, preventing the use of updated maps for effective site management. Italy has committed significant resources to meet both the mandatory requests of the retrospective inventory and the voluntary contributions to the World Heritage Online Map Platform project. This includes the submission of a great amount of

GIS data to promote awareness of this very important platform. Therefore, we would like to encourage the Secretariat to explore ways to enhance and accelerate the verification process.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any further requests to take the floor? I see none, let's proceed then. Are there any questions? I see none.

I therefore invite you to proceed with the adoption of the draft Decision **46 COM 8D**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Il n'y a pas d'amendement et de modifications hormis celles qui viennent d'être présentées par le Secrétariat, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8D** adopted. *[gavel]*

Thank you. Item 8D is now closed.

8E. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF RETROSPECTIVE STATEMENTS OF OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE // EXAMEN ET ADOPTION DES DECLARATIONS RETROSPECTIVES DE VALEUR UNIVERSELLE EXCEPTIONNELLE

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We shall now move to our Agenda Item 8E, adoption of retrospective statements of Outstanding Universal Value. Please refer to the Document 46.COM/8E.

I invite Ms Luba Janikova to briefly present Document 8E. Ms Janikova, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Document 8E presents for adoption retrospective statements of Outstanding Universal Value for properties which had no statement of Outstanding Universal Value adopted at the time of their inscription. As you know, in 2007, the World Heritage Committee requested that statements of Outstanding Universal Value be drafted and adopted retrospectively for all World Heritage properties inscribed between 1978 and 2006. Since 2009, the World Heritage Committee has adopted 771 retrospective statements. Thirty-seven statements are still to be finalised and presented to the Committee: 2 in Africa, 4 in the Arab States, 9 in Asia and the Pacific, 20 in Europe and North America, and 2 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Document 8E presents for adoption one retrospective statement of Outstanding Universal Value from the Arab States region, for which the review process has been finalised since the last session of the Committee. The text of the draft statement for the Archaeological Site of Leptis Magna, Libya, is included in the annex of the document in the language in which it has been submitted by the State Party. Once adopted, the retrospective statement will be translated by the World Heritage Centre and made available on its website. The draft decision is included on page 1 in both the English and French versions of the document.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Ms Janikova, for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments on this agenda item. I see none. Let's proceed then.

I now invite you to proceed with the adoption of the draft Decision **46 COM 8E**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant ce point, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8E** adopted. *[gavel]*

Thank you. Item 8E is now closed.

**8C. UPDATE OF THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST AND OF THE LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER //
MISE À JOUR DE LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL ET DE LA LISTE DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL
EN PÉRIL**

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

Now that we have concluded the examination of the state of conservation reports and the nomination of properties on the World Heritage List, we have to examine Item 8C which concerns the update of the World Heritage List and of the List of World Heritage in Danger.

These updated lists will be presented orally by Mr Balsamo. Mr Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chairperson.

The World Heritage Committee, at its 46th session in New Delhi, India, inscribed 24 new properties on the World Heritage List – 4 natural, 1 mixed and 19 cultural – and approved the extension of 2 properties already inscribed on the List. Among the successful nominations, there are 3 new cultural landscapes, and with these additions, we have now 129 properties officially recognized as such on the World Heritage List, which represents the 10.5% of the List.

The breakdown by region of the 20 new properties inscribed and 2 two extensions approved at the 46th session is as follows:

- Africa: 5 properties
- Arab states: 3 properties
- Asia Pacific: 8 properties
- Europe and North America: 9 properties
- Latin America and Caribbean: 1 property

The new overall figure of the World Heritage List are now 1,223 properties, of which 952 are cultural, 231 natural and 40 mixed.

Breakdown by region of the World Heritage List is as follows:

- Africa: 108 properties
- Arab States: 96 properties
- Asia Pacific: 295 properties
- Europe and North America: 574 properties
- Latin America and Caribbean: 150 properties

Out of the 27 nominations examined, 4 are situated on the territory of the current World Heritage Committee members, and following the debates on Item 8B, one nomination was referred. At this session, in 4 cases, the Committee changed the Advisory Body recommendation which was presented in the draft decision, and 3 referrals became inscriptions, while one deferral became inscription.

As a result of the decision relating to the status of conservation of properties inscribed on the List and the decision on nominations of properties to the World Heritage List, at this session the Committee decided to inscribe one property on the List of World Heritage in Danger, the State of Palestine's Saint Hilarion Monastery, Tell Umm Amer. And at the same time, one property was removed from the List of World Heritage in danger, Senegal, Niokolo-Koba National Park. According to these decisions, there are now 56 properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. And at this session, the World Heritage Committee did not confirm the recommendation presented in the draft decision relating to the inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger of 2 properties.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo, for this update.

I now invite you to proceed with the adoption of the draft Decisions 8C.1, 8C.2 and 8C.3. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on any of the draft decisions proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

La décision s'affiche à l'écran. Et pendant qu'elle s'affiche je vous confirme que nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité. La décision qui s'affiche est en conformité avec les récentes décisions prises par le Comité, telles que présentées par M. Balsamo, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8C.1** adopted. [gavel]

Is there any State Party Observer that like to take the floor? I see Switzerland has raised its plate. You have the floor.

La Délégation de la Suisse (Observateur) :

M. le Président, je vous remercie.

La Suisse souhaite féliciter l'ensemble des États parties qui ont vu leurs efforts récompensés par la reconnaissance du Comité du patrimoine mondial et l'inscription d'un site. Nous nous réjouissons en particulier de l'inscription des 8 sites des régions africaines et arabes, qui plus est dans le domaine culturel. Ceci contribue à une meilleure représentativité des diversités patrimoniales et à renforcer la crédibilité de la Liste, au cœur des préoccupations suisses. Le nombre de recommandations positives des organes consultatifs témoigne d'ailleurs de l'excellente qualité des dossiers d'inscription, fruit de l'amélioration de nos instruments et du renforcement du dialogue entre les États parties et les organes consultatifs. Et nous ne pouvons que nous réjouir d'une prise en compte plus constructive des recommandations de ces derniers par les États parties concernés.

Permettez-nous enfin de relever le travail remarquable des Organisations consultatives dont l'expertise et le professionnalisme méritent d'être salués. Les rapports sur l'état de conservation et les recommandations émises ces derniers jours contribueront à une meilleure préservation des biens concernés. Et le renforcement de certaines décisions par ce Comité, notamment concernant les rapports d'état de conservation, est un signal positif.

Tout en regrettant que, dans certains cas, la dimension politique continue à prévaloir, l'orientation que nous constatons cette année nous paraît encourageante. En tant que candidate au Comité en 2025, la Suisse se réjouit d'une telle tendance qu'elle espère poursuivre dans un esprit d'ouverture et de dialogue avec tous.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any requests for the floor? Any further requests? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8C.2** adopted. [gavel] Sorry, **8C.1** adopted.

Are there any objections to 8C.2? Have any amendments been received, Mr Rapporteur?

Le Rapporteur :

Non, M. le Président. Mon intervention concernait les points C1, 2 and 3.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Is there any objection for **46 COM 8C.2** being adopted? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8C.2** adopted. [gavel]

Now we go to **46 COM 8C.3**. Are there any objections to **46 COM 8C.3** being adopted? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8C.3** adopted. [gavel]

Thank you. I now declare Item 8C closed.

8. NOMINATION PROCESS [closing of the item] // PROCESSUS DE PROPOSITION D'INSCRIPTION [Clôture du point]

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

As you know, Item 8 was presented on 26th July. The related document is 46.COM/8.

Before we move to the examination of the draft decision, are there any comments in this matter? I see none. Let's proceed then.

I will ask the Secretariat, the Advisory Bodies, to answer your questions if there are any questions posed. I see none. I now invite you to adopt the draft decision.

Belgium, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair, and apologies for taking the floor. I will be brief.

Just a suggestion to the Advisory Bodies. When we do our work, you have incredible amounts of work to do to prepare this meeting, but we try to read as much as we can of the documents you prepare, and one of the things we tend to skip is the statements of Outstanding Universal Value in the draft decisions put before us when the advice is positive, because we sometimes believe that you take over what is in the dossier, which is probably not always the case, particularly when you only propose to inscribe based on certain criteria or not all. And we were wondering if it would be possible to make visible in the draft decision which changes you make, or which portions you take over and which portions you strike out relevant to or in comparison to what is in the nomination file.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

The Advisory Bodies, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Chair.

I think it's a reasonable observation from Belgium. We haven't had notice of the issue, so we'll need to think a little bit about how to address the point that's been raised in a way which is expedient. Certainly there are situations where we take more or less the statement of OUV wholesale into our recommendations. There are other cases where the recommendations can be quite a significant change, or even a sort of start over in terms of exactly how the documents is written. So, track changes won't necessarily be the best way to do that. But Gwenaëlle has a bigger number of sites to deal with than me through the work of ICOMOS, so may have a view on this as well. We'll certainly take the point on board, Mr Chair.

Thank you.

ICOMOS :

Je vous remercie pour la question.

Effectivement, comme vient de le préciser mon collègue, Tim Badman, en fonction des dossiers que nous examinons, nous prenons toujours comme point de départ la déclaration de valeur universelle exceptionnelle qui est présentée par l'État partie, et ensuite, en fonction de l'évaluation en elle-même, il peut y avoir des changements significatifs qui sont apportés à la déclaration de VUE ou des changements mineurs. Donc ça dépend vraiment au cas par cas. C'est aussi quelque chose qui est fait en termes de dialogue avec l'État partie tout au cours de l'évaluation en elle-même. Donc avoir un résultat final qui montre les changements de modifications ne sera peut-être pas forcément très utile.

Par contre, je suggère fortement que les États parties – et c'est déjà arrivé au cours du processus d'évaluation lui-même et une fois que l'évaluation est mise à la disposition des États parties – que les États parties regardent de façon méticuleuse, disons, la déclaration de VUE, et c'est déjà arrivé à travers le mécanisme de l'aide d'erreurs factuelles ou à travers d'autres échanges avec les États parties, que certains ajustements ont été apportés aux déclarations de valeur universelle exceptionnelle. C'est vrai que ça ne concerne que les États parties concernés et pas forcément, ensuite... ça ne facilite pas forcément la lecture, disons par les membres du Comité des changements qui auraient pu être apportés aux déclarations de VUE en elles-mêmes.

Voilà, je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see the State Party of Belgium. You have the floor, sir.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you.

Just to explain, the nomination files, we get them from the beginning of the year. Decisions only very shortly before the meeting. So, sometimes we already have read the statement of OUV in the nomination file. And we... there's hardly time to go into detail for all the draft decisions. So, I would be perfectly happy with you just indicating we have quite significantly rewritten the statement. So, we don't, we're not going to use track changes, and only do that where there are minor things.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Mr Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

Just to add on this, that, yes, it may be a good idea to have this, but probably the draft decision is not the best place to put this. I think this could be done in the context, for instance, of the evaluation report which is available and will be basically better placed over there.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo, for your comments.

Are there any further comments or questions? I see none.

I therefore invite you to adopt draft Decision **46 COM 8**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant ce point, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any further questions or comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 8** adopted. *[gavel]*

I now declare Item 8 closed.

We have a request from an Observer to take the floor. World Heritage Watch, you have the floor.

NGO World Heritage Watch (Observer):

Okay. Sorry. Thank you for the floor, Mr Chair.

This year, the World Heritage Committee has inscribed 24 new properties on the World Heritage List while having examined 124 properties under Item 7, roughly 10% of all inscribed sites. Out of these 124, 57 were sites in danger, while 67 were under Item 7B. Not even considering that many of the latter reappear on the Agenda every other year, the Committee can examine only about 6% of all non-endangered sites every year, which means that it would take it more than 18 years to examine all sites on the List. With a List that is growing at the present rate, it will take longer and longer, and the statutory task to monitor the sites under UNESCO tutelage will become ever more difficult to fulfil.

At the same time, out of the 1,199 properties on the List before this session, there are 439 about which no information has been published on their web pages for ten years or more. I repeat 439 sites, more than one third of all. It may be that the Secretariat has received information from third parties about which we don't know, but in principle, we have to conclude that the Committee has been in the dark about the state of conservation of one third of sites for ten years or more – in some cases, since their inscription. Will the 24 sites inscribed this year join that long list? And how much sense does it make to inscribe a site if it has little chance to be monitored?

Distinguished Delegates,

It is more than urgent that the Committee drastically reduce the number of sites it inscribes, and shifts its focus on safeguarding those properties which are already on the List.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now see the Observer State Party of Norway has raised a plate. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Norway:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

First, allow us to recognize and thank the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for their always professional and diligent work.

Norway carefully follows this important Convention, together with many other Observer States Parties here in the room and online. We all share the responsibility to uphold the integrity and credibility of this Convention, and to push the boundaries for best practice and standard-setting, conservation and management for the most precious and valuable places on Earth, our shared World Heritage.

Significant and important additions have been made to the List at this meeting. We wish to commend the States Parties who have worked hard with the nomination dossiers to fulfil the requirements of the Convention and the *Operational Guidelines*, and consequently being recommended for inscription. More importantly, we wish to recognize the States Parties who have accepted and followed the expert advice expressed in the evaluations and draft decisions, be it on state of conservation or nominations, including withdrawing and accepting recommendations for non-inscription, as in the cases of Türkiye, Portugal and Serbia. One notable example to be mentioned is Panama, accepting a referral draft decision; we thank you for this contribution to the Convention's integrity and credibility, and look forward to seeing your significant site inscribed next year.

Inscription on this List is a decision for eternity. Therefore, the decision must be right. We must clearly know the values and attributes in relation to criteria, integrity and authenticity, as well as ensure the necessary protection and management, all necessary to meet the requirements of OUV. Properties inscribed which do not comply with these will appear in the SOC matters in the future, increasing further the pressure on an already overwhelmed system with limited resources. Imagine also what could be spared in terms of resources if we do not have to send missions, evaluate and discuss nominations which are not yet mature for inclusion on this precious List.

That is why Norway and many other States Parties have committed to establish mechanisms for early dialogue and capacity-building for all States Parties. The nomination reform, with the Preliminary Assessment as one of the several components, is a crucial mechanism to facilitate early dialogue and capacity-building for the successful nominations for us all. It may also potentially enable significant savings of resources down the line.

I thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the State Observer Party of South Sudan. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of South Sudan:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Since this is the first time for the State Party of Republic of South Sudan taking the stage, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Government and the people of India for their hospitality rendered to us and all the States Parties in this 46th session of the World Heritage Committee meeting in New Delhi.

We express our heartfelt congratulations to the Government and the people of South Africa and other African states for inscription of their property in the World Heritage List. This is indeed remarkable milestone for the country and a collective responsibility of African continent to be better represented on the prestigious UNESCO List.

South Sudan is a State Party to the World Heritage Convention since 2016. Sadly, our country remains among the 11 African States Parties that are yet to inscribe a property on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Despite having a number of heritage sites with a potential outstanding of universal value, currently, we have 3 properties inscribed in our country's Tentative List, namely Sudd Wetlands – it is considered to be Africa's largest wetland, which offers a diverse array of wildlife and various cultural traditions of Indigenous Peoples – Deim Zubeir Slave Trade Route – this site is historically important and consists of man-made trenches stretching over three kilometres. Third, Boma-Badingilo Migratory Landscape has the largest tract of intact habitat that supports significant viable mammal wildlife population.

We call upon the international community to continue to support the efforts of UNESCO and African World Heritage Fund, and assist the State Party of South Sudan in development of its nomination dossier, so that the people of South Sudan can also have heritage inscribed on the World Heritage List.

I would like to express our deepest appreciation to the African World Heritage Fund for their continuous support to African States Parties in implementing the 1972 Convention in Africa through its various capacity-building initiatives which has contributed to improve the representation of African continent in the World Heritage List. I would like to thank UNESCO and World Heritage Committee for your unwavering support to the State Party of South Sudan's effort in implementing of the World Heritage Convention.

The Chairperson:

Please conclude.

The Observer Delegation of South Sudan:

I thank you, *Namaste*.

The Chairperson:

Namaste, and I thank you as well.

I give the floor to the Director of the WHC to make a comment. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Good morning to all the Delegates.

No, it's just a very quick comment because... It was to thank the Delegate of South Sudan. And of course, South Sudan is among the 11 African countries with no World Heritage site as of today, and we are working together with all the partners as a priority to support and assist South Sudan, including with the great support of the African World Heritage Fund, to build the capacities and so that South Sudan can present their nomination dossier very quickly.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Dear colleagues, I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

Forgive me, I don't have a clear voice at the moment.

We share the concerns that have been expressed by the State Party of Norway. Norway is one of the countries that in recent years has stood out in the mandate of the Committee for raising several of the important issues concerning about the workings of the Committee, and on several occasions they have raised these issues. And if I could cite as an example, when it comes to the issue of the 4 modifications, these 4 occasions on which we shifted away from the recommendations of the Advisory Bodies, I just wanted to put forward the consideration that World Heritage Watch put forward. They said that very often we don't have reports concerning inscriptions that ensure that we have adequate periodical reports from certain sites that would share with us, as Committee members, the state of conservation of those properties. They need to be reflected in the Committee's work. We need to clearly leave a trace of the fact that sometimes we have not received the desired state of conservation information from those properties and States Parties.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Dear colleagues, as you can see, we have finished with examination of all our items on the Agenda for this morning. Therefore, and as announced this morning, we will now proceed with examination of Items 7 and 9A, followed by 10A. Are there any objections to this? I see none.

7. STATE OF CONSERVATION OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES [closing of the item] // ÉTAT DE CONSERVATION DES BIENS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL [clôture du point]

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues, as you will recall that it was decided to examine draft Decision **46 COM 7** contained in Document 46.COM/7 on the state of conservation of the World Heritage properties, at the end of our debates on Items 7A, 7B and 8B. This agenda item was introduced on 23rd of July by the Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. Before we move to the examination of the draft decision, I would like to know whether there are any comments on this matter.

I see no requests for any comments or questions. I therefore invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 7**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le Point 7, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any further comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 7** adopted. *[gavel]*

This therefore closes our main Agenda Item 7.

The Director, World Heritage Centre, Mr Lazare, wants to make a comment. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre / Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Thank you, Chairperson.

Je voulais, Distingués membres du Comité, peut-être juste faire un commentaire sur la manière dont nous travaillons pour analyser toutes les questions liées à l'état de conservation des sites du patrimoine mondial. Vous savez qu'avec le nombre croissant et important des sites – et aujourd'hui nous en avons 1 223 – le travail sur les questions de conservation sont de plus en plus pressantes et le but de ce document, qui reste ouvert, est aussi éventuellement de prendre en compte toutes les discussions que vous avez à la fois lors de l'examen des états de conservation, mais aussi sur des questions liées à l'état de conservation qui peuvent apparaître quand vous examinez les nominations.

La manière dont ce document est effectivement présenté vous donne une idée des questions les plus pressantes, les plus récurrentes, qui arrivent tout le temps. Et ces questions, nous vous apportons une série d'analyses stratégiques et une série de propositions sur les questions qui peuvent vous aider à nous guider sur les politiques du patrimoine mondial. Et nous espérons vraiment que ces décisions que vous avez adoptées puissent à la fois nous aider à faire le suivi, mais aussi vous aider, vous, à mieux comprendre ces questions pour anticiper surtout sur toutes les questions qui peuvent se poser à l'avenir sur l'ensemble de vos sites du patrimoine mondial. Et comme vous avez vu dans ce document, nous avons des points que vous connaissez tous et nous avons essayé au maximum dans ce document de vous donner des exemples concrets sur les questions que nous avons observées ou en tout cas analysées ensemble avec les Organisations consultatives sur certains sites. Et l'année prochaine, vous verrez que ces questions, pour une bonne partie, reviendront encore.

Alors, nous n'avons pas toutes les solutions avec les Organisations consultatives, mais donc c'est un appel aussi, auprès de tous les experts qui tous les jours travaillent sur le terrain, pour que ce document que nous avons préparé, ils puissent vraiment le lire attentivement, les analyses qui sont faites, et partager aussi avec le Centre du patrimoine mondial leurs réflexions et leurs analyses. Et je crois que c'est un peu la raison pour laquelle vous nous avez demandé de faire ce travail, et c'est la raison pour laquelle, peut-être le projet de décision peut paraître très long, parce que c'est un projet de décision que nous vous avons proposé avec 38 paragraphes. Mais ils sont tous importants, ces paragraphes, et nous comptons vraiment sur votre appui pour nous aider et nous accompagner à pouvoir assurer la mise en œuvre des décisions qui ont été faites à la fois sur comment vous percevez aujourd'hui la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril. Et pour ce faire, nous avons publié deux documents sur une enquête que nous avons menée qui est disponible aujourd'hui sur le site web. Comment aujourd'hui vous regardez et analysez la question des situations d'urgence qui résultent des conflits ? Comment, toute la question liée au relèvement et à la reconstruction, au relèvement des communautés, surtout à la reconstruction, est importante ? Quels sont les défis aujourd'hui qui sont les pressions exercées par le développement et qui sont importantes à analyser et à prendre en compte pour rendre la gestion encore plus efficace et durable des sites du patrimoine mondial ? Et comment aujourd'hui, la question du changement climatique, qui affecte de plus en plus les sites du patrimoine mondial, vous les percevez aujourd'hui ? Et nous travaillons sur un guide sur l'adaptation au changement climatique et nous aurons de nouveaux outils à l'avenir qui vont vous permettre de faire un suivi beaucoup plus précis sur ces questions, de vous permettre d'avoir un engagement proactif sur ces questions.

Et enfin, vous aurez aussi noté que la question de la contribution du patrimoine mondial à la conservation de la biodiversité est un aspect fondamental de ces décisions que vous avez prises aujourd'hui et nous allons essayer au maximum de faire un suivi.

Et enfin, Monsieur le Président, je voudrais vraiment remercier tous les États parties, membres du Comité et inclus, qui nous appuient, qui appuient tous les États parties afin de contribuer à l'amélioration des sites inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril et l'amélioration des conditions de tous les sites du patrimoine mondial.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Observer NGOs. First, the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum of World Heritage, followed by the World Heritage Watch. IIPF, you have the floor now.

NGO International Indigenous Peoples' Forum (Observer):

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. I am speaking on behalf of the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum of World Heritage. We are encouraged by this decision, particularly the decision of the local communities, Indigenous Peoples and human rights which touches in a frank manner of the various issues that we face in our communities due to the impacts arising from World Heritage sites in our territories.

We note with appreciation the mention of the International Expert Workshop on Recognising and Respecting Indigenous Peoples Heritage Values in the World Heritage sites, held in January this year. We can assure the World Heritage Committee and the World Heritage Centre that the outcome document of this workshop is forthcoming very shortly and kindly request you to widely disseminate this outcome document and take its findings and recommendations into serious consideration.

We take this opportunity to express the need to re-examine the criteria for inscribing natural sites in order to abolish artificial division between natural and cultural heritage, which is wholly inconsistent with the holistic worldview of Indigenous Peoples and has highly negative impacts on us in many World Heritage sites.

Regarding paragraphs 26 and 27 of the decision, we underline that the States Parties should be required to effectively demonstrate, through credible evidence, that Indigenous Peoples' free, prior and informed consent has been obtained when submitting nomination that may affect us and that they be required to ensure the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in designing and implementing management plan and monitoring frameworks for World Heritage sites.

Finally, on the collaboration between the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the World Heritage Convention, we can inform that our Indigenous Forum will link to the Pre-COP International Summit on Traditional Biodiversity Related Knowledge to be held in Bogota in August and stress upon the need that Indigenous Peoples are effectively involved in the joint programme of work.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your comments.

I now give the floor to the World Heritage Watch. You have the floor, sir.

NGO World Heritage Watch (Observer):

Thank you.

I will make a statement on behalf of the Diyarbakir City Protection Platform, the Stonehenge Alliance, the Sudan Cultural Heritage Relief, Amnesty International, Ohrid SOS, the Centre for Biological Diversity and the Save the Tigris Foundation. Start of statement.

We do not see much of a point in making statements after decisions have been taken. We collectively express our disappointment in the lack of engagement with civil society by the Committee prior to adopting its decisions. We do not want to give the World Heritage Committee any pretext to maintain the appearance that there is any participation of civil society, impacted local communities and Indigenous Peoples at its meetings worthy of the name. The UN system at large relies on expertise and active engagement of civil society across different sectors. And the Conference of State Parties to other conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Convention on the Expressions of Cultural Diversity, civil society actors participate in the opinion-forming process as a matter of course. The World Heritage Convention alone is trailing decades behind what has become time-tested successful practice in the UN family.

It is long overdue that the World Heritage Committee also recognizes contributions of civil society and gives them appropriate space in its deliberations. We call on the States Parties to amend the Rules of Procedure to give civil society the right to participate meaningfully in the Committee's discussions.

End of statement. Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Para 22.4 of the Rules of Procedure states: "The representatives of organisations, individuals and Observers referred to in Rules 6, 7 and 8 may address the meeting with the prior consent of the Chairperson". And that's why they have been permitted to address the meeting.

9A. UPSTREAM PROCESS // PROCESSUS EN AMONT

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

The next item of our Agenda concerns the Upstream Process. Please refer to Document 46.COM/9A.

Mr Alessandro Balsamo, I invite you to briefly present Document 9A. Mr Balsamo, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you. Chair.

Document 9A presents the progress report on the Upstream Process and the new Upstream Process requests received.

The Committee launched in 2011 an initiative called "Upstream Process", which aimed to explore options for improving and strengthening the nomination process. The Upstream Process has been incorporated in the *Operational Guidelines* in 2015 and its implementation over the first years highlighted a number of challenges in terms of human and financial resources, but also the need for conceptual clarification on its scope. In 2018, the Committee approved a revised definition of the Upstream Process proposed by the Ad-Hoc Working Group that met in that year, and requested the Secretariat to integrate it in the *Operational Guidelines* in the framework of the revision of the 43rd session in 2019. In 2020, the guidance on developing and revising World Heritage Tentative List was prepared by the Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Centre in order to address the Upstream Process requests regarding the creation or revision of Tentative Lists in a more consistent and structured way.

Subsequently, the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies have operationalized this guidance through the toolkit for States Parties and resource persons. The toolkit is used for workshop on the development and revision of Tentative Lists and contributes to a streamlined and coherent implementation of all Upstream Process requests concerning Tentative Lists. The document also refers to the relationship between the Upstream Process and the Preliminary Assessment, and makes reference to the proposal to exempt from the Preliminary Assessment procedure nomination of sites having been subject to an Upstream Process concerning a specific site, as adopted in Item 8 a few minutes ago.

It is always important also to emphasise that the application of the Upstream Process approach does not imply that a site would ultimately be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The main aim of the Upstream Process is to reduce the number of sites that experience significant problems during the nomination process, and to avoid significant investment in financial and human resources, where the proposed sites do not demonstrate potential for justifying Outstanding Universal Value.

Concerning the new requests received by the 31st March 2024 deadline, the World Heritage Centre received 6 Upstream Process requests. Annex 1 of Document 9A shows these requests in order of priority. Annex 2 of the Document presents the list of pending Upstream Process requests received from 2018 to 2024. They are divided by year of submission and object of the advice requested – Tentative List or nomination – and presented in English alphabetical order by State Party.

Since the launch of the Upstream Process, a high number of requests has been received from all regions. However, the implementation of the process has proven to be challenging, especially in terms of calendar and financial resources, as it is undertaken according to the availability of financial and human resources. The implementation rate of the Upstream Process request is therefore determined by the resources available each year, hence causing a backlog of requests and long waiting times for States Parties.

Finally, we would like to thank the States Parties of Ireland and Kazakhstan for their financial support to the overall coordination of the Upstream Process.

The draft decision is on page 3 of both English and French version of Document 9A.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Balsamo, for your presentation.

I would like to know whether there are any comments, requests for the floor from the States Parties.

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving India the floor. And since this is the first time in the day that we are taking the floor, a very good morning to everyone.

Mr Chair, the Upstream Process has indeed been a transformative initiative for the World Heritage Convention – we heard the report from the Secretariat. It was launched during the 32nd session in Quebec City in 2008, and this initiative has impacted the Convention. The inclusion of the Upstream Process in the *Operational Guidelines* in 2015 marked a milestone illustrating its value beyond pilot projects and embedding it as a standard beneficial practice for many States Parties. As we look to the future, the 2024 deadline brought in, as the Secretariat mentioned, 6 new requests reflecting a diverse regional and economic representation, all aimed at potential future site nominations. Having said that...

The Chairperson:

India, may I request you to please... because we are hearing two voices here. You have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

... however, we would like to address a concern which was presented in the report that we have received, in paragraph 19 of the background document, which presents the Upstream Process and Preliminary Assessment as mutually exclusive options. The document suggests that these processes are interchangeable, implying that one could substitute the other.

It also noted in paragraph 8 the financial burden of the Upstream Process is generally borne by the State Party, while the funding mechanism for the Preliminary Assessment remains unclear to date. Additionally, paragraph 11 points out that the implementation of the Upstream Process has been challenging due to the calendar and financial constraints. The rate of implementation is influenced by the resources available each year, leading to a backlog of requests and extended waiting times. While LDCs, low income and low middle income countries and SIDs are prioritized for financial support, the available resources remain limited. The mandatory Preliminary Assessment process could also face similar challenges, with an uncertain funding mechanism, which is also pointed out by the Secretariat in their brief report.

Time frame is another issue. Upstream Process, as the para 16 of the same document reads: "timeline to deal with Upstream Process could be on an average up to 18 months". We have heard time and again that there is no implication on the time frame for submitting a nomination dossier, so I have a question for the Secretariat, that can they confirm that, given the fact that the Upstream Process takes minimum one and a half years and/or Preliminary Assessment takes one year before the submission of the dossier, can we confirm, can the Secretariat confirm that with up to 35 nominations being submitted for the Preliminary Assessment from 2027 onwards, when it becomes mandatory, that there will still be no financial implications for the same on the States Parties, or in case that there is, how is the Centre geared up, the World Heritage Centre geared up for that?

Mr Chair, India maintains its position that – and we would like this to be recorded in the report – that both processes, that is Preliminary Assessment as well as your Upstream Process, are useful and should be used by those who need it, than making it mandatory. By keeping both processes voluntary rather than mandatory, States Parties can choose the processes that best fit their needs and context, allowing for informed decisions, based on their financial concerns and priorities, without being forced into following one process or the other.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any requests for the floor? Any further queries?

Mr Balsamo, I hope you have noted the questions. You have the floor to respond.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Chair.

And thank you to the Honourable Delegate of India for the questions concerning the Upstream Process and the Preliminary Assessment.

We have to say that, as it is also underlined in Document 9A, these are two mechanisms that are, let's say in a certain sense, quite similar because they intervene at the early stage of the nomination process. However, the differences between these two mechanisms in how they are implemented are quite important. And especially as the question was concerning the financial implications, we want to underline that while the cost of the Upstream Process requests has to be borne by the requesting State Party, this is not the case for the Preliminary Assessment. Therefore, in terms of financial constitution of the two processes, this is a big difference.

And of course, as it was underlined by the Distinguished Delegate of India, it is indeed true that for the time being, the response to the way of, let's say, contributing financially to the Preliminary Assessment is not yet found, while in any case for the Upstream Process as it is underlined, this is another question because the cost is with the State Party that is requesting it. But the question of the financial sustainability of the Preliminary Assessment is one of those that are at stake in the context of the discussion of the Open-ended Working Group, which will be discussed, as you know, later on in the Agenda in Point 11. And we know that the Group has still a lot of recommendations to review if the Group is mandated to work for next year. I think that with this, it's all.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. India, this is your second time, you have requested information on the financial aspects and there is no clear response. But would you like to restate your question specifically, as well as your request to have it recorded in the report?

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Yes. We are concerned about two aspects. Of course, one is the financial implication which we have been talking about. And yes, we haven't got a very clear indication as to when the Preliminary Assessment kicks into force as a mandatory step. What will be the financial burden? You know, because we do recall last year in the Ad-Hoc Working Group for the budget, there was a presentation by the Director of World Heritage Centre wherein it was mentioned that this process will have an impact, which may potentially also either reduce the number of evaluations a year, or perhaps it may also have an implication in supporting certain, you know, certain missions or certain sort of, you know, the fund to be given for conservation or for the management or for, you know, capacity-building initiatives. So I do recall that, you know, and we do have papers with us which were shared by the Secretariat. So that aspect has to be borne in mind.

The second, what we are also trying to say is we are certainly saying that both the processes are important. They have a role in the overall, you know, the nomination, any State Party who wishes to take advice for, you know, ensuring that the nominations are successful, that they are able to establish the Outstanding Universal Value of a property, you know, in a more sort of cohesive manner. Yes, these processes are very important and should be taken, but by those who wish to take it. But thrusting it upon, and I do remember, Mr Chair, there was also a statistic that when this was being discussed and adopted, that I think it was only about 31 or 32 States Parties which had participated in this, there was a survey that was conducted, you know, I don't have those papers with me right now.

The Chairperson:

37 out of 195, which is 19% of the States Parties had responded.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair. Your memory is far sharper than mine. But yes, that is what it is. So, what we are trying to say is that let this be first thoroughly discussed. Yes, the Secretariat is rightly pointing out that this Open-ended Working Group is looking at it, is looking at these processes as well. So therefore, our appeal here is that, till we have a very firm clearer perspective on this, that yes, we should keep it voluntary. That is our take on it.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

And the Secretariat informs me that your request... Please do not talk like this. You can go behind.

The Secretariat has informed that your request to have it recorded in the report has been noted. Mr Balsamo, you want to respond to this? You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Maybe just to bring in a more precise matter. First of all, saying that, as it was, I think, noted in the Budget Group, that was held during this session, for the next two years, there are no worries about basically the supporting financial contribution that are needed to support the Preliminary Assessment. And second, I think we have a different vision

on the number of States Parties that participated in the process as the survey, which was only anyway, the kicking off of the whole process, which lasted four years, it was replied by 73 States Parties, and but that was just the first of many steps that over 4 years included also the review of 2 World Heritage Committee sessions and several Ad-Hoc and Open-ended Working Groups.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I will now give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

And after that I will go to the Distinguished Representative of Argentina, to be followed by Rwanda.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you. Chairperson.

No, I just wanted to add my few comments after, maybe to add more clarification on the comments made by the Distinguished Delegate of India.

Now, the first thing, which definitely is clear is that when it comes to the Upstream Process itself, it is true that we have in the World Heritage Fund an allocated budget of US\$ 100,000, so, which allows us to, you know, conduct our work, knowing also that there are some voluntary contributions that are being provided by Member States or States Parties to support this process. And... But the World Heritage Committee itself has already allocated an amount. And in the previous budget, it was US\$ 130,000, if I remember correctly. It is true, and I confirm exactly what I had said, which you correctly reminded. And you were right.

What also I said recently is that yes, this year for the cycle that is going to commence, concerning Preliminary Assessment, we are able to cope with the finance to be able to conduct this cycle and at the same time, as my colleague Alessandro Balsamo was saying, is that there is a mandate also of the Open-ended Working Group, where we will continue this discussion. And the first attempt that we have been doing is, of course, to try to find, you know, something which is more, I will say, logic between the Upstream and the Preliminary Assessment whereby we will be able to, once you have started here, once you have done the Upstream, you mean, then you don't need to go this way. So, we are trying to... Our proposal, of course, is to say that if we can approve and combine these two, because the two processes, to say that let's exempt from the Preliminary Assessment procedure sites that have been subject to an Upstream Process, and this will also continue to improve the situation. But definitely we count on the contribution of India during the Open-ended Working Group to continue having this important discussion, and what the Delegate of India has said would clearly be kept and recorded in the proceedings of this meeting as requested.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

Yes. Just to recall how all of this came about in the first place. It's very important, and I think what's being demonstrated is how the Committee actually works. And I think there is some confusion between the Upstream Process and the Preliminary Assessment. And it's not because there's no information. It's just because the information isn't widely known, perhaps, in the field. And this again, is actually our responsibility. If we want to keep working on this, we need to do more on that.

But what I wanted to recall was that this mechanism actually was born of dialogue between the Delegations in UNESCO and the World Heritage Centre to try and streamline the work processes. It's not a negotiation between Member States, no, but it's when there were, when problems arose, everybody started looking at how we could work on these mechanisms, improve them, streamline them and make things work better. And I think that's the spirit that needs to prevail here. This Committee is a very good example. We, all of us, have talked about the spirit of dialogue that is prevailing in this Committee and that we want to continue to prevail. And I think we can learn a lot actually, from our Host Country in this regard, might I say. But I do think there is some confusion between the different mechanisms and work needs to continue on this so that we can work out the best dialogue-based solutions so that, remember what we really wanted to do was at the same time continue working on capacity-building. And these two issues are linked. And that is why we'd like to see the Open-ended Working Group continue the discussions on these pre-inscription or pre-norm mechanisms and capacity-building.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Argentina.

I now give the floor to Rwanda followed by Saint Vincent. Rwanda, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Rwanda:

Thank you, Chair. And a very good morning to everyone.

It's going to be very quick. We really wanted to support the strong and clear statement made by India, and we also wish to have it recorded that we support India's statement.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Rwanda's request to support India's statement has been noted by the Secretariat.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines attach a great importance to the Upstream Process. Without this Upstream Process, we couldn't have advanced in our nomination file with, common nomination file with Grenada.

But here we are talking about the Upstream Process. We don't want to mix Upstream Process and Preliminary Assessment, and I am sure that the Open-ended Working Group will have the opportunity to speak about the Preliminary Assessment and the obligations embedded already in the *Operational Guidelines*.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there requests, any other Member State would like to raise its plate? To raise a question?

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair. I think part of my question is yet not answered.

When I had requested to understand whether the timelines are, if you follow either of the two processes as a mandatory, you know, thing? Because as of now, Upstream Process is voluntary, and Preliminary Assessment is going to be mandatory from 2027 onwards. As of now, of course, even Preliminary Assessment is also voluntary. But you will have a situation where is one step as a voluntary and one step as a mandatory would be juxtaposed, you know, with one another. So we'll, once we put a property on the Tentative List and wherein you have a cooling off period of minimum of one year, and then we submit the nomination dossier, and therein kicks in Preliminary Assessment, which will take at least one year, therein kicks in either the Upstream Process where minimum it takes 18 months, this is minimum as per this document, aren't the timelines stretching further? That is what the question I had requested from the Secretariat, and I hope an answer for that as well.

Thank you. Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I think Mr Balsamo would be the right person. You have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chair.

And thank you for the question that will, I hope, allow me to clarify that these are two, let's say, similar processes, but distinct in the way they will, and are, applied.

Indeed, the Upstream Process is not at all mandatory. It's totally voluntary and is not foreseen in any way that will become mandatory. But moreover, what is important to underline, Upstream Process is also, and more and more I will say with the addition of the Preliminary Assessment, Upstream Process will become focusing on the revision of the Tentative List. The request to have an Upstream Process on a single site will be less and less, we think and we

consider, with the introduction of the Preliminary Assessment. And indeed, the decision that the Committee just took at this session shows, and it was useful to avoid any, let's say, redundancy, because while the Upstream Process is totally voluntary, it is an early advice on a nomination. So, it has the same, let's say, focus of the Preliminary Assessment. So, if it is undertaken, there will be no need to undergo a Preliminary Assessment that, as rightly mentioned, will eventually become mandatory from 2027.

So, there is absolutely no additional burden in terms of timelines because it's only the Preliminary Assessment that takes one year, while the nominating State Party is preparing the nomination.

I may also add that in the context of the Open-ended Working Group, the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies have been requested to reflect on ways also to streamline further the nomination process. And one of the things that may be put on the table and presented already to the next session of the World Heritage Committee is a proposal to, let's say, lessen the time for the submission of the Tentative List prior to the submission of a Preliminary Assessment, which currently is one year. Basically, as a Preliminary Assessment is dealing with the idea of a site of a potential nomination, this timeline can also be reduced to one month, for instance, reducing the overall duration of the official part, let's say, of the nomination process. So, I think, I hope, that I now answered the question.

The Chairperson:

Can you repeat what timeline could be reduced to one month?

The Secretariat:

The timeline, well – we are going to propose it is not yet something for this Committee. But it will be the submission of the Tentative List, which is currently requested to be done one year prior to the submission of the Preliminary Assessment. This timeline could be actually reduced even to one month or something like that.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Thank you for the clarification.

I see Lebanon has raised its plate. Sir, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Mr President.

Well, point 9A is about Upstream Process, but it seems we moved to Preliminary Assessment. I just wanted to note one thing. If we had had a Preliminary Assessment procedure, 3 properties that were presented in this Committee and were discussed and where we had problems between the proposal of the Advisory Body and the decision of the Committee and the modification that were introduced by the States Parties to be in conformity with the Advisory Bodies, namely Sado Island, namely Iran, namely Italy, where the States Parties approved the proposal that were done by the Advisory Bodies, if we had had Preliminary Assessment, we would have had nomination that would arrive at the Committee clear and clean with an approval of the Advisory Body and of the States Parties.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

It would have been so wonderful if the mountains were perfect triangles and planetary orbits were circular. But that's not the case. And Preliminary Assessments also cost a lot more than what the Upstream Process cost, at least as far as the World Heritage Fund is concerned. So, we appeal that contributions and donations to the World Heritage Fund may kindly be increased from all the generous-hearted Parties.

And we move on from now, from this point, if there are no further requests to take the floor. I see none.

With this, I think we have... I therefore invite you to proceed with the adoption of the draft Decision **46 COM 9A**. But before doing so, I will ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments.

Kazakhstan, I see that you have now raised your plate. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I just would like to request to add our country as a supporter of the Upstream Process in the draft Decision in para 7, as Mr Balsamo mentioned in his statement at the beginning of the discussion of this item.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Mr Balsamo?

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much.

And thank you to Kazakhstan for this note. Indeed, it is true, the mention of Kazakhstan in the decision is not there, simply because we received the contribution after the publication of the Document. So, I think it would be exact to add Kazakhstan in the draft decision for the contribution.

The Chairperson:

Yes, that's why she intervened and said please add now. So now that you have added, are there any amendments or objections to adopt this draft decision?

We see that this para 7 has been adopted – sorry, has been amended.

Is there any objection for this entire decision to be adopted as a whole, as amended? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 9A** adopted as amended. ^[gave]

Thank you. Item 9A is now closed.

I now give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to make some announcements. You have the floor, Sir.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I just wanted to inform you that there is one side-event for the lunch break, and it is the event organized by the State Party of Burkina Faso on the implementation of the 1972 Convention entitled "An Overview of Burkina Faso's Experience". And this will start at 1:00 pm.

But more than that, most important thing, also, Mr Chairperson and Distinguished Delegates, I all encourage you, invite you to go and visit the wonderful exhibition "Incredible India" in Hall 14. If you haven't done so, please. It's just incredible, you will find so many things. So, I invite you to go and visit this exhibition, which was kindly put up by the Host Country, and I really would like to thank them for giving us such an experience.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

This meeting is now adjourned till 3:00 pm.

The meeting rose at 12:30 pm. // La séance a été levée à 12h30.

EIGHTH DAY
Monday, 29 July 2024
FOURTEENTH PLENARY MEETING
3:08 pm – 4:40 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

HUITIÈME JOUR
Lundi 29 juillet 2024
QUATORZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
15h08 – 16h40
Président :
S.E. M. Vishal V. Sharma

10A. REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING EXERCISE IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA // RAPPORT SUR LES RÉSULTATS DU TROISIÈME CYCLE DE L'EXERCICE DE SOUMISSION DE RAPPORTS PÉRIODIQUES EN EUROPE ET EN AMÉRIQUE DU NORD

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

Dear Committee members,

Let's resume our session. I hope you have had a pleasant, prolonged lunchbreak.

We are now going to examine Agenda Items as follows: we will start with Item 10A, to be followed by Item 10B, before moving to Items 12 and 13. Thank you very much.

We will move now to the reports related to the Periodic Reporting exercise of the 1972 Convention. We will start with a report on the results of the Third Periodic Cycle Reporting exercise in Europe and North America. The relevant information is enclosed in Document WHC/24/46.COM/10A.Rev.

Allow me to now give the floor to Ms Berta de Sancristobal, Chief of the Europe and North America Unit of the World Heritage Centre, who will present to us this report. Ms Sancristobal, you have the floor.

The Secretariat / Le Secrétariat :

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Indeed, as the Chairperson just mentioned, you have on your slide the document where the report on the results of the Third Cycle of the Reporting exercise in Europe and North America can be found. The reason for having published a Rev version was to include the 3 annexes as displayed also on the screen. The first is a quantitative analysis of the outcomes for the section on the implementation of the Convention at the national level. Annex 2 is also a quantitative analysis of the outcomes for Section II – meaning the implementation of the World Heritage Convention at the level of each property. And the third annex shows the trend between the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting and the Third Cycle based on the established monitoring indicators that have been used for all other regions, and which are used to determine the comparability of the data collected through the questionnaires in the two cycles.

The Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting for all regions was launched by the Committee in 2017 by Decision **41 COM 10A**. Progress reports on the implementation of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in this region, Europe and North America, have been presented to the Committee in 2019, 2021 and 2023. In its decisions, the Committee has highlighted the role of the Secretariat in ensuring a holistic approach across regions by providing overall coordination, guidance tools and analysis, and by facilitating a State Party-driven process.

Last year, in a progress report on the implementation of the Action plan for the Second Cycle of Reporting in Europe and North America, respectively – two different Action Plans –, the World Heritage Centre was requested to include in the regional report to be submitted to this session, an assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the respective Action Plans in each region, based on the information that States Parties provided in the questionnaires of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting between 2022 and 2023, and this brief analysis can be found in subsection 1.1.2 of your Document.

The Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in Europe and North America started in September 2022. The Secretariat organized and met with the national focal points in the region during an online kick-off meeting in October 2022, which brought together 85 representatives of States Parties. The first phase of the Exercise ran until the end of July last year, during which States Parties were invited to organise consultation and capacity-building workshops at the national level. Thanks to the generous support of the Governments of Ireland and Italy through the UNESCO Regional Office for Science and Culture in Europe in Venice, the Secretariat organised a subregional consultation and capacity-building meeting in Kotor, Montenegro, at the end of October last year, attended by 14 States Parties

from Southeastern Europe. The participants considered some of the preliminary analysis of the findings of the Periodic Reporting and the priority issues that emerged from this reporting exercise.

The Secretariat then continued to analyse the responses to both sections of the Periodic Reporting questionnaire, in order to prepare a draft regional report, the outline of which was circulated to States Parties in the region prior to the regional consultation held at UNESCO Headquarters in December last year. The three-day workshop in December made possible, thanks to the financial support of the Governments of Germany and Ireland, allowed for an in-depth discussion with 44 of the 51 States Parties in the region, and served as the basis for the development of a Regional Action Plan that you have to examine today.

Following this regional consultation – in-person regional consultation – the Regional Action Plan was refined by the Secretariat and circulated for review. Comments were received from 18 States Parties on the pre-final draft, which were then incorporated in the final version that you have today with you, and which has been finalised by the Secretariat in the two working languages of the Committee. Next slide please.

Who are the key actors of this Exercise? As you know, the 51 States Parties to the Convention in the region that have been invited to complete the questionnaire on the implementation of the Convention at the national level, as well as the site managers of 548 World Heritage properties at the time of the launch of the Exercise, who were invited to complete Section II on the implementation of the Convention at the property level. The Exercise has been coordinated by the World Heritage Centre in close cooperation with the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe for the States Parties covered by that Bureau. The contribution of the independent experts – Sarah Court and Melissa Marin, led by Leticia Leitao – to the in-depth analysis of the vast amount of data collected during the Exercise, was crucial to the presentation of this report. The World Heritage Centre would like to express its sincere thanks to all three of them. Cooperation with the Advisory Bodies has also been ensured throughout this process.

So, the World Heritage Centre is pleased to report that all 51 States Parties in the region submitted their questionnaires, achieving 100% completion rate. For Section II, so the property level section, 543 out of the 548 World Heritage property questionnaires were submitted, which is a pretty good rate of submission.

In presenting these figures, allow me to highlight the fact that this is the first time that Europe and North America region have been able to report as a single region. Before, they were reporting separately. In addition, these figures reflect a significant investment of human capacity and commitment at all relevant levels of the States Parties, and in particular the dedicated contribution of the National Focal Point for the implementation of the Convention as well as the World Heritage site managers who undertook the significant task of completing the reporting questionnaires. Next slide please.

The table on this slide provides information on the number of properties inscribed on the World Heritage List during the Second and the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting and concerning the number of sites on the Tentative List of the States Parties in the region.

Overall, as you can see, the number of properties inscribed in Europe and North America between the two cycles grew by 75, which represents an increase of 16% in ten years. During the same period, the number of sites on the Tentative List dropped by 16.

When asked about the main perceived benefits of inscribing properties on the World Heritage List, most States Parties report that the main benefit is enhanced honour and prestige. This is followed by the improved presentation of sites, strengthening protection and conservation of heritage, which comes number 3, ranked 3, increased number of tourists and visitors and enhanced conservation practices.

In the process of developing Tentative Lists, the majority of the States Parties use ICOMOS thematic studies. IUCN thematic studies seem to have been used less, but this is somewhat to be expected given the heavy focus on cultural heritage in Europe, one of the two subregions. Seventy-one percent of the States Parties report having used the UNESCO Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List.

Concerning the Upstream Process, 16% of the States Parties use it to support the revision of their Tentative List, while 2 nominations were presented to the World Heritage Committee after having received upstream assistance.

Let me get to some of the findings of the prior reporting cycle at the national level. So, most of the States Parties in the region consider that the legal framework for the identification of both cultural and natural heritage is fully adequate. Legal frameworks were considered slightly less adequate for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage than natural heritage. And while most States Parties conceded that there was sufficient capacity to enforce the legal framework for cultural heritage and natural heritage, almost half of them consider that existing capacities and resources to enforce the legal framework could be strengthened for both cultural and natural heritage. So, this appears to be a priority for the region.

With regard to financial resources, more than half of the States Parties have policies to allocate side revenue for the conservation and protection of cultural and natural heritage. Nevertheless, few States Parties in the region consider the current budget for cultural and natural heritage to be adequate. In terms of human resources, only a fourth of the States Parties felt that they had adequate resources for cultural heritage, while almost one third responded that they felt the same for natural heritage. In terms of capacity development needs, the following were identified as the highest priorities for both cultural and natural heritage: sustainable development, sustainable

resource utilization and management, conservation and management of heritage sites, impact assessment tools, strengthening resilience to natural hazards and climate change, risk preparedness and disaster risk management. However, it should be noted that when considering capacity development needs for cultural heritage compared to natural heritage, slightly different results emerged, and details can be found in the report.

There is significant cooperation and synergies reported in the region, with other conventions and programmes related to culture and biodiversity. The communication is the most intense with the focal point of the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. There is also notable communication with responsible for the Man and the Biosphere Programme and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. Next slide please.

It is worth highlighting that where cooperation exists between different programmes and conventions, it is more likely to be between natural properties and nature related-conventions and programmes, then between cultural properties and cultural related conventions and programmes. The highest levels of cooperation are between natural sites and the MAB programme, with 50% of World Heritage site managers reporting this, and with Ramsar focal points. Among the 329 cultural properties that consider the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape to be relevant, nearly half had nevertheless not used it.

Regarding the assessment of the condition of the key attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage properties, site managers reported that these were well conserved in the majority of properties. No attributes were reported to have been lost at any property. It should be noted, however, that the analysis of the attributes reported reveals a variable level of understanding of the concepts of values and attributes, with some properties providing incomplete or inaccurate information. Almost all properties in the region have an adopted or retrospective Outstanding Universal Value Statement, which forms the basis for all conservation and management activities. However, it is worth noting that 20% of properties with an adopted Statement of Outstanding Universal Value indicate that it needs to be updated.

One of the main results of the reporting is to provide an overall picture of the factors affecting the state of conservation of all heritage properties in the region, from the standard list of factors, which is also the list used under reactive monitoring. It should be noted that the reporting has taken into account both positive and negative factors. The 3 main positive and negative factors currently affecting the properties in the region are shown in the table on the slide. For cultural and mixed properties, the most common negative factors are climate change and severe weather events, and local conditions affecting physical fabric. For natural properties, the most reported negative factors are again climate change and severe weather events, followed by pollution and invasive alien terrestrial species. A common positive factor for all types of World Heritage property is the adequate management and institutional factors.

There is, however, an important link between the Periodic Reporting process and the monitoring of the state of conservation of properties by the Committee, the Advisory Bodies and the Secretariat under the reactive monitoring process. While Periodic Reporting allows for a self-assessment by the national and local authorities responsible for a World Heritage property, the Committee's monitoring activities and reviews provide an external perspective involving international experts when the properties are considered under threat. Together, these two statutory processes complement each other and provide a comprehensive understanding of the state of conservation of World Heritage properties in Europe and North America. So, we want to share with you the results back-to-back with the Period Reporting Exercise. On average, the World Heritage Committee examines the state of conservation of some 30 to 35 World Heritage properties in Europe and North America each year. Since the completion of the Second Cycle of Period Reporting, 252 reports have been submitted to the Committee covering 91 properties in 35 States Parties in Europe and North America. That is, more than two thirds of the States in this region. During the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, 16% of the properties covered by the Exercise have been subject to reactive monitoring at one time or another. If we compare the negative factors for the same period – so, as reported in the Period Reporting Cycle Exercise – with the factors reported in the reactive monitoring statistics for the region, we get a very different picture of the threats. On the reactive monitoring process, the first six major threats are: management systems and management plans – and you will recall that I just said it was the first positive factor identified under pressure reporting – followed by housing, legal frameworks, impact of tourism, visitor recreation, ground transport infrastructure and major visitor accommodation and associated infrastructure.

Now turning to the findings of the Periodic Reporting in terms of boundaries and delimitation of properties, properties throughout the region are considered to have adequate boundaries to maintain their Outstanding Universal Value. The adequacy of buffer zone is, however, lower, as only 60% of site managers report that their buffer zone is fully adequate. Significant attention has been paid in recent years to legal regulatory, contractual, planning institution and/or traditional protective measures. 78% of the properties are reported to be protected and managed by an adequate and effective legal framework that helps to maintain their Outstanding Universal Value. Overall, the region has seen a slight improvement in legal frameworks for identifying heritage since the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting, while legal frameworks for the conservation and protection of heritage have declined significantly over the same period.

With regard to the priority management need identified by the site managers, the most important ones are again: addressing climate change, disaster risk management and capacity-building, human resources and budget issues.

The results of the existence of management plans and their effectiveness should therefore be contrasted with the results on the existence of monitoring mechanisms. Only half of all properties report having a comprehensive integrated monitoring programme that is relevant to management needs. It should be noted that there are more properties reporting having monitoring programmes than reporting having adequate monitoring indicators, which may indicate that some of the reported monitoring programmes may not be fully effective. For those properties that report having monitoring indicators, these are more likely to measure state of conservation than management effectiveness or good governance.

Je vais continuer en français. Les rapports doivent déboucher sur des actions et il n'est que juste après tout le travail accompli par tant de parties prenantes dans la région dans le cadre de cet exercice, que le Secrétariat soit en mesure de proposer un Plan d'action pour soutenir les tendances positives existantes et proposer des actions pour relever les défis identifiés. Tel est le but du Plan d'action constitué en cinq objectifs stratégiques, 26 résultats escomptés et un menu de 97 activités proposées.

Le Centre du patrimoine mondial se réjouit que le Plan d'action régional qui est aujourd'hui proposé à ce Comité soit le résultat d'un véritable effort commun mené en collaboration avec les différentes parties prenantes et qui se veut un cadre général mais aussi spécifique à la région. J'insiste sur le fait que l'une des principales nouveautés de ce Plan d'action est qu'il s'agit pour la première fois d'un document commun à l'Europe et l'Amérique du Nord. Le Plan d'action proposé a été élaboré sur la base des éléments suivants : les résultats des Rapports périodiques du troisième cycle soumis par tous les États parties de la région, les résultats de l'atelier de consultation de trois jours à l'échelle régionale en décembre 2024^[4], avec la participation des points focaux nationaux chargés de la mise en œuvre de la Convention, et les commentaires reçus de 18 États parties sur un avant-projet pré final au début de cette année.

D'après ce plan d'action, les activités, les plus de 90 activités proposées par les États parties doivent être comprises comme un menu parmi lequel les États sont invités à choisir les actions qui leur semblent les plus pertinentes pour leur cadre. En revanche, les résultats escomptés et les objectifs stratégiques ont pour vocation de se vouloir pertinents pour l'ensemble des États de cette région.

Le Plan d'action régional fournit un cadre pour tous les biens du patrimoine mondial, qu'ils soient inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en tant que biens culturels, naturels ou mixtes. Il reconnaît ainsi l'interconnexion des patrimoines culturels et naturels en notant que la plupart des biens du patrimoine mondial sont le résultat de dynamiques sociales et écologiques profondément imbriquées au fil du temps.

Le Plan d'action aborde aussi les cinq objectifs stratégiques connus sous le nom des « cinq C » adoptés par le Comité du patrimoine mondial en tant que des thèmes transversaux, inséparables et interdépendants. Tout d'abord, la conservation, qui est au cœur de la mise en œuvre de la Convention et sous-tend l'ensemble du contenu de ce Plan d'action. Ensuite, la crédibilité, une crédibilité qui s'entend par rapport à tous les aspects de la mise en œuvre de la Convention, bien que la crédibilité de la Liste en tant que témoignage représentatif et géographiquement équilibré des biens culturels et naturels de valeur universelle exceptionnelle, reste essentielle pour une région qui représente près de la moitié du nombre total des biens inscrits. Le Plan d'action reconnaît également que la pleine participation des communautés locales et/ou des peuples autochtones à la gestion des biens du patrimoine mondial et le respect de la diversité, de l'égalité des genres et des droits humains sont essentiels à la mise en œuvre équitable de la Convention et du plan d'action régional lui-même. Le renforcement des capacités et la communication, quant à eux, sont considérés comme des outils à part entière pour soutenir la mise en œuvre de ce Plan d'action. Le renforcement des capacités des différents acteurs, qu'il s'agisse de praticiens du patrimoine, d'autorités gouvernementales ou d'autres types d'institutions ou de représentants des communautés locales, est fondamental pour atteindre les résultats escomptés du plan d'action. C'est pourquoi le plan d'action fixe des priorités générales pour le renforcement des capacités dans la région, qui peuvent être précisées dans des stratégies nationales ou sous régionales. Ces stratégies devraient également contribuer à renforcer l'appréciation des biens du patrimoine mondial par le biais de programmes d'éducation, de participation et d'information. La communication sur les bénéfices de la protection des biens du patrimoine mondial aux communautés et à la société dans son ensemble est essentielle pour obtenir et maintenir le soutien du public en faveur de la conservation.

Je vais vous présenter très rapidement les cinq objectifs stratégiques sur lesquels la région s'est mise d'accord dans ce Plan d'action. Le premier que vous voyez donc à l'écran, c'est de renforcer les cadres politiques, juridiques et réglementaires pour assurer la protection de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle, pour une bonne gouvernance et une gestion efficace des biens du patrimoine mondial. En effet, assurer l'application et la mise en œuvre des cadres juridiques et réglementaires, ainsi que leur alignement sur les Orientations, sont des aspects essentiels pour donner une priorité à la protection du patrimoine naturel et culturel au niveau national et au niveau des biens. Ce premier objectif stratégique vise ainsi à encourager, auprès de tous les acteurs, la mise en œuvre d'une approche de gestion intégrée de la protection des biens du patrimoine mondial, en assurant une collaboration entre les différents niveaux d'administration et les divers secteurs, tout en promouvant une croissance économique soutenue, inclusive et durable, ainsi que des opportunités de travail décent dans le contexte du patrimoine mondial.

Le deuxième objectif stratégique vise à améliorer les processus de planification et de suivi de la gestion pour assurer la protection à long terme des biens du patrimoine mondial. En effet, des plans de gestion efficaces, limités dans le temps, inclusifs et officiellement reconnus, sont essentiels pour atteindre cet objectif. Le renforcement des réseaux des gestionnaires, la promotion de l'échange régulier de bonnes pratiques et la résolution concertée des problèmes permettront de relever plus efficacement ces défis communs. En outre, l'intégration des plans de gestion

dans des instruments de planification plus larges garantira des stratégies de protection cohérentes et globales. Ce deuxième objectif stratégique vise donc à ce que tous les acteurs impliqués disposent des outils nécessaires pour affiner les processus de planification et de suivi de la gestion afin d'assurer la protection et la conservation durable du bien du patrimoine mondial.

Le troisième objectif stratégique, c'est de mettre la réflexion sur la résilience et la préparation aux situations d'urgence, la gestion des risques liés aux catastrophes, l'atténuation du changement climatique et l'adaptation à celui-ci au cœur des efforts de conservation et de gestion. En effet, l'exercice de rapports périodiques a révélé que l'intégration de la réflexion sur la résilience et la préparation aux situations d'urgence, la gestion des risques de catastrophes et l'atténuation du changement climatique doivent être au cœur de toute initiative de protection et de conservation. La promotion du développement et de la mise à jour régulière de ces outils de travail sur la base des données disponibles et avec la participation des communautés locales et d'autres acteurs pertinents qui font partie de leur système de gestion, est essentielle pour parvenir à leur intégration dans les plans et stratégies à long terme et, plus large, de gestion des risques de catastrophes et de changement climatique.

Le quatrième et avant-dernier objectif stratégique est celui d'exploiter tout le potentiel des biens du patrimoine mondial en tant que moteur de développement durable et en tant que moyen de parvenir au bien-être des êtres humains dans le respect des limites de la planète. Certains se souviendront que cet objectif stratégique a donné lieu à beaucoup de discussions lors de la réunion de décembre. Mais en effet, le Plan d'action régional se donne pour objectif stratégique de garantir que la gestion durable des biens du patrimoine mondial et la réalisation de leur capacité à agir en tant que moteur du développement durable s'effectue grâce à la participation significative des divers acteurs à la prise de décisions. Le temps est presque fini, alors je vais abréger.

Donc, le dernier, cinquième et dernier objectif stratégique de ce Plan est de renforcer la crédibilité de la Liste du patrimoine mondial en identifiant et en protégeant le patrimoine culturel et naturel ayant une potentielle valeur universelle exceptionnelle par le biais de processus structurés, participatifs et transparents. Et ceux parmi vous qui ont participé à la réunion de consultation de décembre, vous vous souviendrez que nombreux parmi vous ont souhaité voir figurer cet objectif en dernier du Plan régional d'action. Il aborde l'aspect critique de la crédibilité de la Liste du patrimoine mondial en préconisant des processus de mise à jour de Liste indicative qui soit guidée par des évaluations exhaustives, par des larges consultations et par l'implication des communautés locales et/ou des peuples autochtones en fonction des contextes, dans tous les efforts de conservation et en reconnaissant leur rôle à la fois de gardiens et de partenaires du patrimoine.

Cette diapositive est uniquement pour avoir un aperçu rapide des prochaines étapes. Donc, comme pour les autres régions, une évaluation globale à mi-parcours est prévue environ dans trois ans, en 2027 après l'adoption, nous l'espérons aujourd'hui, de ce Plan d'action.

Le Secrétariat est conscient de la lourde charge en matière de rapports qui pèsent sur les États sous cette ou d'autres conventions. Le Secrétariat est également conscient de la limite de ses propres ressources humaines et l'Unité Europe et Amérique du Nord est loin d'être une exception. Ainsi, l'exercice d'évaluation globale à mi-parcours doit être compris comme un exercice gérable pour tous et qui évite toute duplication. Car, comme on le sait, tel que conçu jusqu'à ce jour, l'exercice des rapports périodiques et les questionnaires qui y sont associés sont conçus pour suivre la mise en œuvre de la Convention et l'état de conservation du bien, mais ne sont pas conçus pour suivre les avancées de mise en œuvre des Plans d'action. Ainsi, les indicateurs de suivi proposés le sont uniquement au niveau des objectifs stratégiques et s'appuient en partie sur les informations collectées à travers l'exercice des Rapports périodiques, dans un souci d'optimisation des informations que nous avons déjà collectées. Vous verrez donc que deux types d'indicateurs sont proposés afin de maximiser l'utilisation des Rapports périodiques comme un outil de suivi de la mise en œuvre du Plan d'action régional, et de réduire et optimiser ainsi les efforts de tous ceux qui sont impliqués.

Donc, d'un côté, vous avez pour chaque objectif stratégique les indicateurs de suivi existants, donc déjà utilisés dans le troisième cycle, qui sont listés, et le cas échéant, quand on a pu extraire cette information, il y a aussi la base de référence résultant des informations collectées pendant le troisième cycle. Et la deuxième colonne dans le document, ce sont des indicateurs supplémentaires qui vous sont proposés pour compléter ce suivi et qui peuvent être aussi utilisés dans vos Plans d'action nationaux ou même au niveau des biens. Cependant, ces indicateurs, comme nous l'avons expliqué dans la réunion de décembre, restent pour le moment indicatifs et on espère qu'ils pourront être affinés par la suite, avant la révision à mi-parcours de la mise en œuvre du Plan d'action.

Donc, après l'adoption du Rapport régional et du Plan d'action, nous l'espérons aujourd'hui, dans quelques minutes, leur diffusion va être encouragée et le Centre du patrimoine mondial et les Organisations consultatives resteront disponibles pour faciliter sa mise en œuvre au niveau régional ou sous-régional. On espère aussi qu'avec un peu de soutien supplémentaire de votre part, on pourra publier une version du Plan d'action de plus facile utilisation – à savoir qu'il ne soit pas un document de travail du Comité – et qu'il puisse être plus facilement approprié par vous tous et par vos partenaires. Dans la mise en œuvre de ce Plan d'action, il sera fondamental d'encourager la coopération régionale et sous-régionale. Donc, vous trouverez le projet de décision qui figure à la page 102 de la version en anglais et à la page 113 de la version française.

Pour conclure donc, le Centre du patrimoine mondial souhaite exprimer sa profonde gratitude aux 51 États parties de la région Europe et Amérique du Nord, aux points focaux nationaux, ainsi qu'à tous les gestionnaires – rappelons-le, aux plus de 500 gestionnaires – de sites pour leur participation active à cet exercice de Rapport

périodique et à l'élaboration du Plan d'action régional. Leurs précieuses contributions ont permis d'offrir une vision exhaustive de l'état de la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine dans la région et des facteurs affectant l'état de conservation de presque la moitié des biens inscrits sur la Liste. Enfin, le Secrétariat souhaite réitérer ses sincères remerciements aux Gouvernements de l'Allemagne, de l'Irlande et de l'Italie pour leur soutien financier ainsi qu'au gouvernement du Monténégro pour avoir accueilli la consultation sous-régionale qui s'est déroulée à Kotor en octobre de l'année dernière. Leur générosité et leur engagement envers les objectifs et les principes de la Convention ont permis la mise en œuvre réussie de ce troisième cycle de Rapports périodiques dans la région Europe et Amérique du Nord. Et je conclurai par dire que pour ceux parmi vous qui souhaitent entendre de la voix, pas de ma voix, mais de la voix de ceux qui ont participé à cet effort collectif, vous êtes tous cordialement invités à l'événement parallèle qui aura lieu à 18 h 15 dans la salle 6.

Merci de votre patience et de votre attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you so much for that report and I would like to offer you a glass of water. Thank you and applaud, please, for this wonderful reporting. ^[applause]

I would now like to give the floor to IUCN for a joint statement on behalf of the three Advisory Bodies.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Indeed, the statement is made on behalf of all three Advisory Bodies, ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN.

The Advisory Bodies would like to congratulate the States Parties of the Europe and North America region for the completion of the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting in collaboration with the Secretariat.

There has been a positive process with very high levels of engagement and collaboration that has demonstrated the usefulness of this Exercise as a self-assessment tool. The results of this Third Cycle will support endeavours towards meeting the identified five strategic objectives and priority needs and implementing the Action Plan. The Advisory Bodies have contributed to this process, to the analysis of factors and trends, and have prepared instruments and tools which are available to States Parties, focal points and the site managers to effectively implement the Action Plan that they have designed.

The Advisory Bodies take note of the overall findings of the Periodic Reporting, that staff training and capacity-building is a highlighted gap for the region, in particular capacity and resources to enforce the legal framework to address activities. While this is an important overall observation, it's also noteworthy to recognize the different challenges and capacity-building needs depending on the different subregions within Europe and North America. There are differences in the main factors affecting properties that were identified through the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting for the region, compared to the factors mentioned in the SOC report. So, there should be continued strengthening of the connection between the two processes. There are large proportions of States Parties in the Europe and North America region that have ratified or are signatories to other multilateral environmental agreements and conventions, and this emphasizes the point that States Parties should continue, should further reinforce the synergies with these other international instruments, and the Advisory Bodies are ready to support this. The Advisory Bodies are also ready to support capacity-building in the region through its different programmes and activities.

Mr Chair,

IUCN would like to highlight that this year, IUCN is holding regional conservation fora in each of the regions to prepare for the IUCN World Conservation Congress in October 2025. Two regional conservation fora for North America will take place, first in Washington DC from 20th to the 22nd of August 2024, and Ottawa, Canada, from the 1st to 2nd October 2024. For Europe, the Regional Conservation Forum will take place in Brugge, Belgium, from 30th of September to 3rd October 2024.

ICOMOS has initiated a series of workshops on Heritage Impact Assessments to provide capacity-building and guidance for the members of ICOMOS National Committees and local stakeholders, which shall take place by the end of 2024 and will continue next year. ICOMOS launched a thematic approach to transhumance cultural landscapes, which would also identify key challenges and opportunities in the safeguarding, management and transmission of transhumance space, landscapes and heritage places.

The Advisory Bodies thank all actors involved in Periodic Reporting for the results achieved, and for the collaborative process that has been put in place to implement this important statutory process of the World Heritage Convention.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would now like to open the floor for comments on the subject. Before we move to the examination of the draft decision, I would like to know whether there are any comments on this matter.

Türkiye, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We would like to thank the World Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies and independent experts for their tremendous efforts and technical support, not only in carrying out the Periodic Reporting Exercise, but also for their in-depth analysis of the large amounts of data collected during the process. We are also grateful to those States Parties for their generous financial support and/or support in other areas during several phases of this work.

As we all know that Periodic Reporting is significant for the effective long-term conservation of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, as well as strengthening the credibility of the Convention's implementation. The outcomes of the Third Cycle Periodic Reporting show us that the highest priorities for both cultural and natural heritage are sustainable development, sustainable resource use, conservation and management of heritage sites, impact assessment tools, strengthening resilience to natural hazards, climate change, risk preparedness and disaster risk management. We acknowledge with great pleasure that all these topics have been on the agenda of the World Heritage Committee for a long time. However, the Committee should pay more attention to these issues and try to find ways to better incorporate these issues into the management plans and the nomination processes.

The most pressing need for cultural properties across the region appears to be related to climate change adaptation and mitigation. In this regard, the adoption of the Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage 2023 is a significant step in this regard.

Türkiye welcomes the preparation of a detailed Action Plan. However, our experiences from the previous cycles show us that the States Parties had some difficulties in implementation of the Periodic Reporting Action Plan. As much as we know, few countries have developed National Action Plans for the implementation of the Regional Action Plans. Therefore, as a State Party, we are planning to identify the actions that are most relevant to our national priorities and translate them into Turkish and share them with all national and local stakeholders. I believe this could also provide to be the basis of good practice.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Would any other Member State like to take the floor? I see no further requests. Let's proceed then.

I will now invite you to examine and adopt draft Decision **46 COM 10A** included in Document 10A.Rev.

I see one Member State has raised its plate. Is that Poland? No. Norway. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Norway:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Norway wishes to sincerely thank the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for the implementation of this important exercise, and for facilitating the development of the Action Plan. It provides us with a framework from which we can develop our own national priorities and activities within the framework of the overall medium- and longer-term objectives at the regional and global levels. It's reassuring to know that we, in this way, can contribute towards our shared objectives in World Heritage in particular related to climate change, biodiversity development issues amongst many.

It is vital for the World Heritage Convention to have a monitoring and reporting mechanism tailored to the needs of World Heritage. It provides us with very specific information on the state of conservation at our World Heritage properties, as well as a snapshot of the implementation of the Convention at the national level. Without this specific nature of the Periodic Reporting, it would not be useful as a relevant monitoring tool for us. It provides us and our site managers with the necessary leverage to drive change at home and convince decision-makers. It allows continuity in our monitoring and over time allows us to see changes over time.

Furthermore, it is a mechanism for our site managers and their teams to flag issues which would not necessarily be flagged otherwise. We also get a very important addition to the reactive monitoring process, encompassing all World Heritage properties, and not just those within the reactive monitoring, reporting on the same factors or threats, if you so wish.

Besides being highly useful for us as a State Party, the fact that it includes us all and all our World Heritage properties also makes a significant difference and contributes to the credibility of this Convention.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I will now invite you to examine and adopt draft Decision **46 COM 10A** included in Document 10A.Rev. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement du Comité sur ce point.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any further comments or interventions? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 10A** adopted. *[gave]*

Dear colleagues, Item 10A of our Agenda is now closed.

Mr Director WHC, you have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup M. le Président.

Je voulais peut-être prendre juste quelques mots pour, à propos de ce point des résultats du troisième cycle du Rapport périodique pour la région de l'Europe et l'Amérique du Nord, pour faire juste quelques remarques.

Comme vous avez noté, cet exercice est le dernier des exercices du troisième cycle et c'est un exercice qui a concerné près de la moitié des sites du patrimoine mondial – un peu plus de 48 %. Et c'est très important de le souligner parce que c'est un exercice qui a été mené avec grand succès : comme l'a dit ma collègue, la partie 1 du questionnaire a été complètement remplie, à 100 %, et la partie 2 du questionnaire à 99 %. Ce qui veut dire que la participation à la fois de tous les points focaux qui avaient été désignés, mais également de tous les gestionnaires de sites, a été vivement appréciée parce que 543 sites sur 548 ont rempli le questionnaire.

Et les grands objectifs qui sont ressortis du Plan d'action qui vous a été résumé sont également importants parce que quelque part, ils reprennent non seulement déjà les objectifs stratégiques que poursuit le... que vous avez défini au niveau de la mise en œuvre de la Convention du patrimoine mondial, mais qui reprennent aussi les défis actuels auxquels le patrimoine mondial est confronté.

Et donc c'est juste pour dire que vraiment, je voudrais remercier tous les États parties de cette région qui ont mené cet exercice, qui ont accueilli les réunions, qui ont interagi avec le Centre du patrimoine mondial pour non seulement organiser toutes les consultations, mais également préparer le rapport et le Plan d'action qui vous a été soumis. Vous n'aurez peut-être pas, vous n'avez peut-être pas eu le temps de regarder ce rapport qui est extrêmement fourni, extrêmement riche en analyses, mais également aussi en recommandations. Je vous encourage et je vous invite à le regarder parce qu'il va nous servir et il va continuer de nous servir pour faire le suivi que vous nous demandez sur l'ensemble des sites du patrimoine mondial.

Et encore une fois, merci aussi aux Organisations consultatives – les trois Organisations consultatives, l'ICOMOS, l'UICN et l'ICCROM, avec qui nous avons travaillé ensemble pour la réalisation de cet exercice. Et les données qui en ressortent sont tellement importantes qu'[elles] vont non seulement nous permettre de continuer à travailler sur le renforcement des cadres politiques, la contribution à l'objectif global du travail de notre Organisation et aussi celui du patrimoine mondial, mais aussi avec un aspect qui est très particulier, qui sera celui de mettre l'accent de plus en plus sur la résilience, sur la préparation aux situations d'urgence, sur la gestion des risques face aux catastrophes, sur l'atténuation du changement climatique et bien d'autres défis auxquels les sites du patrimoine mondial sont aujourd'hui confrontés.

Donc merci beaucoup. Nous avons été très honorés de vous fournir ce rapport.

10B. MID-CYCLE ASSESSMENT REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THIRD CYCLE ACTION PLAN IN AFRICA AND THE ARAB STATES // RAPPORT D'EVALUATION A MI-CYCLE SUR LA MISE EN OEUVRE DU PLAN D'ACTION DU TROISIEME CYCLE EN AFRIQUE ET DANS LES ETATS ARABES

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Director.

Dear colleagues,

We will now listen to the presentations of the follow-up on the implementation of the Action Plans of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Africa and Arab States regions, which were presented during our Committee session in 2021. The relevant document for this agenda item is Document WHC/24/46.COM/10B. We will start with the report in the Africa region as per section 1 of the Document 10B and will then proceed with the report in the Arab States as per section 2 of the document. We will proceed with the adoption of the two related draft decisions once the debate is completed.

I would like to therefore give the floor to Mr Muhammad Juma Muhammad, Chief of the Africa Unit of the World Heritage Centre, who will introduce the mid-cycle assessment report on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Africa region. Mr Muhammad Juma Muhammad, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Chairperson, Distinguished members of the Committee,

I am pleased to present to the Distinguished members of the Committee the progress that has been achieved in the implementation of the Regional Action Plan 2021-2027 under Decision **44 COM 10B** of the World Heritage Committee. Next, please.

Distinguished members of the Committee,

The Third Cycle Periodic Reporting was launched during the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee, Krakow, Poland, and culminated in the approval of Regional Action Plan 2021-2027 during the extended 44th session of the World Heritage Committee, Fuzhou, China. The Action Plan is the result of a strategic framework developed from the collaborative effort of World Heritage site managers, national focal points, key stakeholders from sub-Saharan Africa and the coordination of Africa World Heritage Fund. Next, please.

The Action Plan outlined 5 strategic objectives, namely: 1) Strengthen the representativity and credibility of World Heritage List in Africa; 2) Improve conservation, effective management and promotion of all World Heritage; 3) Develop capacity for conservation management and promotion of cultural and natural heritage; 4) Enhance heritage education, communication and awareness raising; 5) Strengthen community and stakeholder engagement for effective management of World Heritage properties. The Committee, during extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, reiterated its requests to the World Heritage Committee to monitor the implementation of the regional Action Plan in close collaboration with African World Heritage Fund in view of preparing a mid-cycle assessment report to be presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session. Next.

To monitor the progress of the implementation of the Action Plan, a survey was developed. It reflected all 26 actions of the Action Plan and included both closed and open-ended questions to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Four subregion workshops on completion of the survey were carried out from January to February 2024, organised by UNESCO to facilitate the completion of surveys by national focal points. The survey achieved a high response rate of 89%, with 42 out of 47 States Parties completing and submitting their responses. Survey results were compiled and analysed by Secretariat with the contribution of evaluation experts.

The preliminary findings were presented at the mid-cycle Review Workshop held in Cape Town from 27 to 29 February 2024. It's noteworthy that the workshop held provided an excellent opportunity to discuss how to achieve the harmonisation of Action Plan with a strategy for heritage in Africa, as both frameworks complement each other in supporting the implementation of 1972 Convention in Africa for the lasting impact. Next.

Finding and evaluation. The evaluation found that efforts are being made across all States Parties toward all 26 actions and 5 strategic objectives in the Action Plan. Around 20% of States Parties have updated their national inventory to reflect current heritage sites. A crucial step is ensuring that all potential sites are recognized and documented. Additionally, 19% of States Parties have requested upstream support, indicating an active pursuit of assistance and collaboration to enhance their heritage management capacities. Since the adoption of Action Plan, 5 new sites have been inscribed on the World Heritage List in Africa region, 5 additional sites have been inscribed at this present Committee, Mr Chairman, bringing the number of 10 sites inscribed since 2021.

About 30% of State Parties have confirmed the establishment of innovative funding mechanism. They are essential. These are essential for securing necessary resources to maintain and protect heritage sites. There has been significant progress in developing the desired state of conservation for the removal of property from the List of World Heritage in Danger. Since 2021, two sites have been removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger, namely Salonga National Park and Tombs of Buganda, Kasubi, in Uganda. Mr Chairman, we all recognize that there is another removal of the site in this present Committee, of Niokolo-Koba.

The use of digital technology for monitoring, such as surveillance drones, GPS system and digital model has been a highlight of enhancing the effective monitoring and management of heritage sites. There is clear evidence of various capacity development activity across the region, essential for equipping heritage professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to manage and conserve heritage sites effectively and sustainably.

African Site Managers Network has been established and is active, facilitating the exchange of information, best practice and resource among site managers. Heritage education is becoming more integrated at lower education levels such as elementary and secondary school, ensuring that young people are aware of and value their cultural heritage from an early age. There have been significant awareness activities using technology, employing tools like social media, visual tours, online campaign to reach a wider audience and raise awareness about the importance of heritage conservation.

There has been limited progress in integrating traditional knowledge and developing sustainable businesses around heritage sites, which is crucial for ensuring the local community benefit from and actively participating in heritage conservation efforts. There is a recognized need for more community engagement strategy, as effective communication and collaboration with the local community are essential for sustainable management of heritage sites. Community needs to understand the benefit of heritage conservation and involvement in the process.

Mr Chairman, we have challenges. However, the extent of progress differs significantly across different actions and States Parties. Some actions were not integrated in national plans, primarily due to the budget challenge, limited expertise and sometimes insufficient support from local authorities. It has been observed that the dissemination of Action Plan was not significant in many States Parties, leading to the progress not made in some areas.

Conclusion and way forward. Mr Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee,

In conclusion, the regional Action Plan for Africa 2021-2027 remains highly relevant to the need of States Parties in the region. Despite challenges, significant progress has been made and with the proposed recommendation, targets are likely to be met or exceeded by 2027. Based on the survey and evaluation findings, 4 recommendations are proposed as a strategy to achieve the expected results of the Action Plan for the next 3 years. These are: pursue the integration of regional Action Plan for 2021-2027 into national plans; continuing to support strengthening representativity and credibility of the World Heritage List in Africa; enhance communication, awareness raising and heritage education; strengthening community and stakeholder engagement.

Mr Chair, Distinguished members of the Committee, thank you very much for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Muhammad Juma Muhammad.

I would now give the floor to Ms May Shaer, Chief of the Arab States Unit of the World Heritage Centre, who will now introduce the mid-cycle assessment report on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting in the Arab States region.

And after that, I'll give the floor to Mr Lazare, Director of WHC, to speak on local community participation in heritage conservation efforts.

Ms May Shaer, you have the floor.

The Secretariat:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Good evening, everyone.

As mentioned, the six-year regional Action Plan for the Arab States was presented and endorsed by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session in 2021. It focuses on the identified priorities at the time, with a set of 35 actions outlined under 3 strategic objectives, mainly to: 1) contribute to a representative and balanced World Heritage List in the Arab States, reflecting the cultural and natural diversity of the region; 2) to enhance the protection and conservation and management of World Heritage, particularly for sites inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, including through emergency preparedness, disaster risk response and planning for recovery; and 3) to improve the integration of sustainable development policies in the management of World Heritage sites.

In order to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan, the World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, organized the regional meeting in December 2023 in Bahrain with the participation of World Heritage focal points and the Advisory Bodies. A survey form was also developed and launched online on 29 February 2024, with the submission deadline set for 31 March 2024^[4] for the regional focal points representing the States Parties. At the time of launching the survey, the total number of inscribed properties in the region was 93, located in 18 States Parties with 84 cultural, 6 natural, and 3 mixed sites. Of the 93 properties, 23 sites, that is around 24.7% of sites in the region, were on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Based on the survey, it can be concluded that overall, priorities of the Action Plan have been mostly relevant in the region. The level of engagement in the implementation of activities may vary from one State Party to the other, on the basis of relevancy of the action and the presence of constraints such as conflict, limited resources, or other constraints. Several States Parties have been engaged and have confirmed their engagement in activities organised by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage in relation to the implementation of the Action Plan.

A number of observations overall can be mentioned, and I will just highlight the main observations. Due consideration has been given by the States Parties to Tentative Lists, and this has, you know, increased relatively well since the Third Cycle Reporting whether in terms of preparation of Tentative Lists, updating or appraisal. This

implies the existence of a current momentum towards achieving an enhanced representation on these lists, in view of potential future World Heritage nominations. Second, there is active engagement in fostering synergies between the 1972 Convention and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, where States Parties have mentioned and provided several examples of synergies between the two conventions, including through nominations on both lists that are complementary somehow. However, still limited synergies with the Second Protocol of the 1954 Hague Convention could be observed. And moreover, enhanced capacities in the definition of Outstanding Universal Value is noted, as also confirmed by the finalisation of several pending retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value. However, several issues related to boundary clarifications and minor boundary modifications, including for the designation of buffer zones, require further attention.

For sites inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, establishing the desired state of conservation for removal of properties from the List of World Heritage in Danger has been steadily increasing, and here I would like to note that in close collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS, the States Parties have worked substantially on the development of corrective measures and desired state of conservation, and since 2021, 5 have been already adopted by the Committee. Implementation of corrective measures that have been adopted has also proceeded, yet we note that planning for recovery, in terms of an overall recovery for sites, may require additional efforts and attention, including possibly capacity-building in that regard.

Enhancing resilience to natural hazards and the management of risks remains a priority in the region. And despite the fact that there have been several capacity-building activities as well as efforts to prepare risk-preparedness plans, this remains a priority to be addressed.

There has been a very high interest in enhanced capacities in impact assessment, and this could be noted in the impact assessment studies that have been steadily increasing and submitted for technical reviews as well. However, with regard to the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, the majority of States Parties are yet to make use of this recommendation, and hence technical support in this area may be beneficial. There are also efforts to strengthen management systems in the region as a whole, overall.

When it comes to the integration of sustainable development dimensions in the conservation and management of World Heritage, there appears to be consideration for the updated Policy Document on Climate Action for World Heritage, as well as in climate adaptation and mitigation.

Attention has also been given to issues related to tourism management strategies and/or action plans that have been established to manage tourism and its derived economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts. And again, there is an increased attention that could be noted since the Third Cycle Reporting.

Stakeholder participation has been highlighted very much during the mid-cycle assessment, particularly with regard to community engagement. Fostering awareness-raising strategies has been pursued actively in the region, and several respondents have reported on implementing heritage-related educational programmes, including for schoolchildren and youth.

Therefore, it is recommended that implementation of the Action Plan is further pursued, yet with particular attention on the identified gaps that I have mentioned.

Ladies and Gentlemen, draft decision of this item, **46 COM 10B.2** can be found on page 24 of the English version and page 26 of the French version of the document.

Thank you very much for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Ms May Shaer.

I now give the floor, as mentioned before, to the Director of the World Heritage Centre. Mr Lazare, you have the floor, Sir.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

And sorry again to take the floor because, as you know, the Secretariat is really putting lots of efforts and energy and the synergies and energies and everything to be able to analyse for you for the monitoring of all the World Heritage properties, the factors affecting those properties. And so, what we are doing, of course, is that we, you can see that at the mid-cycle, there are a number of observations that concern Africa and also the Arab States. One thing which is important, which I wanted to highlight here, is the issue – and we have been discussing it – of community, local communities' engagement. I think if we want to discuss the issue of resilience and everything, this is absolutely important, and sustainable management of World Heritage sites, sustainable conservation of World Heritage sites, we cannot do it without local communities' engagement.

And this is also where it is important to benefit from the experience from the different regions. So that some regions where there is already enough experience, we are appealing that they share this experience with the other regions where this is happening. One thing which was said in the report on Africa is the limited progress in integrating tradition and integrating management systems, local knowledge, sustainable businesses, so that, you know, the

management and the conservation of World Heritage sites can improve the livelihoods of the communities living in and around the World Heritage site. And this is where something is really needed in terms of best practices that can help and even exchanges of experience, because we all know that without communities and local communities who have been the caretakers of these sites for many generations and generations, it is difficult to ensure a sustainable conservation of sites even in the future.

And I think you also observe, and you have seen, that there is an improved cooperation with all the regional institutions, the Category 2 Centres in the different regions, with the African World Heritage Fund when it comes to the African region, with the Arab World Heritage Centre, when it comes to the Arab States, where we continue to work together to implement the Action Plans that you have adopted for the two regions regarding the implementation of the Periodic Reporting Exercise.

So, we do appeal for any, to any States Parties who would like to share all the experience. I think, for example, India has a lot of experience, for example, in dealing with the issues of local communities and benefits around World Heritage sites. It would be absolutely welcome to exchange with the other regions on your experience, and I also... and other regions also. I am looking at India because we are in India for this World Heritage Committee, Mr Chairperson.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

And you can keep on looking at India because we have a global expert among us, Mr. Janhwi Sharma, and we don't mind sharing him with the rest of the world. And we have the ASI, which is the Archaeological Survey of India, our expert body, it has in-house expertise and it is more than happy to be of service to our brothers and sisters from all over the world. Thank you, Mr Lazare, for making that wonderful suggestion.

And are there anymore further comments or questions? I see none.

We will now turn to the adoption of the two related draft decisions, starting with the draft Decision **46 COM 10B.1**. But before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any proposals for amendment regarding this draft decision.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement de la part du Comité sur ce point, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 10B.1** adopted. ^[gavel]

We now turn to draft Decision **46 COM 10B.2**. Before doing so, I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any proposal for amendment regarding this draft decision.

Le Rapporteur :

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Are there any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 10B.2** adopted. ^[gavel]

I now declare Item 10B closed.

12. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE // ASSISTANCE INTERNATIONALE

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We now move on to Item 12, devoted to International Assistance.

To this end, I would like to invite you to pay attention to Document 46.COM/12. This document will be introduced to the Committee by Ms Jyoti Hosagrahar, Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre. Ms Hosagrahar, you have the floor.

The Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

This report relates to Document 46.COM/12 on International Assistance. The first part of the document is related to International Assistance requests within the purview of the World Heritage Committee, that is requests for US\$ 30,000 or above. Please note that all requests under this amount are within the purview of the Chairperson of the World Heritage Committee.

The list of the requests approved in 2021 and in 2022-23, until the 15 May 2024, can be found in the annex of the Document 46.COM/12.

You can now see on the screen a summary of the requests submitted to the Committee for its decision. The funds available under the Conservation and Management Assistance budget as of 30 April 2024, amount to a bit more than US\$ 611,000, so there are enough funds to approve all of the 4 requests, if the Committee decides to do so.

Mr Chairperson, should I continue? There seems to be a point of order.

The Chairperson:

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Sorry, Mr Chair. Can we have one of these translated into English as well? Because they're all foreign, French, please. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, India.

Can the editors please note that the Convention has two languages?

The Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Should I start again? Okay. So perhaps we wait for the slides, and I can re-explain this set of slides.

I think I can continue? So, I will re-explain this set of slides if, with your permission, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Yes, of course, there is freedom of expression here.

The Deputy Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

You see, now on the screen a summary of the request submitted to the Committee for its decision. The funds available under the Conservation and Management Assistance budget as of 30 April 2024, amount to a bit more than US\$ 611,000. So, there are enough funds to approve all of the 4 requests if the Committee decides to do so today.

The first request comes from Mauritius for the revision of the Local Economic Development Plan for Le Morne Cultural Landscape. This plan aims to foster and maintain a higher quality of life in Le Morne Village and the surrounding area by unlocking the local economic development opportunities, and it will be developed through a participatory approach. This request is therefore recommended for approval.

The second request comes from the Lao PDR for the follow up to the reactive monitoring mission to Luang Prabang, which took place in April 2022. The request responds directly to some of the recommendations made by this mission, in particular in relation to the strengthening of the conservation management plan through supplementary conservation policy documents that will take into account the Historic Urban Landscape Recommendation approach, intangible aspects and biodiversity aspects. This request is therefore recommended for approval.

The third request comes from Colombia for the improvement of the "Ayllu" application. This mobile application is used to monitor the state of conservation of the property. It requires some updates which will be defined thanks to the feedback of the State's property's computer technicians and the sharing of experience of its implementation with local communities of different road segments. This request is therefore recommended for approval.

The fourth request comes from the United Republic of Tanzania for capacity-building in environmental, social and visual impact assessment for projects in vicinity of the natural heritage sites. The request will help the State Party to better understand the integration of World Heritage and the concept of Outstanding Universal Value into the preparation and evaluation of environmental impact assessments, environmental and social impact assessments. This request is therefore recommended for approval.

The second part of the document provides a brief overview of International Assistance requests approved in 2022-2023. The main figures are shown on the screen. As you can see, Africa and LDCs are the main beneficiaries of International Assistance under the World Heritage Fund.

The third part of the document provides an update of the status of the 2024-2025 budget for International Assistance as of 30 April 2024. As you can see on the screen, half of the funds for the Conservation and Management Assistance and 73% of the funds for Preparatory Assistance have been used or have been already earmarked for approvals, including for the possible approvals to be decided by the Committee in a few minutes.

It means that there might be funding issues for International Assistance next year for Preparatory Assistance. If this happens, the Secretariat will see how to deal with this, using the possibility given to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to move funds between budget lines. If this is not sufficient, of course we will come back to the Committee for this.

Finally, we would like to recall that the maximum ceiling for Preparatory Assistance was set at US\$ 30,000 in 1999 and has not been revised since then, whereas the costs entailed by the preparation of nomination files has gone up. Therefore, after 25 years, we propose to increase it to US\$ 40,000, which would represent only a punctual support. However, in order not to delay the process of preparation of nominations, such an increase would require to increase also the ceiling of the decisions made by the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee to US\$ 40,000. Otherwise, any request for Preparatory Assistance beyond US\$ 30,000 would have to wait for the Committee's approval. In wake of the increase of ceiling of the Chairperson, it is also proposed to increase the ceiling of decisions by the Director of the World Heritage Centre up to US\$ 10,000. And with that, I come to the end of my report presentation.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Madam Deputy Director, for this wonderful presentation. I think you also need an applause. *[applause]*

I would like to know whether there are any comments on this agenda item. I see none.

I now invite you to adopt the draft Decision **46 COM 12**. But before doing so, I will ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant ce point.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments from the room? I see no comments.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 12** adopted. *[gavel]*

With this, Item 12 is now closed.

13. PRESENTATION OF THE FINAL ACCOUNTS OF THE WORLD HERITAGE FUND FOR THE BIENNIUM 2022-2023, REPORT ON THE EXECUTION OF THE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2024-2025, FOLLOW-UP TO DECISION 45 COM 15 [Report of the consultative body] // PRÉSENTATION DES COMPTES FINAUX DU FONDS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL AU TITRE DE L'EXERCICE BIENNAL 2022-2023, RAPPORT SUR L'EXÉCUTION DU FONDS DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL AU TITRE DE L'EXERCICE BIENNAL 2024-2025 ET SUIVI DE LA DÉCISION 45 COM 15 [Rapport du groupe consultatif]

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

As you know, this item, the Item 13, was opened during the first plenary meeting on 22nd July last week, and the Working Group on the Budget has met several times throughout our session.

I would like to give the floor to the Chairperson of the Working Group, Ms Chiara Franco, from Italy, to present her report and the draft decision proposed on this matter that was distributed to you. Ms Franco, you have the floor.

The Chairperson of the Budget Working Group (Ms Chiara Franco):

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

It is my pleasure to report back on the outcome of the discussions carried out in the Budget Working Group and present the revised version of the draft Decision **46 COM 13**.

First, please allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the members of the Committee for the trust that you have placed in me with my election as the Chair of the Budget Working Group. The group met twice on 25th and 26th of July. Overall, we had 31 participants representing 6 Committee members, 7 States Parties non-members of the Committee and the 3 Advisory Bodies. I would like to thank all the delegates, as well as the representatives of the Secretariat and the Advisory Bodies who attended and actively participated in the meetings. The inputs and very cooperative spirit of all participants allowed us to proceed efficiently and to conclude our work earlier than initially scheduled.

The Group was opened with a very comprehensive presentation of the budget document by the Director of the World Heritage Centre, covering the financial reports of the World Heritage Fund for 2022-2023, the report on the execution of the budget for the biennium 24-25 as of March 2024, and the follow up to Decision **45 COM 15**, including the funding of the first cycle of Preliminary Assessment and the implementation of the Roadmap for the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund.

The Group then moved to the examination of the draft decision. The original text was largely retained, with the exception of two minor amendments to existing paragraphs and the drafting of two additional paragraphs. Amendments were made on paragraph 3 to extend the call for the payment of assessed contributions beyond 2024 to include also arrears, and to paragraph 4, to call on States Parties to consider making voluntary contributions in general, not limited to unrestricted ones. A new para 7 was added, encouraging payments to the subaccount for the evaluation of nominations, as well as a new para 12 asking for additional financial information, including historical trends on the average cost of evaluations and monitoring activities.

To conclude, allow me to reiterate my sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the efficient work of this Group. I hope that the Distinguished members of the Committee will adopt the amended draft decision, which is the outcome of our collective work.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Ms Franco.

Are there any comments? I see none.

I now invite you to examine and adopt draft Decision **46 COM 13**, but before doing so, I will ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous avons reçu la proposition d'amendement du groupe de travail, présidé par Mme Chiara Franco de la Délégation italienne – la version qui a été circulée auprès des membres du Comité – et nous n'avons pas reçu d'autres amendements.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments or objections to the amended draft decision before we adopt this as a whole? I see no objections.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 13** adopted as amended. [gavel]

Item 13 is now closed.

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for your excellent time efficiency. We have advanced quite well in our deliberations today and have even discussed some of the items initially foreseen for tomorrow. Therefore, when we resume the session tomorrow morning, we will examine Items 10C and 11 and will proceed with Items 14, 15 and 16 planned for the afternoon so as not to waste our precious time. We can anticipate that all these items might be discussed in our morning meeting.

Should this be the case, I will suggest that there be no plenary session in the afternoon and that Item 17 related to the adoption of the decisions and Item 18 be moved forward to Wednesday morning instead of Wednesday afternoon. Is there any objection to this? I see none.

I would now like to give the floor to the Host Country, India, to make some announcements with regards to the closing ceremony. India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

Well, this comes as a surprise, that we are calling it a day at the moment. But just to keep everyone, all the Distinguished Delegates who are present here in this room, informed, that tomorrow, as a closing ceremony, our Honourable Minister for Culture and our Secretary would be arriving here at 6:30. So we would have a little formal ceremony at 6:30, from 6:30 to 7:00, followed by a cultural programme, followed by a dinner, which will be at 8 o'clock. All this will be there at level 2. The closing ceremony and the cultural programme will be in one of the auditoria, I think it is, if I'm not mistaken, Audi 2. But the dinner will, I think, will be in the level 1. That is what we thought we will announce, but the exact contours of the programmes we will be able to tell you tomorrow morning. But this is for every, you know, this is for the information of all the delegates, that they are all requested to join for this closing ceremony as well as, you know, the cultural programme followed by dinner.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I would now like to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to make a few announcements. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

This is just to inform you and invite you, all of you, even those that are not from... concerned by the Periodic Reporting exercise of Europe and North America, that there will be a side event which is, of course, organized by UNESCO on the presentation of the Regional Action Plan. So, and many focal points from various States Parties will also be sharing their perspective and their analysis. So, we all invite you. It will start at 6:15 in room MR6.

And the other side event is organised by South Africa, entitled "30 Years of Democracy and 27 years of World Heritage Collaboration". And of course, there will be lots of surprises, lots of music and dance. If you want to learn how to dance the South African dance, come. A full event will be there and a dinner. So, it will start at 6:30 in room MR19.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Director.

With no further announcements, I would like to adjourn this meeting till 10:00 am tomorrow. ^[gave]

Have a very nice evening and see you tomorrow.

The meeting rose at 4:40 pm. // La séance a été levée à 16h40.

NINTH DAY
Tuesday, 30 July 2024
FIFTEENTH PLenary MEETING
09:55 am – 1:44 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

NEUVIÈME JOUR
Mardi 30 juillet 2024
QUINZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
09h55 – 13h44
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues, *Namaste*.

I hope you all had an enjoyable evening yesterday.

Before we resume our session, I would like to inform you of the outcomes of the eighth and the last meeting of the Bureau. Yesterday we completed the examination of Items 8B, 8C, 8D, 8E, general Item 8, general Item 7, and Items 10A, 10B, 12 and 13. We will therefore reconvene this morning to complete the examination of the following Items: 10C, Report on the implementation of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting and general reflection on Periodic Reporting; Item 11, Report of the Open-ended Working Group established by the extended 45th session of the Committee; Item 14, Other business; Item 15, Election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee; Item 16, Provisional Agenda of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee.

With regards to Item 11, I would like to remind you that yesterday a request was placed to the Bureau for the recommendations to be considered under Item 11 related to the work of the Open-ended Working Group, to be adopted altogether as a package. We can anticipate all these 5 items might be discussed in our morning meeting. As agreed in the plenary yesterday afternoon, should this be the case, then there will be no plenary session this afternoon. And Item 17 related to the adoption of the decisions, and Item 18 will be moved forward to tomorrow morning instead of tomorrow afternoon.

Dear Committee members,

Due to some ongoing consultations, the Bureau also recommends that Item 15 only be examined by the Committee tomorrow morning when it resumes its session, instead of this morning. I would therefore encourage again all Regional Groups to carry on with their consultations as regards the 5 Vice-Chairpersons and the Rapporteur, in order to achieve a proposal for the composition of the Bureau that could be adopted tomorrow morning under Item 15.

I also wish to remind you that there will be a closing ceremony tonight at 6:30 pm in Bharat Mandapam. As discussed yesterday, I would request the Host Country to give us a list of all the volunteers and college students who have been serving out here, so that these college students can come up on the stage, and we can acknowledge their efforts, taking each and every individual's name. If the list can be provided to us, we can get it done. Thank you very much.

10C. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THIRD CYCLE OF PERIODIC REPORTING AND GENERAL REFLECTION ON PERIODIC REPORTING // RAPPORT SUR LA MISE EN OEUVRE DU TROISIÈME CYCLE DE L'EXERCICE DE RAPPORT PÉRIODIQUE ET RÉFLEXION GÉNÉRALE SUR L'EXERCICE DE RAPPORT PÉRIODIQUE

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We will now proceed to our Agenda Item 10C on the global implementation of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting and some general reflection on Periodic Reporting exercise, which is contained in Document WHC/24/46.COM/10C.

Allow me now to give the floor to Mr Lazare, Director of the World Heritage Centre, to present this report. Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. And good morning to all.

Distinguished Committee members,

By Decision **41 COM 10A**, the Committee decided to maintain the order of regions and the six-year periodicity of the Periodic Reporting cycle, with one region reporting every year: Arab States, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America, and one year between cycles for a reflection, if

necessary, and for the production of a global report on the basis of the outcomes of the cycle across all regions. Then, by Decision **45 COM 10E** the Committee requested the World Heritage Centre to submit a report on the overall implementation of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting to be presented at its 46th session. Next slide.

On the implementation of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, the Secretariat is pleased to inform the members of the Committee that the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting was successful and efficient in terms of submission. And now that the questionnaires for the Third Cycle have been completed by all regions, it is possible to start analysing the overall submission rate throughout the cycle. As you can see, the submission rates of the questionnaire at both the State Party and the World Heritage property levels are nearly 100%, and in some regions, notably in Africa, it is indeed 100% for both Section I and Section II. Same for the region of Europe and North America. The Secretariat would like to really thank the World Heritage site managers and the national focal points involved in the process for their active participation.

As shown in the table on the screen, a high global submission rate was observed for both the national and World Heritage property levels, with an average submission rate of 98.9% at the national level, that is Section I of the questionnaire, and 99.1% at the World Heritage property level, that is Section II of the questionnaire. Compared to the second cycle, the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting exercise improved by 6.1% for Section I and 3.2% for Section II.

Now, with regard to the process, the Secretariat has consistently ensured that a holistic approach was operated across regions by developing tools and guidance to facilitate this process. Key initiatives included: first, developing capacity-building tools for Periodic Reporting, including training modules, key terms, list, animation videos, a handbook for World Heritage site managers, and frequently asked questions. Two, translating these tools into various languages thanks to the contribution from various States Parties, UNESCO Category 2 Centres and also, and I must say, UN volunteers. The third key initiative was the reviewing and updating records and contacts for States Parties in the World Heritage database before the reporting began, to ensure that the coordination of the exercise was successful. Another key issue was to provide a helpdesk for technical and content support during the reporting period. One key initiative was also to conduct early reviews of questionnaires in some regions to address difficulties before final submissions. And the last one was to organise workshops and capacity training to explain the Periodic Reporting process and questionnaires.

Indeed, Distinguished Committee members, since the Third Cycle was launched in 2018, the Secretariat also ensured a global approach and overall coordination by a dedicated Periodic Reporting coordinator. This ongoing support was made possible by funds from the Government of Sweden, and with regard to the monitoring indicators of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, by Decision **41 COM 10A** the World Heritage Committee welcomed the development of strengthened and comprehensive monitoring indicators to improve follow-up progress made by States Parties in the implementation of the Convention.

With regard now to the assessment of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting. During this Third Cycle, valuable feedback was collected from respondents, particularly through chapter 15 of the Periodic Reporting questionnaire, which is on assessment of Periodic Reporting, and then for each Section. Results across all regions confirmed the pertinence and usefulness of Periodic Reporting for all World Heritage stakeholders. Globally, 69% of respondents stated that the Periodic Reporting process improved their understanding of the World Heritage Convention.

The ways in which States Parties plan to use the information from the periodic report reveal diverse priorities across different regions. Globally, the most common use of data is for improving the management of World Heritage properties (almost 93%) followed by revising management plans (91%) and raising awareness (86%). Updating existing data is also significant (almost 80%) while fundraising is also frequently prioritized (more than 40%).

Several recommendations were formulated by States Parties regarding the questionnaire format and process. These include: simplifying the questionnaire; considering specific questionnaires for transboundary and serial properties; providing more frequent and early capacity-building and training; having specific questionnaires for cultural and natural properties; removing redundancy and overlapping questions; addressing language and accessibility issues; improving the online tool; facilitating data collection; and reducing the gap between reporting cycles. The Secretariat commends the States Parties for these recommendations, which will be very useful and will inform the revision of the fourth cycle questionnaire. Next slide.

Now, when it comes to the launch of the reflection period for 2024-2025, as stipulated in the *Operational Guidelines*, paragraph 204, the sixth year of each cycle is a period for reflection and evaluation. This pause allows the Periodic Reporting mechanism to be assessed and revised as appropriate before a new cycle is initiated. So, based on this paragraph 204, now that the process for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting Exercise came to a close with the adoption yesterday of the Regional Action Plan for Europe and North America, the Committee may wish to consider initiating a one-year reflection period from July 2024 to June 2025, and this reflection period mechanism is now well established and has proven effective since its initiation with the first Periodic Reporting cycle in 1998.

Significant groundwork laid during the Second and Third Cycle, including data collection and feedback mechanisms, allows for an efficient and focused reflection period. This maturity in the process enables a streamlined approach to address evolving needs and challenges in a timely manner. The reflection period will be used to address the recommendations formulated by the States Parties through the assessment and feedback gathered during this Third Cycle Exercise and this will involve the following – but not limited to: the revision of the questionnaire format; the online tool as it is now a practice during the reflection period; take into consideration of policies adopted notably

between 2018 and 2024; an update and development of tools and guidance for the next cycle; organize reflection surveys as it was done at the previous reflection period, and meeting if required and if additional financial contributions.

It should be noted that 60% of site managers advocated for more frequent reporting cycles, such as every 3-4 years. Since the implementation of the Periodic Reporting mechanism in 1998, States Parties have been invited to report only three times over 26 years, resulting in an average of 8.6 years between cycles, with the reporting gap of ten years between the Second and the Third Cycles. And respondents suggested that the timelapse between reporting cycles should be reduced to allow a better comparison between cycles. Comments focused on the rapid changes occurring worldwide, emphasizing the need for closer monitoring and timely reporting on its consequent impacts.

These comments, Distinguished Committee members, highlight the pressing need to address urgent impact, such as those resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the regional conflicts, and new policies adopted in the framework of World Heritage.

Also, assess the workload of the stakeholders involved, was noted, notably that of the Secretariat. The workload associated with Periodic Reporting for the Secretariat found out to be still heavy, especially with the current financial and human resources and not sustainable to continue on the same model for the next cycle.

Mr Chairperson, before concluding, I would like to also mention that States Parties are invited to host Periodic Reporting reflection meetings with States Parties of all regions, Advisory Bodies, the Secretariat, the UNESCO field offices and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Category 2 Centres under the auspices of UNESCO. Extra budgetary resources to support the reflection period would therefore ensure the proper and collaborative reflection and evaluation of the Periodic Reporting.

And the draft decision of this item, as you have noted, is presented in page 24 and 25 of the English version and page 26 and 27 of the French version.

Mr Chairperson, with this and with your agreement, I think I will pass the floor to the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mr Ottone, who would like also to provide you with further information.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Mr Ottone, you have the Chair – you have the floor.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

And I will use my natural language, so the Spanish, so that you can put your translation.

[interpretation from Spanish] Mr Chairman, Distinguished members of the Committee, good morning.

With the aim of adding my two-cents word to the report that we've just heard, and with gratitude for the meeting that I had yesterday with various Delegations yesterday concerning the proposed amendments, I just wanted to say thank you very much for this conversation, which enabled us to clarify a few points and understand this process and why currently we are revising the cycle of reporting not only for this Convention, but all of the Culture Conventions and Recommendations.

And I wanted to just spend a moment on this. In this current Third Cycle of Reporting, which has just ended with the European and North American region, if you think about it, in the very first region, that was in 2019 that it got started, and the last one was in 2024, so 2018, 2019 all the way through to 2023-24. So, it's actually really difficult to have accurate information when there's a whole 5 years gone by between one region and the last region. Now, this might seem obvious, particularly when you bear in mind what's happened in the last 5 years: and so, there are 2 regions that were pre-COVID, some that were in the COVID period and some post-COVID. And so, the conclusions and, you know, the identifying shortfalls and what we've learned in the last 5 years is almost impossible because of these disparities. You've really got to compare apples with apples and pears with pears. And yet, anyone coming out of this cycle would not be able to draw useful conclusions unless you're looking specifically at the conclusions coming from that particular region in the cycle.

But having said that, I think we also need to take into account the historical context: in the 1972 Convention, as we just heard from the Director, has actually, really got underway with monitoring in 1980. In other words, ten years after the entry into force of the Convention and when the need for monitoring was actually identified. And so, when it comes to standard setting instruments related to culture, remember there were basically 2 main conventions at the time, the 72 and the 1954, and the 1954 with its two protocols and the 1970 Convention as well. Now, 2 conventions that took a long time before they actually got underway as conventions, like the ones, what we call the kind of leap that took place. And those instruments are instruments that are being appreciated by you and highly ratified by you. But then, remember, there are 3 further Conventions, 2 more Recommendations on top of that, all the programmes, such as, for example, the MAB Programme or other programmes from UNESCO.

And so, all of these instruments, what they do is provide us with the necessary information that we need in order to make our decisions. And if we want informed decisions and they really make it possible for each of these instruments to keep being useful. But we need the data and statistics behind them. And that is why we need you in each of these, and each of these Conventions through your Ministries of Culture, as we saw when we met at the MONDIACULT, for example, we had a chance for an update on that. We had to get information and information about how these are being implemented nationally, regionally, and, particularly when you work in an institution like this, internationally, so that we can incorporate all of that data and in that case, inform public policymaking in your countries and also in the sub-regions and regions. And therefore, now, when we do tend to talk a lot about this, and that's why I am really grateful for those conversations we had about the proposed amendments yesterday, because we've come up with some really positive, constructive ideas, such as the second amendment that came through from Lebanon last night and supported by 5 other Member States. One thing that actually came out of all of this, of the IOS evaluation, was that many of the participants in this Convention, you know, from the culture sector and anyway when we work, we've got these national, we've got these focal points who are working on each of these in standard setting instruments. And in this last reporting cycle, we've seen that the work has been so useful, and it should enable us to compare like with like.

And now what we need is an identical period across all of the different standard setting instruments. And if we don't, then we're going to have an overall global report which will not be capable of taking into consideration World Heritage. And so, I think that would be an absolute aberration. And so, what we're trying to do is look at everything that we're doing for natural, cultural, mixed sites with safeguarding efforts. It's really important that we align ourselves or align these reporting cycles so that the information is available for you, for this Committee, for the States Parties' General Assembly, which is only held every two years, but and above all, for the culture sector where we work. And everything that we're trying to do with sustainable development, working towards the common goal of Agenda 2030 and beyond, this is all going to be vital, vitally dependent on support from all of you, one and all.

And so, I do think that what we're doing is moving in the right direction. There's, sometimes, I think the decisions are bold, useful, and they're ratifying everything that we know needs to be done if it's going to continue being useful for here, for the Secretariat, for what you do in your own countries.

And finally, I just wanted to say that the report that we're currently preparing, that we announced in MONDIACULT for next year, 2025, what's really difficult is to have all of these different, last year, six-year cycle in one Convention, three-year cycle in another one, four years in another Convention, with various different Lists being made up. And the question now is how to put this four-year cyclical information down in a readable form, bearing in mind the specificities of each of these instruments. Because the whole point of these was to inform national and global policy.

Now, I don't want to take up any more time, Mr Chairman, I just wanted to thank once again our host, the members of the Committee and everybody who has taken part in these discussions to come up with the text of which we think is now balanced and really is forward-looking. It looks to the future of this, for this Convention.

So, thank you. Thank you for giving me the floor, Sir.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much, both of you, for this very clear presentation.

I would now like to invite members of the Committee, if they have any comments on this agenda item.

Belgium, you have the floor.

La Délégation de la Belgique :

Merci, M. le Président, bonjour à tous.

La Belgique partage les inquiétudes reprises dans l'amendement que nous avons co-écrit, puisque nous estimons que le rapport périodique répond tout d'abord aux prescrits de l'Article 29 de la Convention. Et nous venons de terminer ce troisième cycle de rapports standardisés, et nous avons maintenant une expérience en la matière. Les choses ne sont pas encore parfaites. Le dernier exercice était trop long. Certaines questions n'étaient pas pertinentes ou pas bien formulées. On a eu l'occasion de l'exprimer, notamment, nous le savons, que le format actuel ne convient pas pour les biens en série ou les biens transnationaux. Le vocabulaire utilisé n'est pas toujours compréhensible par les gestionnaires de sites. Des problèmes de traduction existaient encore et certaines mises à jour demandées dans le deuxième rapport périodique n'ont pas été toujours tenues en compte dans le troisième cycle, ce qui pose question pour la synchronisation des informations envoyées au Centre.

Néanmoins, ces inconvénients ne doivent pas occulter les nombreux avantages actuels et potentiels que présente cet exercice pour l'UNESCO, mais aussi pour les États. Pour l'UNESCO et pour le Centre du patrimoine mondial, c'est l'opportunité d'une évaluation régulière et standardisée, la mise en œuvre de la Convention et l'état de conservation des biens du patrimoine mondial d'une région du monde. Cela permet d'identifier les besoins, les attentes régionales et par là orienter ses travaux et programmes. En ce qui concerne les États, c'est une opportunité de mener une réflexion structurée avec les gestionnaires des sites, de les inscrire dans une approche qui dépasse les limites de leur site et les inscrit dans une dimension internationale. Ces exercices nous aident à mieux

comprendre les besoins communs à nos sites. L'unité dans la diversité est une belle devise qui devrait nous inspirer dans le cas présent.

M. le Président,

Le taux de participation de ces exercices sont particulièrement élevés, plus élevés que pour dans d'autres Conventions, ceci parce qu'ils répondent à une véritable attente des États et des sites. Ceci doit être respecté et entendu. Nous comprenons la demande et l'intérêt d'une approche globale pour les questions culturelles et nous ne sommes pas opposés à de nouvelles approches. Nous vous demandons cependant de ne pas défaire ce que nous pouvons appeler un projet.

Pour terminer, comme l'a souligné M. l'ADG, pour faciliter le travail des gestionnaires des sites, nous voudrions avoir une pensée pour les États parties qui n'ont que des petites équipes pour répondre aux demandes des rapports périodiques des différentes Conventions. Il serait difficile, voire impossible pour eux d'assumer une nouvelle méthode de travail qui cumulerait en même temps tous les rapports périodiques dans leur forme actuelle. Nous demandons donc à l'UNESCO de faire preuve d'imagination et de trouver une solution qui permette de répondre à ces objectifs tout en respectant les attentes des États parties, peut-être en nous basant sur l'organisation actuelle du questionnaire en deux sections et en suggérant que la partie 1 s'intègre plus facilement dans un exercice global pour le secteur culturel et que la partie 2 puisse devenir encore plus spécifique en ce qui nous concerne. Nous demandons enfin au Secrétariat qu'ils nous expliquent comment ils vont entamer la période de réflexion, tel qu'annoncé dans les paragraphes 65 et 66, et, déjà suggérer qu'ils n'oublient pas les gestionnaires de sites lorsqu'il s'agit des parties prenantes.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Lebanon.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Mr President.

During 50 years, our Convention has evolved from the initial vision of its founding fathers, which conceived the World Heritage List as a selective list comprising a small number of iconic sites, to a more open approach, expressing regional specificities and respectful of cultural diversity. The reporting mechanism should follow this strategic move. They should become more specific, more regional and more diverse. This is the rationale behind our proposed amendment to the draft decision.

Periodic Reporting is one of the core conservation monitoring mechanisms of our Convention. It is the way by which those who are at the basis of the system, site managers, focal points, regional centres, review periodically the situation in their respective sites and express the specific needs and demands to the World Heritage Centre and the Committee. The regional approach to Periodic Reporting is a major tool for promoting regional collaboration while responding to the specific characteristics and setting priorities for each region in the implementation of the Convention.

The feedback and recommendations formulated by the State Parties following the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting show that regional differences are notable in terms of expectations and priorities. Priorities in Africa are not the same as in Europe and North America. The needs and demands in the Arab region and in Latin America and the Caribbean are not the same as in Asia-Pacific, etc., etc. Replacing the current regional approach by a global approach might end up imposing a standard harmonization process, which would lead to loss of regional specificities. Instead, we must favour a bottom-up approach that takes into consideration the specific needs of heritage sites, the expectations of local community, together with the respect of cultural diversity principle expressed in Nara Document and other basic texts of the Convention.

The global report shouldn't replace the 1972 Period Reporting mechanism but should be built on the results of this Period Reporting in order not to lose the specificities which represent an invaluable source of richness for the UNESCO system.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Kenya, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair.

Kenya would like to join the previous speakers in agreeing with the sentiment. And we want to take this opportunity to thank the Centre for the guidance of the States Parties in filling the questionnaire, despite the challenge of COVID-19. They did a splendid job, and we have to commend them for that.

I have some quick points here, especially regarding to the online tool, which many States Parties observed that there were some challenges, particularly in the part of once you are filling that questionnaire and then you go offline, you come back and then whatever you had filled is lost and you have to go back again and start filling the thing all over. So, our recommendation is that, in line with the recommendation of the draft statement, is that we need to have a way that this online tool will be more friendly so that it doesn't become a tedious process of filling and then going back again and going all over again starting from point one.

The other thing that we have noted is that the State Party of Somalia, which joined in July 2020, of course did not report because they were very new to the Convention and in this case, we would want to urge the Centre to have a specific programme to bring the State Party of Somalia up-to-date to the reporting processes of World Heritage now that they started working on the Tentative List.

Finally, Mr Chair, the State Party, the Delegation of Kenya, aligns itself to the draft amendment by the Distinguished Delegate of Lebanon about keeping to the region reporting cycles.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Jamaica.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair.

Jamaica also expresses his thanks to the World Heritage Centre for presenting such a concise report and the direct support received during the process, though mostly virtual.

As a participant in the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, we are really pleased to see that within the regions, over 98.9% completion rate was achieved, and this is really encouraging, as we have heard being said previously. Jamaica also notes that in the report, engaging the questionnaire revealed that among all regional groups, the LAC region ranked lowest in the areas of regional cooperation and providing updated information. And this is particularly important to us in the Caribbean as we continually seek to strengthen our networking across the region, which can be challenging due to language and other differences. However, we believe that continuous engagement with regional bodies and with the C2Cs can improve this with greater assistance provided for the anglophone Caribbean Small Island States who are in need of greater support.

There is, as we also noted that there is a strong emphasis on improvements with site management and revising management plans, and we are heartened by the management improvements for World Heritage properties and thankful for the support received in relation especially to climate resilience in Jamaica towards this end.

Importantly, Chair, we note the movement from a regional approach to a period of the Periodic Report to a global one, and we would support the amendments that have been proposed by Lebanon and Belgium in this regard.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Mr Lazare to respond to the queries and comments made. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je voudrais remercier la Distinguée Déléguée de la Belgique pour ses commentaires, et c'est bien l'esprit dans lequel nous envisageons de mener ce travail de réflexion.

Alors pour être peut-être plus précis, nous avons déjà l'expérience des deux précédents exercices. Et l'idée ici, c'est toujours de mettre en avant le processus inclusif et de participation avec ceux avec qui nous avons travaillé. C'est pour ça qu'il ne s'agira pas, pour le Centre du patrimoine mondial, de produire juste un rapport à l'issue de sa réflexion. Il va s'agir de mener des consultations avec tous les points focaux qui ont participé à cet exercice et qui ont des leçons ou des recommandations beaucoup plus précises à nous donner. On va le faire soit par le biais d'enquêtes, soit par le biais de réunions, comme on l'a fait toujours par le passé. Mais dans tous les cas, on ne le fera pas seul. Et l'idée, c'est un peu les points que j'ai présentés, c'est-à-dire que nous parlions avec tous ces points focaux et même les gestionnaires de sites, d'abord de l'amélioration du questionnaire : comment on va arriver à simplifier ces questionnaires pour éviter les doublons, les répétitions, les questions qui sont probablement inutiles ?

C'est-à-dire par exemple on ne va pas redemander tous les ans ou à tous les cycles, toujours les mêmes questions qui n'ont pas besoin d'être aujourd'hui.

Je pense qu'on a déjà un outil informatique qui commence à bien fonctionner. Et cela est surtout sur la base déjà des premiers retours que nous avons eus sur l'utilisation de ce questionnaire. Et c'est vrai qu'il y a encore eu des problèmes techniques, parce que l'accès à Internet n'est pas le même. Il y a des gestionnaires de sites qui sont vraiment dans des coins très reculés et qui n'ont pas cette facilité d'accès à Internet. Et je crois que l'idée, c'est vraiment de continuer à améliorer l'outil qui est en ligne de façon à ce que disait le distingué délégué du Kenya tout à l'heure sur les bugs qui continuent d'arriver ne puissent pas arriver. Mais là, M. l'ADG pourra vous en dire effectivement un peu plus.

Donc, c'est vraiment dans cet esprit participatif que nous allons mener ce cycle-là en ayant bien en idées et puis en images le fait que vous souhaitez effectivement qu'on renforce encore tout le travail qui peut être fait au niveau des sites. Et donc ça va être vraiment quelque chose sur lequel on va beaucoup travailler, mais sur la base aussi des indicateurs que nous avons reçus.

Donc, voilà, je pense que vos recommandations nous aideront aussi à continuer à améliorer cette question. Et donc j'adresserai un courrier à tous les États parties dans ce sens-là pour commencer à recevoir aussi des recommandations supplémentaires de votre part.

Merci beaucoup M. le Président.

Je pense que M. l'ADG va certainement répondre aux commentaires du Délégué du Liban aussi et du Kenya.

The Chairperson:

Okay, I have seen that the Distinguished Delegates from Argentina and Mexico have also raised their plates, but I will give the floor to ADG Culture to continue the explanation being given by the Director WHC. Mr Ottone, you have the floor.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

I'll try to be as brief as possible so that we can hear from the members of the Committee who have raised their plates. As I mentioned, first of all, I'd like to thank all of the members who have taken the floor. I think it's key to learn from our experience. And this Third Cycle has been very rich in terms of identifying what's working and what isn't in our monitoring process.

As I mentioned previously, we need to ensure that there is no confusion here. When it comes to a global vision, it should be on the basis of a regional approach. In the Article 29 of our Convention, there is a mention of monitoring and there is a request for national monitoring. So actually, the regional and global approach is something that was requested by you. It's not actually set out in the text, but we felt that it was one of the best ways to learn from our experience. What we're proposing here is to add an additional layer, so we'd keep the regional layer. And I'll repeat this because we're not going to replace it. That's not being called into question. What we're proposing here is to align that layer with a global layer, which can take into account everything that's happening in World Heritage sites across the world, and including that in a global agenda, which is of national, international and regional interest. And in order to achieve that, we need data, information and numbers. So that's the aim here.

So once again, we're not changing the approach entirely and forgetting what we've learnt from the past. It's simply adding a new layer which we don't currently have. And in doing so we'd be also harmonizing the cycle periods, the cycles of the Periodic Reporting.

Second point, the Distinguished Delegate of Kenya mentioned that there may be an issue regarding the current data-collection system, which is not only an issue related to Internet access: it's due to the fact that the system, given the new tools that are available to us, has simply become obsolete. It was created at a time to meet a specific demand, but now everything that the Secretariat is doing within the remit of its role, which is to work at the service of Member States to provide accurate information at the right time, we need to modernise the operating systems we use. The role of the Secretariat is to provide those tools. So I have no doubt that with the systems we're using to collect information and not just information related to this Convention, but all standard setting instruments from the Culture Section and hopefully in the future, all Sectors of UNESCO, including Science, for example, and other programmes related to Education which are working in similar areas to us, hopefully in the future we'll be able to make all of our lives easier. A couple of years ago, we started talking about the single stop-shop, and this is the idea here. We want to ensure that the information that we've received in the past is updated, and that's not always the case today. I'm speaking from experience here. When I was a Minister and we had to fill out forms, when the government changed, we had to start everything again from scratch, and the specialists themselves changed as well. So, if the information is compiled on a UNESCO portal, then it will be much easier to check, to reuse and to use it to the ends that have been set out.

Thank you very much. And now I'll hand back to you, Chair, so that we can hear from the rest of the members of the Committee.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Argentina, followed by Mexico.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

Several times during this Committee, we mentioned that the Committee is characterized by dialogue. This is the Committee of dialogue in our view, so we're delighted to take part in that dialogue.

Our country attaches great importance to regional aspects. However, we share the comments made a few moments ago by the ADG Culture that it's important to make things clear here. The reports are an opportunity to show what we have to offer, and also to ensure dialogue within our own regions and among our countries. My country is a federal country with provincial administrations, which require specifically this type of dialogue. When we need information for Periodic Reporting, we need to mobilise all players at provincial level, at site level, at civil society level. And this enables us to truly identify internal issues and then bring those issues to the regional level. So, we're also very interested to hear from a global approach too.

We've been working a lot on the issue of the low participation rate in some regions. Having global reports, in our view, could enable us to have a much more general overview of what the situation is, so that the World Heritage Centre, the Secretariat and Member States can better understand the situation at hand and thereby we could improve the tools we use as part of our Convention. Thank you very much, and we will continue to work on this, and we hope to have a much shorter deadline for these in the future.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Mexico, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

We also wish to thank the ADG for the explanations provided and the comments shared. And we wish to express our support and to thank you for the support provided at regional level in order to ensure the effective response rate to this cycle of Periodic Reporting.

However, there are 27 cultural sites, 2 mixed sites, as well as natural sites. This means that we also have to think about issues related to what was already mentioned by Belgium and Lebanon. Mr ADG mentioned that we need to strengthen data collection, and we would add another layer which we're very much interested in, which is bottom-up approach to move from national to regional and then global level. Because site managers in Mexico – this is the Second Cycle of Periodic Reporting I've been in charge of in Mexico – and the question that all site managers raised at the end of this cycle was: yes, it's all well and good, we have this regional dialogue which is very useful, and it's important to learn from the experience of other site managers, however, we don't have a detailed diagnosis of what is the situation in each country, what are the issues each country is facing.

And this is why we are very much concerned by an approach that would focus on the global level. We need to understand what's going on at the national level as well in order to ensure more adapted approaches. It's not just about capacity-building here, it's about addressing specific issues related to the conservation of World Heritage sites. Subregional plans are being developed, and we need to look at how we can address issues that aren't sufficiently discussed for mixed sites, for serial sites, and for transnational sites as well. In questionnaires, there's not necessarily enough detail about how we can ensure interaction with the other Cultural Conventions of UNESCO.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Qatar.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We are aware of the key role of the Periodic Reporting as a conservation monitoring mechanism within the World Heritage Convention, particularly for its assessment function for the application of the Convention and updated information.

We share the belief with our Belgian and Lebanese colleagues that the regional approach is more effective for collaboration and addresses specific regional needs. We also believe that a global approach would undermine this effectiveness, leading to a standardised process that contradicts the principle of cultural diversity in the Nara Document and other fundamental texts. Different regions such as Africa, Europe, the Arab States and Asia Pacific have distinct priorities and needs that must be respected.

Therefore, with the wish to avoid bureaucratic inefficiency, which we believe would come with harmonisation in this specific context, we support the amendment proposal put forward by the Delegations of Belgium and Lebanon.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Senegal, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous avons suivi avec beaucoup d'intérêt les rapports présentés au 10A, 10B, 10C par les différentes régions. Je pense que toutes les régions se sont mobilisées et les pourcentages obtenus montrent qu'il y a un intérêt réel pour ces rapports-là. Ce matin, nous avons suivi le Secrétariat et j'ai suivi avec beaucoup d'intérêt aussi le rapport présenté par le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial, qui a donné des indicateurs qui montrent que nous sommes manifestement sur la bonne voie.

Les débats que j'ai entendus depuis ce matin, notamment l'intervention du Liban, de la Belgique et les précisions apportées par l'ADG, montrent, il me semble, qu'il n'y a pas trop de contradictions. La base, ce sont les rapports régionaux qui sont la substance qui va alimenter, à mon avis, une superstructure qui fait la synthèse de tout cela et nous permet d'avoir un panorama global. Donc on ne nous demande pas de passer du local au global. On dit simplement qu'on va créer un global qui fait la synthèse des locaux.

Si c'est ça et si cette compréhension-là est correcte, je pense que nous n'avons pas trop de contradictions. Et bien sûr que j'accepterai avec plaisir l'amendement du Liban, qui est une mesure prudentielle, mais je ne crois pas qu'elle soit en contradiction avec la vision globale dégagée par le Secrétariat du Centre du patrimoine mondial.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any further requests for the floor?

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I would like to echo the previous speakers. They had very interesting interventions and very interesting questions. I would like to echo also the intervention of Mexico and the question raised. Thank you for the Secretariat for all the explanation.

Just I want to know how the global report will be done. I mean, you will synthesize all the Periodic Reporting, and we know very well that we should underline also the specific needs, not only for each region, but also the sub-regions, which are very sometimes different from the needs of the whole region. I am speaking about the Caribbean and Pacific islands and the islands in the Indian Ocean. So giving the situation, I would like to know how you are intending to do the global approach: it is a summary or how you will define the data, how you will choose the data, the information? It is about key challenges? It is about the trends? It is about protection, conservation programmes? So just I want to know how you will define all this.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Sorry. Of course. Mr Chair, we agree on the amendments presented by Lebanon, Belgium, Kenya and Qatar. And I miss maybe a country, but we agree on these amendments.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Saint Vincent.

Your question, how will the global be done, underlying specific needs, not just for the regions, but you also want the specific needs identified for the subregions within a region. Define how the data will be there, whether it be a summary, how will it be done? What are the key challenges? So, I hope the Secretariat has noted it.

I now give the floor to India, followed by Türkiye.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving India the floor.

Mr Chair, we also support the amendments that have been proposed. But like, like the previous, you know, speakers who have spoken before us, and I think most of the things, most of the things have been iterated by them.

There is a, you know, first, I think, what we are doing is that we are talking about the developing synergies with other international instruments and programmes on cultural and natural heritage in sustainable development perspective. We feel that while developing such synergies is a welcome step, but this also calls for a greater capacity-building initiative. And herein we would like to reiterate the recommendation of the latest IOS evaluation on creating a community of practice of staff working across Conventions and Recommendations to drive the harmonisation process. If synergies with different Conventions and programmes are to be reflected in the Periodic Reporting forms as well, we may have to create a pool of such professionals at the regional and national levels, as a level 2, as currently the Periodic Reporting questionnaire is primarily answered by professionals who are trained in the World Heritage Convention, and not necessarily in the implementation of the other international instruments.

Our second concern pertains to the, you know, to this aspect, which I think the Distinguished Delegate of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines just pointed out, that what are these global heritage trends and challenges that we are talking about? Because now we are also speaking on one level to sort of adapt the Periodic Reporting exercise in the regional context. Yet we are looking at the global heritage trends and challenges. So how do they convalesce with one another, that we are referring to? And are these defined already or are they still have to be defined?

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I'll give the floor to the ADG Culture to respond to the queries.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

Just to be able to clarify some of these questions and respond more generally to what has been raised here. There's been mention of the importance of what is regional, and go back to the original text. Remember, the original text of the Convention doesn't actually talk about the regions. It was basically our own decisions that led us to have this regional approach, which means it's up to the Committee to decide how they want the next Periodic Reporting cycle to look. And that is what we are going to reflect on. As Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo said, from tomorrow, from this morning right through to mid next year, that's up to the Committee to decide. But, and the Secretariat of the entire Culture Section in each of the standard setting instruments, will be meeting three, four or five times a week to try and get together and analyse how each of these periodic sessions is working, looking at everything that's necessary, unnecessary, what's working, what's not working, what's the best for the Sector. And so, they're starting to bring in, they're trying to get all of the information that they need. And all of this is based on the data that you provided.

So why do we need to do this exercise? It's because basically in the last two cycles, we never actually looked at a different way of doing it. And now it's time for that to change. Because now your governments, your Ministers of Culture want to also have a global overview. That is what we heard from them. And what's it going to be done on the basis of? On the basis of the priorities that you have set regionally and which we saw in MONDIACULT. So, the priorities are not actually defined by each of the conventions. They are defined as a whole from the requirements that your authorities for culture identified throughout the consultation process, and which will no doubt come out in the next November MONDIACULT meeting. And so, the World Heritage Convention has certain themes based on the information that you gave us: cultural rights, safeguarding, management. Who's going to provide all of this information? Well, when we talk about certain properties that are currently suffering, and we're discussing them here, but the basic role of this Committee is to safeguard that culture, and that is how we can provide information and offer guidance. And so that's why it's understanding the layer that actually is under the remit of this Committee is to make sure that that valuable information is collected and gets back to public decision-makers, and so that you can apply it at the local level with regard to your specific legislation.

So, but it's time for cultural policies to be perfectly mainstreamed into all other kinds of policy, bearing in mind issues such as access to culture, safeguarding, indigenous and cultural practitioners' involvement, etc. But if you want to simplify, streamline, improve, enhance these processes, then we're going to get better information to inform public policy. And this is through the global report.

And I'd like to thank once again the proposed amendment, because we feel that that really does encapsulate the spirit of all of this. And so, what we're trying to do is that, since we currently don't have one overall vision, you know, we've got different monitoring exercises with different regional approaches, different snapshots of what's happened here or there. You know, or as you know, we want more than just an x-ray as the Delegate of Argentina said, what we want, now we've got an opportunity to have solid data that can be used to inform public policymaking, in your various ministries of culture or among lawmakers.

And finally, with the question that was raised by the Distinguished Delegate of India, I am convinced that the proposed strategy at the sector of dedicating 2026 to what we said is capacity-building, a whole year of capacity-building across all of the regions in parallel, so that every civil servant, every, you know, regardless of where they work in the regions, in your countries or through regional offices or whatever. But as of today, currently, they're not working on cultural heritage, but they need to. And what we're trying to do now with this capacity-building is create tighter links with cultural heritage, with the site managers. And until now there's been this blockage where the decision makers couldn't meet with those working in the field, the site managers who are there on a day-to-day basis. They're the ones who know what the issues are, and they are the ones who have the knowledge. And so, from this capacity-building, we are creating a closer link so that all of this can be dovetailed better. And so, the information can flow both ways and that you get better policies. And without that it won't work. And that is why we need that information to flow. And that's why we need a concrete... what we need to do is to get that input, and it's you yourselves in the past who have made the decisions, laying the groundwork for this. So, let's move on with it.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Türkiye, followed by Japan.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We agree with, and support, the amendments proposed by Lebanon and Belgium, because Periodic Reporting is a major tool for promoting regional collaboration. A standard harmonisation, if it were to be imposed with a global approach, would contradict the principle of cultural diversity. Therefore, we do find the amendments necessary and agreeable.

However, a global approach as an additional layer might be useful, without replacing the regional approach, and I thank ADG Culture for his explanations here. But I also agree with my Distinguished colleague from the Saint Vincent and Grenadines that we do need further clarification on this.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your comments regarding the need for further clarifications.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Japan, followed by Greece. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

Japan also appreciates much effort of the World Heritage Centre on the Periodic Reporting. We understand the suggested amendment by Lebanon and Belgium aimed to enhance an effect of the reporting by taking into account the characteristics of each site and so forth. So, Japan want to support the amended draft decision.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Greece.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Chair.

It's just to echo the concerns expressed by our Indian colleague as well as by the Distinguished Representatives of Türkiye and Saint Vincent and Grenadines. We need more clarified answers on these very sensitive issues, particularly the capacity-building is of particular importance. How can we match the global approach with the capacity-building? I would like to ask for more clarification from ADG and from the Director of the Centre.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

ADG, you heard the request for further clarifications from Türkiye and Greece, and he has specifically asked both of you. So you have the floor first and then I give to Lazare.

The Assistant Director-General for Culture:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

Let me explain this. The global vision is built with you, and it's based on your information. Do you understand what I've just said there? Currently, if I wanted to have a global report based on the five regions reports, I wouldn't have the information I require. What I have to do is go through the information over the last five years and then extract the data that I need, so that I can present you with an overall global report. It's going to have to be done with the information provided by yourselves. In other words, there's not much change. But the difference is that when you see the last cycle report from Europe and North America, the information is what we call a big doorstopper, like this. But what you actually want is a summary. You want something usable. But we're currently working on for the next. We've had to revise with my four-person team, we had to go, and plus some analytical tools, we've had to go through across all the programmes and recommendations and culture conventions, I think it was around 3,720 something reports, periodical reports across all of these instruments. So, you'll understand that that is a massive amount of information. And when you want to go through the set objectives and priorities, it's actually really hard to extract this. You can't do it without AI. This is just raw data. It's not been analysed. So currently we're getting the information from you. But they only actually provide the information with regard to the requirements of the Committee. But when it comes to the site managers, this is an instrumental, an instrument that, they're a tool that is really, really important to the Convention because all of the decisions that are taken here at this Committee need to be implemented by the site managers. And so, all of this information is very granular. And that's not going to provide you the global report that you want.

The global report, what will it do? Well, it's going to show the major trends across different regions. What are the good practices in one region as opposed to another. What are the visions? And you know, we're able to get down to the site level and see what are the key issues in Africa, India, the Caribbean, they're all different. Obviously, these are reflected in the regional reports. Obviously, there are some cross-cutting ones like climate change, but some sites are being affected in different ways, and in the Caribbean there are different processes to Latin American sub-region.

So, what am I saying? Am I saying there's nothing in common? No. Of course, they've got things in common, but they're dealing with the issues in different ways. And it's possible that some experiences will be able to continue, that public policy will be able to solve some of the problems that they can work on. That much is true. But sometimes it's not actually going to be possible through legislation. It's going to be done with practical solutions. And that's why we've really got to be listening carefully to the work.

So, this is a mammoth task you know, if you want all of that scientific information to go into a global report. And remember, it's not this Committee and it's not even the World Heritage Secretariat. The Secretariat has, what, three people currently actively contributing on a daily basis to the work of this team that covers this work, and they're the ones who are giving us all the input so that we can put it into a global report. And then we've got those who work in monitoring across the different Conventions in the Sector. So, what we want to do, what we're trying to do, is come up with the best possible standardization, just, it doesn't mean more work for you or more work for the Secretariat. It's just a way of optimizing, and it's adding another layer to the information that you've already had.

We've never had this global overview and yet the people are asking for it. And it's two years and two months, you know, the time frame that we've got to work in. And now we're talking about something that's not in the text. We're talking about just aligning periodicity. That's all it's about. Because you can't really, you can't harmonize something that isn't harmonizable. Each instrument is specific and unique and that will always remain the case.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

You can't harmonize something that is not harmonizable. That's what the, was the Spanish translation into English.

I hope Mr Lazare can harmonize and become a musician. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre / Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

No, I think.

Ce que je voudrais simplement redire, c'est que nous nous appuyons sur ce que les points focaux nous ont dit au cours de cet exercice, c'est-à-dire la possibilité de faire l'effort de comparer la situation de la mise en œuvre de la Convention de leur pays au niveau régional et au niveau global. Donc, ça veut dire quoi ? Ça veut dire que quand nous allons faire l'analyse au niveau régional, nous sommes obligés de prendre en compte la répartition des données, par exemple entre les sous-régions, dont nous appliquons la même méthode qu'au niveau régional. Et c'est-à-dire que, donc, nous allons faire un effort d'essayer de désagréger les données afin de pouvoir réaliser donc une analyse tant au niveau régional qu'au niveau sous-régional.

Donc, il y a eu une question sur le renforcement des capacités. Nous avons jusqu'en juin 2025 pour produire cette réflexion et cette analyse. Donc, nous aurons à ce moment-là des résultats, et sur la méthode. Et à partir de ce moment-là, nous allons commencer les réunions de renforcement des capacités avec nos points focaux. Nous, on veut travailler avec nos points focaux. On va continuer à travailler avec nos points focaux pour très bien essayer de mettre en place et expliquer cela. Donc, c'est cette priorisation dans le renforcement des capacités qui va être notre colonne vertébrale pour pouvoir arriver à ce travail et de contribuer effectivement à... au global dont M. Ottone a évoqué.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Chair.

I apologize for taking the floor again, but having listened to the explanations by the ADG Culture and the Director of World Heritage Centre, what is astounding is the scale of this exercise.

The Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, if I can very roughly sort of sum it up or calculate, we are looking at about 1,000 to 1,050 properties which might have, you know, participated in this exercise, which means that there are more than 1,000 site managers who have participated in this exercise. This is my rough calculation. The Section I of the Periodic Reporting is about 85 to 90 pages, and similarly the Section II is also equal number of pages. So, which means that per property we are generating data worth about 90 pages and then per State Party again, the overarching information that is being generated is also about 85 to 90 pages. We are looking at a data of nearly 150,000 to 170,000 pages that have been generated. Now, you know, the analysis that we get, if I'm correct, is we get the regional analysis. So, you know, the regions, we get a summary report which gives us an idea about the trends or reflection on the trends. But the micro-level issue is, I think, if I'm if I'm correct in my understanding, we don't get that reflection. And I think that is somewhere we need to fill that gap wherein, because it is the last person standing on the site as a site manager, you know, that person should be aware of the issues that that person is facing at the ground level as much as it is happening at the regional level, as much as it is happening at the global level.

So as the Director of World Heritage Centre pointed out, or maybe ADG Culture pointed out, that we have only three to four resource persons who are handling this, such a complex task. I think this is something that we need to look into, to address this much amount of data that is being generated, how do we work out, you know, various synopses out of this so that the States Parties can also learn out of it. And this is, you know, hearing this explanation, I think this is a comment I had a spontaneous comment I had in mind, which I thought, I'll share it here with the Committee and everybody else.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for that summarization.

150,000 to 170,000 pages, that's what we termed, you know, the torture by literature. But the question is that, just three or four resource persons are handling it, perhaps States Parties can volunteer resource persons who can be in the state capital, need not come to Paris, but at least can take the load off the Secretariat in some way or the other, so that more focus can be given on the increasing number of properties and more resource persons are used in this exercise. But thank you for the comments and appreciating the tremendous work done by the men and women of the UNESCO Secretariat.

And now I give the floor back to Lebanon, followed by my good friend from Argentina.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I'm sorry to take the floor again, but I will be very short. We take note with satisfaction of the declaration from the ADG, that the global approach does not replace the current regional period reporting, and that the harmonization process would not lead to loss of local and regional specificities, but adds a new additional layer to the system.

However, while welcoming the MONDIACULT initiative, our Convention has its own specificity. Our Convention covers cultural, natural and mixed heritage, and our priorities are defined based on the local and regional level. To this end, we would favour a bottom-up approach that takes into consideration the specific needs and expectations of local communities, together with the respect of cultural diversity principles expressed in Nara Document and other basic texts of the Convention.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Lebanon.

I now give the floor to Argentina.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

I think we need to mention previous experience in issues or matters that may seem different, but are actually slightly similar. For ten years, I worked in synergies between chemical conventions, and we had exactly the same discussions we're having here today. Synergies are essential, and that information is key. And if we have to analyse 200,000 pages, then we'll have to learn to use tools that may not be at our disposal for the time being. Just because of the quantity of pages, this doesn't mean that science has to stop moving forward, and we're seeing this on a daily basis.

We understand the concerns expressed by some Delegations on the specificities of this Convention. However, we wish to draw your attention as members of the Committee to the fact that not everyone is a member of the Committee. This Convention includes all of the international community, including States which are not members or who have not signed the Convention.

The sites that we aim to protect belong to humankind as a whole, not just to the members of the Committee. This is why the regional dimension seems essential to us. We're talking about the same thing, but in different terms. If, with our limited power here, we further limit the possibility for other stakeholders to act, then I think we'd be sending the wrong message.

One Delegation has just highlighted the specificities of this Convention, that we have cultural sites, but we also have mixed and natural sites too. Our vision is that all sites at the end of the day are cultural, because nature cannot defend itself on its own. It's us, through our culture that we can improve or worsen the situation. So, our vision will be what enables us to actually make change. If we just leave nature on its own, if we were to leave nature on its own, then we wouldn't need this Committee or any other Convention.

We will not oppose the consensus, of course, but I think that we're talking about exactly the same thing here. We need to improve our tools, and we agree here with the Secretariat about the need to have global information. We are very grateful for the explanations, and we look forward to further discussing this in the working group, because we believe that there's some confusion leading to fear here.

We have discussed these issues indefinitely in other fora, for example in the UN. And so, we believe that we shouldn't be limiting the possibility of comparing information. We need to look at what's working and what isn't. Another response we could provide is simply to state that we don't know, we don't have that information. We shouldn't be ashamed of that. We simply need to identify whether there's a lack of capacity or a lack of resources. And that shouldn't necessarily damage the reputation of a specific State but rather help us to remedy the situation. So, we wish to fully support the initiative led by the Secretariat and the World Heritage Centre, which is to come up with shorter reports which are more specific and, as highlighted by the ADG, focus on global aspects too, which is not the case for the time being. When we return to Paris, to UNESCO, we'll face the same issues that we're discussing today, but perhaps with limitations set out by this Committee, which has only made up of 21 States.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Mexico, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

And apologies for requesting the floor once again. We just have some general and final comments. We wish to thank you for your proposal to collaborate among States when it comes to helping the Secretariat. We also wish to thank once again, Mr ADG Ottone, as well as the Director of the World Heritage Centre, for the explanations provided. And we always stand ready to support joint work to ensure the implementation of this Convention.

Very briefly, I wish to come back to the concern about drawing on the MONDIACULT Declaration and how it applies to site managers. And I was very much involved – because I'm from Mexico of course – in MONDIACULT, and I'm here representing Mexican site managers. So, we need to look at how we can actually integrate all of those declarations and statements into concrete measures to protect World Heritage properties. I would not say that the site managers are the ones, aren't the ones on the front line, on the contrary, I think they are the first responders in a way, and we need to learn from them.

Now, when it comes to harmonization, I would ask Mr ADG. We've discussed this at length in the group: what about the harmonization of Tentative Lists? We expressed our concern about avoiding generalization and focusing on specificities as well. We have no concern about sharing information. On the contrary, that is what we're all here to do. And we are all aware of the work that's undertaken in collaboration with other conventions, such as the Illicit Trafficking Convention and others in this field.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your comments on the harmonization of the Tentative Lists.

I see that Mexico has spoken, so there have been 17 interventions by the Committee members.

And now I see that the Observer State Party of Norway has raised its plate. So, Norway, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Norway:

Thank you, Chair.

We have been participating through three cycles now. And throughout these we have contributed actively to develop, improve and tailor this unique monitoring mechanism to the needs of this site-based Convention with its cultural as well as natural and mixed sites, transboundary sites and most importantly, us, the States Parties. It may not be perfect, but it is a unique mechanism with high relevance for the site managers. Us as a State Party, Norway as part of a sub-region as well as the Europe and North America region, and finally also for Norway as part of the world.

We also wish to really emphasise the function that this exercise has in terms of capacity-building and awareness raising at a local, regional and national levels in all matters related to this Convention, as well as the fostering of collaboration at subregional and regional levels.

We have been listening to this discussion with keen interest, and we are slightly puzzled by what we are hearing from the podium. It is not clear for us what the consequences of this proposal will be, nor whether these proposals are in fact in line with Article 29 of the Convention. And secondly, whether it is in line with the fact that this is a State Party developed, driven and owned exercise. We consider that the States Parties should be the driving force behind changes and further development to the Periodic Reporting, as we are the ones relying on this exercise to be of relevance for us and our site managers also in the future. And we are happy to hear that the Director of the World Heritage Centre invited us to collaborate. We will certainly utilize this opportunity.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Norway. Thank you.

I see that there are no further requests for questions and comments.

I will therefore invite you to examine and adopt draft Decision **46 COM 10C** included in the Document 10C, but before doing so I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendment to the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Bonjour M. le Président, bonjour à toutes et à tous.

Concernant le Point 10C, nous avons effectivement reçu un amendement soumis par le Liban et co-écrit avec la Belgique, le Mexique, le Kenya, le Qatar, le Rwanda, mais également le Sénégal et la Jamaïque tel qu'exprimé en salle.

L'amendement débute au projet de décision par le paragraphe 7, avec le remplacement de la transition d'une approche régionale à une approche globale pour le rapport par, « demande en outre au Secrétariat de préparer une étude de faisabilité pour examiner les modalités pratiques d'amélioration de la soumission des rapports périodiques au titre de la Convention, y compris pour considérer comment réduire les cycles de soumission des rapports et établir une date limite commune à toutes les régions pour la soumission des rapports, pour considérer le recours à des questionnaires spécifiques aux biens culturels et naturels ainsi qu'aux biens transfrontaliers et en série, et pour développer davantage de synergies avec d'autres instruments et programmes internationaux concernant le patrimoine culturel et naturel dans une perspective de développement durable pour examen lors de sa 47^e session ».

Au paragraphe suivant, « prenant en considération l'évaluation de l'IOS et conformément à la Décision **219 EX/13**, demande au Secrétariat d'explorer également, dans le cadre de l'étude de faisabilité susmentionnée, les modalités pour une amélioration des rapports périodiques au titre de la Convention, dans le but de faciliter une analyse cohérente à l'échelle mondiale des tendances et défis du patrimoine en préparation de leur usage dans les rapports mondiaux de l'UNESCO sur les politiques culturelles ».

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

We shall go paragraph by paragraph.

Are there any comments or questions? Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4. Are there any objections? I see none.

Paragraphs 5, 6. Are there any objections? I see none.

Yes, Kenya, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair.

In light of what our experts shared concerning the experience of the online platform, we just had a little amendment to add at the end of paragraph 5 to say, after "Convention", to say, "and the need to reinforce the technical platform to strengthen data upload for better reporting".

Thank you, Chair.

The Rapporteur:

May I ask the Delegation of Kenya to repeat and see if it's confirmed, please?

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you so much.

And the need to. Yes, it looks good. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

All right. Is there any objection to the amendments suggested by Kenya on para 5? I see none.

We go to para 6. Any objections to para 6? No.

Now we go to para 7. "Further requests the Secretariat to prepare a feasibility study". Is there any objection to para 7? I see none.

You go to para 8. "Taking into consideration". Is there any objection to para 8 as it appears on the screen? I see none.

Go to para 9. Para 10. No.

Is there any objection to the adoption of the whole decision, as amended? Any comments? I see none.

I therefore declare the draft Decision **46 COM 10C** adopted, as amended. ^[gave]

Dear colleagues, if there are no requests for the floor, I now declare Item 10C of our Agenda closed.

11. REPORT OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ESTABLISHED BY THE EXTENDED 45TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE // RAPPORT DU GROUPE DE TRAVAIL À COMPOSITION NON LIMITÉE ÉTABLI PAR DE LA 45E SESSION ÉLARGIE DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Excellency Alaidaroos, may I request you to come on the podium, please ^[speaks in Arabic]. Also, the Rapporteur of the Open-ended Working Group, the Distinguished Delegate of Grenada, can you please come on the podium, if you are there in the room. Yes, you are there.

Dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's now time for us to review Item 11 of our Agenda, which pertains to the report of the Open-ended Working Group established by the extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee, contained in Document 24/46.COM/11 that has been distributed to you. As a reminder, at its extended 45th session last year, the Committee decided to transfer the mandate of the former Ad-hoc Working Group to an Open-ended Working Group in order to be more inclusive and allow all States Parties to the Convention to contribute to the discussions. The mandate of the Open-ended Working Group was defined in Decision **45 COM 11**, and the Committee requested the Open-ended Working Group to submit a report and recommendations to its 46th session. To this end, I have the pleasure to welcome Mr Mohammad Alaidaroos from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who has been chairing the meetings of this Open-ended Working Group since February 2024. And Ms Chafica Haddad from Granada, who was elected Rapporteur of this group. I will now give the floor to present the report of the Open-ended Working Group. Mr Alaidaroos, you have the floor to be followed by Ms Haddad.

The Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group:

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr Chair. *Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh*. Good morning.

At its extended 45th session held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2023, the Committee decided to transfer the mandate of the Ad-hoc Working Group to an Open-ended Working Group to allow all States Parties to the Convention to contribute to the discussions. The mandate of the Open-ended Working Group is defined in Decision **45 COM 11**.

I wish to take this opportunity to warmly thank the States Parties of Bahrain and Switzerland for their financial contribution provided for the organisation of the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group. The Open-ended Working Group met in four meetings in 2024, and requested the Secretariat to prepare a background document to guide its work and to avoid repeating and re-discussing decisions and recommendations that have already been examined and formulated in the past.

At the inception meeting, the group elected its Bureau with myself as Chairperson, Germany, Poland, Philippines and Kenya as Vice-Chairpersons and, as Rapporteur Mrs Chafica Haddad from Grenada, to whom I passed the floor in order to provide a brief review on the work of the group.

Thank you. Thank you very much.

The Rapporteur of the Open-ended Working Group:

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson. Excellencies, dear colleagues,

The mandate of the Open-ended Working Group is defined in Decision **45 COM 11** and in the same decision, the Committee requested the Open-ended Working Group to submit a report and recommendations to this session.

The main topics that arose during the discussions are:

- the need for better representation and enhanced balance of the List, including the necessity to address the existing imbalance of the World Heritage;
- have a common understanding of fair representation and existing gaps;
- slow down nominations of well-represented States Parties;
- address the nomination processes, including the following:
 - improvement of procedural efficiency;
 - streamlining nominations process;
 - simplification of the nomination format and limit of the dossiers size;
 - use of new technologies and updating of communication tools;
 - revision of the Tentative Lists including regional harmonization of Tentative Lists with the support of the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies for possible cooperation and serial or transnational nominations; and also
 - to update of the gap analysis by the Advisory Bodies.
- In addition, it is requested to have a better use of existing processes such as the Upstream Process and the Preliminary Assessment.

- the need for possible financial support for a sustainable nomination process, notably through more voluntary contributions, including unrestricted ones;
- setting of potential twinning or linking of sites during the nomination phase and after inscription; and finally
- exploring the inclusion of possible technical support from the World Heritage related Category 2 Centres.

In addition, the necessity to have a common understanding of credibility was highlighted, as well as to agree on the definition of authenticity and integrity, and to clarify the concepts of Outstanding Universal Value and of gaps, and to recognise regionality in the World Heritage context.

In this regard, Kenya announced the intention to host a meeting in Kenya in May 2025 on this topic for Africa.

But also the importance of conservation emerged as a top priority, stressing the importance of protecting the heritage and not only increasing the inscriptions.

The importance of implementing the *Operational Guidelines* was recalled, as well as that of the Declaration of Principles to Promote International Solidarity and Cooperation to Preserve World Heritage that was endorsed by the General Assembly at its 23rd session in November 2021.

One of the most recurrent topics in the debates of the group was the need for capacity-building and awareness raising, including of local communities, decision making stakeholders and youth. Systematized and targeted capacity-building programmes, including mentorship and training of trainers in the framework of nomination, conservation and management, were considered of paramount importance to address underrepresentation of the list. The involvement of stakeholders was highlighted as essential. Emphasizing the importance of engaging local communities and Indigenous Peoples in the nomination and conservation processes to ensure that local perspectives and expertise are integrated, which is critical for the sustainable management of heritage sites.

The attention was drawn on the priority to be given to Africa and SIDS, and the positive role of the Preliminary Assessment to ensure high-quality nomination dossiers, as well as an opportunity to strengthen and improve the dialogue of States Parties with the Advisory Bodies and to install or restore confidence.

The debate also addressed financial challenges within the World Heritage Framework and focused on enhancing existing processes, as well as exploring innovative, sustainable funding solutions.

The possibility of involving additional service providers was considered as an option not to be pursued, as it would introduce complex administrative issues and inefficiency in management, knowledge transfer and institutional memory, which would have to be made up for by additional resources. Emphasis was placed on strengthening existing structures and processes rather than creating new ones, as well as on enhancing the involvement of regional experts.

It is important to underline that an average of more than 102 States Parties participated to each meeting of the Open-ended Working Group, which shows the great interest that States Parties attach to its mandate, covering topics that are highly relevant for all the Convention's stakeholders. Also, more than 120 pages of draft recommendations were submitted and debated during its four meetings.

Given the limited time available before the present 46th session of the Committee, it was agreed to start by discussing the recommendations, which seem to attract the most interest for immediate consideration. Hence, several recommendations on important issues are still pending, and it was understood by all that the remaining recommendations and issues would be discussed during an extended Open-ended Working Group for consideration at the 47th session of the Committee.

Draft Decision **46 COM 11** is on page 4 of both the English and French versions of Document 11. The draft decision is the transposition of the recommendations adopted by consensus by all the States Parties participating to the Open-ended Working Group.

I thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Any Committee member would like to take the floor?

Ukraine, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Ukraine supports the continuation of the work of the Open-ended Working Group of States Parties to the Convention on the protection of the World Heritage for the next period, to discuss and develop relevant proposals on important issues, namely regarding issues of representativeness of the World Heritage List and strengthening its balance, improving capacity-building, exploring the possibility of using additional service providers, as well as working out solutions to ensure funding stability. Issues related to improving the functioning of the World Heritage Centre as a whole are no less relevant for discussion. Optimization of organizational and technical procedures is a priority. There

further discussion will continue to increase the efficiency of the work of the Central Committee and accordingly, the World Heritage Committee.

In addition, taking into account the realities of today, during the meetings of the working group, we consider it necessary to analyse critical situation related to the need to include objects in the List of the World Heritage in Danger in connection with external threats to these objects, in particular related to military actions.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

We have yet not gone into the opening of the draft decision because we have the Open-ended Working Group representatives on the podium, so would any Member State like to take the floor to address specific issues with the Open-ended Working Group before we go into the draft decision? Because at that point in time, once we are done with the Open-ended Working Group representatives, they will leave the podium and then we will be opening the draft decision.

So, is there any specific questions related to the Open-ended Working Group? I see two Member States have raised their plates.

India, followed by Qatar. You have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving India the floor.

First and foremost, we would like to extend our heartiest congratulations to our Chairperson for this exemplary leadership in guiding this crucial, Open-ended Working Group meetings. We also express our deep appreciation to the Madame Rapporteur for her thorough reporting. Additionally, we would also like to acknowledge the background documents prepared by the Secretariat, which provided us with detailed guidance ensuring that we build on past decisions and recommendations.

The mandate of this Open-ended Working Group is very crucial. It involves improving the balance on the World Heritage List, enhancing capacity-building initiatives and proposing sustainable financial solutions. However, the fifth mandate of the group, which is the fundamental reflection on the operation of the World Heritage Convention, is one of the most important mandates that requires rigorous discussions.

We note, you know, that this Open-ended Working Group has made significant progress in discussing and adopting recommendations. And during the discussions so far in these four meetings, you know, we have adopted 13 decisions out of the 28 draft decisions considered. This, we believe, is a significant achievement and a testament to the constructive and collaborative spirit of all participating States Parties.

Mr Chair, to quote Victor Hugo, "there is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come". Indeed, time has come for the idea, for the fundamental reflection on the operation of the World Heritage Convention, to simplify the process, to encourage transparency and inclusiveness, use of technology in the nomination processes and for enhanced cooperation between the States Parties and the Advisory Bodies.

Mr Chair, the World Heritage List is an aspirational list wherein more and more properties with OUV should be there. We shouldn't shy ourselves in adding them on the List, fearing the pressure on the Secretariat or the Advisory Bodies. The pressure will be more and more in times to come. Considering that there are 1,700 plus sites on the Tentative List and with a rate of 25 a year, 30 years from now, we do hope to reach that magical figure of 2,000. Therefore, it is time for us to reflect upon this challenge and find innovative solutions to ensure that we encourage every State Party signatory to the Convention to participate, to ensure that adequate representation, and simultaneously achieve a regionally and typologically balanced and credible List.

Innovation is also the call of the day to support the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to mitigate increasing pressure on them.

India would congratulate the Chair of this Open-ended Working Group for allowing each State Party to voice its views and submit proposals in a truly democratic process. We extend our sincere gratitude to all the States Parties for their valuable contributions and active participation in this working group.

Mr Chair, we acknowledge that this work is yet incomplete and India assures fullest cooperation to the Chair of this group. We will continue our dialogue in future meetings to address the unresolved matters. Let us continue this dialogue and engagement. Our collective efforts and continuing, you know, and continuing engagements are essential for achieving this group mandates. And we hope that this group, Open-ended Working Group, will complete its work in the coming year and be able to present its report to the 47 COM.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I request the timers, for some Member States, after three minutes, you make it zero-zero, and for others you continue, for requests, for consistency in this regard, please. Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Qatar, followed by Türkiye.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

Tout d'abord je voudrais féliciter le Président du groupe de sa présidence de sagesse pendant, après la 45^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial et je voudrais aussi bien sûr remercier aussi, et féliciter Madame Chafica de son rapport très clair et bien sûr qui reflète les discussions pendant le temps des mois passés, vraiment, qui a bien amené des discussions très intéressantes entre les experts.

M. le Président, nous sommes convaincus que le groupe a besoin de plus de temps pour bien arriver à un résultat très précis pour l'avenir de notre Convention, l'avenir de, vraiment, de Liste de patrimoine mondial. C'est la raison de laquelle le Qatar confirme le soutien complet pour le groupe.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Türkiye, followed by Argentina.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

At the outset, we would like to thank all Parties for their participation and valuable contributions to the Open-ended Working Group that eventually led to the adoption of several significant recommendations. As Türkiye, we have actively participated in the working group and submitted our written contribution. We are also very pleased to see the inclusion of written contributions of our country into the draft decision, including main issues such as the update of the 2004 Gap Analysis by the Advisory Bodies, the simplification of the nomination format, creating an online platform for the submission of nomination dossiers, strengthening regional diversity of the Advisory Bodies' experts for advisory, monitoring and evaluation missions and panels, and capacity-building programmes for Tentative List and nomination, especially for Africa and SIDS.

Türkiye would like to highlight the importance of ensuring the participation of experts from diverse regions and areas of experts in the work of updating the ICOMOS Gap Analysis study.

We acknowledge that the most important challenge against the implementation of the working group's recommendations is the provision of necessary financial support. In this regard, well represented States Parties will be able to involve in both twinning programmes and support capacity-building activities. We believe that making the best use of the tools and resources currently available, such as the technical review, Upstream Processes, Preliminary Assessment and existing thematic studies will also contribute to the main objectives of the working group and herein we have a suggestion. While the Preliminary Assessment has been created as a significant tool within the context of the revision of the nomination processes, it would be useful to conduct a review or a report on the implementation of the Preliminary Assessment to measure its effectiveness in reducing both the nomination costs and the divergences between the Advisory Bodies' recommendations and the Committee decision.

Türkiye will continue to contribute to the working group in pursuit of this Committee, and we hope the work of the working group will be completed by the 47th WHC.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Argentina, followed by Japan.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

We should like to extend our thanks for this report, and also for the very existence of the working group. We do think that they need to continue as an open-ended group. This is a dialogue that should not just be among ourselves, but opened up to all States Parties of UNESCO, Member States of UNESCO and Observers, and those who are not members of this Convention too. We do need their input, their ideas, their analysis, so as to understand why some who are not submitting nominations or are not participating are holding back. Is it because of capacity-building, for example? We also think this is a very, very broad remit.

But the question is: until when will we continue working? When do we know when we're finished? Remember that even to continue working requires a wherewithal for all of us as participants. And at the last meeting, we had the feeling that some of the participants didn't actually have a really clear idea as to why they were there and what they were discussing. And we are gradually working through the Agenda under the able leadership of our Chair and obviously with support from the Secretariat.

But let's remember that, remind that the members of the working group, there is representing all of us, so that we can better fulfil the mandate we have been given. And so it's important to keep working on this.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Japan, followed by Jamaica.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairman.

Japan would like to appreciate the discussion of Open-ended Working Group and the World Heritage Centre. We recognise the importance to increase the number of high-quality nominations from other regions, and steady capacity-building is indispensable to do so. Japan is supporting the capacity-building of specific World Heritage sites through capacity-building at underrepresented countries, and we believe these activities will also contribute to mid-term and long-term capacity-building.

In addition, Japan has decided to initiate the support to the project named Approach to the Concept and Practice of Heritage Authenticity in Africa through Japanese Fund in Trust Programme, which includes the support to the international meeting held in next May at Nairobi, which the Rapporteur mentioned. Japan intends to continue its multi-layered contribution to the representation, protection and promotion of World Heritage of underrepresented and not-represented countries.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Jamaica, followed by Belgium.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair. Good morning, delegates.

Jamaica welcomes and appreciates the establishment of this working group and has virtually attended several of the meetings convened during the year in spite of the time difference. Special thanks to the Chairperson, Rapporteur and Vice-Chairpersons of this working Group and the Secretariat also for carrying out their responsibilities with great seriousness. We appreciate the attention given to Africa and SIDS and look forward to positive progress.

Jamaica supports all the aims of the working group, but in the interest of time, we note the focus to address the gap in representation of States Parties in this World Heritage List to produce a balanced representative List. As an island in the Caribbean and a member of SIDS, we note that for a list of over 1,200 sites, there are only 22 inscribed sites from the Caribbean, an area comprising 13 independent sovereign countries. The proposition to improve the technical evaluation requirements, including improving capacity-building activities and to propose sustainable solutions to the financial requirements of the nomination process, is also welcomed. Among all the SIDS of the Caribbean, the average rate of submission is one site every two years, with the last site inscribed in 2017 in Antigua, prior to Suriname in 2023. This highlights the urgent need for capacity-building in nomination development for the Caribbean, especially those of the English-speaking Caribbean, for which increased support is needed.

Jamaica accepts the draft decision, which includes a recommendation for the life of the Open-ended Working Group to be extended until the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Jamaica.

I give the floor to Belgium to be followed by Saint Vincent.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Chair.

The Open-ended Working Group is an important extension of this Committee. It is a forum to discuss fundamental issues with all States Parties to the Convention, not just the 21 Committee members who happen to hold office at the moment. We were happy both to participate in the Open-ended Working Group, but also to see so many other States Parties do so.

Belgium fully subscribes to the conclusions of the Open-ended Working Group presented to this Committee. But we also note that a fundamental discussion on many more points still lies before us. We have made reference to that multiple times also during this session. The mandate defined for the Open-ended Working Group also recognises this, and we look forward to discussing working methods to define how we are going to tackle these different challenges.

One specific additional point we would like to raise today concerns the financial situation of the Convention. While there may be no acute problems yet, there are increasing signs that we may reach the point where we will be confronted with them soon. As the World Heritage List keeps growing and threats World Heritage properties are facing become more frequent and complex. Unfortunately, this also means that capacity to assist States Parties with these SOC issues and even the ability to deal with them at the Committee sessions is limited. This is problematic as the state of conservation is really at the heart of what this Convention is all about.

Dear colleagues, we also count on the Advisory Bodies to do their work based on the highest standards and with the best possible experts. We call on them increasingly, expect a real dialogue and in some cases, setting strict timelines for an answer. These high expectations can only be realized if we offer them sufficient means, and Belgium sincerely wonders what we are doing that right now. This is obviously also not a new situation. We have been discussing this for many years, but we can only note that no real and sustainable solutions have been presented so far. And to underscore this conclusion, we would like to point out that so far, no State Party has contributed to account for human capacities, confirming our position that relying on voluntary contributions is not a sustainable practice. So, we really feel that it is time to start thinking outside of the box and hope that the Open-ended Working Group and its continuation can be the platform that takes up this task.

Chair, we would like to conclude by raising a practical concern regarding the continuation of the Open-ended Working Group. We would like to urge, and we use this word deliberately, we would like to urge the Centre to work out a calendar for our meetings as soon as possible, and stick to that calendar as much as possible, as we really feel we need time for an in-depth reflection and discussion. Belgium hopes we can start with the Open-ended Working Group this autumn already, so in a few months' time.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I request the Secretariat to have a calendar as soon as possible and stick to the calendar as much as possible. Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to be followed by Italy. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

First of all, I would like to thank the President of the Open-ended Working Group for his leadership and also the Rapporteur for the excellent report. I would like also to thank the Secretariat for all the contribution provided with the background document and for all the assistance and also the donors who contributed to make this Open-ended Working Group possible.

This working group, Mr Chair, was very successful because it attracted all the States Parties. They were present, they were active, and also we presented many, many proposals to save the credibility of the Convention, to enhance the representativity of heritage, and to achieve a balanced and credible World Heritage List, as has been said also by my colleague from Jamaica. It is aspirations for non-represented and underrepresented States Parties to reinforce the work of this Open-ended Working Group.

Mr Chair, I want also to say that this working group also underlined the importance of the Code of Conduct and its principles. It underlines also the importance to have more cooperation and more understanding of the needs of non-represented and underrepresented States Parties on the World Heritage List. And I would like also to underline that in between, among the recommendations, we request the Advisory Bodies to undertake a review and update of the 2004 Gap Analysis, which is a very important exercise. And we take this opportunity also to call for funding to have this gap analysis possible.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, followed by Italy, followed by Kenya.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The working group has assumed a great responsibility to carry forward essential reflections on the future of the Convention. We fully subscribe to the recommendations which were finally adopted by the group, and which are now in front of the Committee. The issue of the geographical balance of the World Heritage List has been the core matter of discussion, it is also our priority to address it, to safeguard the credibility and prestige of the Convention. We continue to strongly believe that the objective of a more geographically balanced List can be pursued only through enhanced capacity-building activities, which would also need additional funding. Indeed, we have to remember that the imbalance is already nominations are submitted, and not only in inscriptions. Therefore, we need to support underrepresented states and regions in the preparation of quality nomination dossiers. At this regard, we also look forward to seeing the first results of the Preliminary Assessment process, which has been introduced exactly with this objective.

We hope that the working group will be able to continue its work in an efficient way over the next year, addressing also other prominent issues, starting from the emerging challenges for the safeguarding of our common heritage and including the increasing costs of the Convention and the sustainability of the World Heritage Fund.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Kenya, followed by Rwanda.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair.

We appreciate the reports by the Chair and the Rapporteur and wish to acknowledge the good work and collaboration of States Parties that contributed to the discussion of the Open-ended Working Group. One of the topics as seen from the report concerns better representation and enhanced balance of the List. It is worth noting that while cultural heritage continues to take the lion's share on the List, recognition of natural heritage continues to lag, and Africa has rich natural heritage. Scientific research continues to discover more intricate details about this heritage category, so we wish to submit that requisite attention be given to this important aspect.

With regards to the proposal of Kenya to host the Conference for African Heritage, we thank the working group and the Committee for their support and especially the State Party of Japan, for their commitment of support for the conference.

On the Africa 2035 Programme, we support the statement to be read by Zambia and Rwanda.

On the Preliminary Assessment, we wish to reiterate the technical concerns that were raised by our African experts and shared in previous meetings on the current format, the shape and the implementation of the Preliminary Assessment and the need for a solution to the disadvantages it creates for our region. We recommend further engagement, dialogue and a remodelling of the Preliminary Assessment as we aspire to achieve a balanced and credible World Heritage List to ensure that the new requirements will not become a challenge to under-represented regions.

We also support the sentiments that were raised by Türkiye and look forward to further discussions in the working group. Thank you, Chair, and we support the working group. It has been a very good experience.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Rwanda, followed by the Republic of Korea.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

M. le Président, je vous remercie de m'avoir donné la parole.

Tout d'abord, nous aimerions remercier le Président du groupe de travail, le Secrétariat et ainsi que tous les États membres participants aux premières réunions du groupe à composition non limitée établies par la 45^e session.

Plusieurs points ont été abordés au cours de nos dernières réunions, notamment la nécessité d'une meilleure représentation et d'un meilleur équilibre sur la Liste. Sur ce point, M. le Président, seule une approche inclusive et équitable garantira que le Patrimoine mondial, dans sa diversité, soit représenté et protégé. Nous notons cependant avec préoccupation que, dans son format actuel et compte tenu de l'état de préparation des États parties africains, l'analyse préliminaire constitue une charge supplémentaire et un obstacle pour un nombre important d'États parties, en particulier ceux sous représentés et non représentés sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Les avantages potentiels de l'analyse préliminaire pour améliorer le processus de nomination au patrimoine mondial ne peuvent être réalisés tant que les points de préoccupations soulevés par les nombreux pays africains ne sont pas substantiellement abordés. Augmenter la charge technique sur les pays sous représentés, qui ont encore besoin de renforcement de capacités dans une convention en constante évolution, ne sera pas bénéfique pour ces pays.

À ce stade, l'analyse préliminaire nous présente des défis d'ordre technique, entre autres la rallonge considérable du calendrier d'inscription, qui s'ajoute aux étapes déjà existantes du processus de nomination relativement long. Pour certains États parties, dont les ressources humaines et administratives peuvent être limitées, ce rallongement du calendrier peut constituer un obstacle majeur. Nous tenons également à souligner que le délai actuel de douze mois pour recevoir un rapport d'examen nous paraît excessivement long. Plus important encore, M. le Président, nous constatons qu'aucun renforcement substantiel des capacités n'a été mis en place pour les experts africains concernant ce nouveau processus. Toute l'idée même d'une représentation plus équilibrée de la Liste ne sera pas atteinte. Au contraire, l'analyse préliminaire va considérablement pénaliser certaines régions à court et à moyen terme.

M. le Président, tant que les Directives opérationnelles ne seront pas amendées pour refléter les ajustements éventuels apportés à l'évaluation préliminaire suite aux travaux du groupe de travail, il est important de privilégier le renforcement des capacités autour de l'évaluation préliminaire afin de garantir que les États parties ne soient pas désavantagés. Nous espérons que les discussions évolueront dans ce sens au sein du groupe et que nos préoccupations qui nous paraissent fondées seront enfin prises en considération.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative from the Republic of Korea, followed by Mexico.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Republic of Korea would like to thank the Bureau of the Open-ended Working Group for the draft recommendations, which highlight the importance of strengthening cooperation among stakeholders and improving procedural rules to make the World Heritage System more balanced. In particular, as we aim for a better-balanced World Heritage List, the Republic of Korea would like to join other States Parties in supporting the update of the Advisory Bodies' Gap Analysis. We believe such efforts will lay a groundwork for identifying challenges and navigating solutions to ultimately achieve balanced representation of the States Parties and harmonized categorization of heritage sites on the List. In addition, it is notable that the States Parties have shown great interest in twinning, which encompasses knowledge sharing and capacity-building activities for underrepresented and non-represented States Parties, especially in the process of preparation of nomination dossiers.

The Republic of Korea hopes that the States Parties will explore creative measures for twinning and share their experiences. In doing so, we could leverage the bridging role of various entities such as UNESCO national and regional offices and Category 2 Centres. In this regard, the Republic of Korea welcomes the draft recommendations and hopes that the remaining issues could be addressed in the next Open-ended Working Group.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Mexico, to be followed by Lebanon.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Once again, thank you very much, Chair.

We welcome the unwavering multilateral commitment and the work undertaken by the representatives of States Parties within the framework of this working group. We'd like to thank the Chair as well as the Rapporteur and of course, the World Heritage Centre, as well as you yourself, dear Chairperson of this Committee, for your very relevant comments throughout our discussions.

We need to come up with a new global strategy with input, which addresses a new vision of World Heritage. We need to work on strengthening our vision and representation of sites on the List, as well as regional balance, which we discuss at length, not in terms of political commitments, but by reviewing the technical requirements as well as the state of conservation related aspects. We need to have the support of States Parties as well as C2Cs if we are to succeed in this process.

We also need to ensure capacity-building. And here we repeat what we said during one of the meetings of the working group. We need to ensure cooperation with the World Heritage institutions of the States Parties of this Committee and the Advisory Bodies so that we can improve the assessment of new nominations as well as the strategy.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

And I'll give the floor to Lebanon, followed by Zambia.

La Délégation du Liban :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je voudrais d'abord remercier le Président du groupe de travail, le Rapporteur et le Secrétariat pour tous les efforts qu'ils ont faits.

Ce groupe de travail a été extrêmement intéressant. Les discussions ont été extrêmement riches. Essentiellement, il y a eu plusieurs questions qui ont été soulevées. Essentiellement, les discussions ont porté sur les moyens de renforcer la crédibilité de la Liste et la représentativité de la Liste.

Ces deux points qui ont été, qui ont constitué depuis plus de 20 ans des points de base sur lesquels le Comité s'est toujours penché. À ce sujet, nous avons tous accordé une importance, une grande importance à la nécessité de mettre à jour les gap analysis qui datent de 2004, puisque ces gap analysis vont permettre de définir quels sont les manques dans la Liste et comment on peut faire évoluer et développer la Liste pour répondre à ces manques et avoir une Liste plus crédible et plus représentative.

Un deuxième point qui a été longtemps abordé, c'est la question du renforcement du dialogue entre les États parties et les organes consultatifs au moment de l'évaluation des nominations. C'est un point important qui a aussi été pendant très longtemps un des points d'achoppement à l'intérieur du Comité, puisque jusqu'à très longtemps, jusqu'à longtemps, enfin, dernièrement, il y a eu, il y avait une sorte de processus complètement séparé. D'une part, les États parties faisaient leur nomination et d'autre part, les organes consultatifs faisaient leur évaluation sans aucun dialogue, sans aucun contact. Les choses ont commencé à évoluer. Nous pensons que le Preliminary Assessment est un moyen de pouvoir renforcer ce dialogue au moment de l'évaluation. Maintenant, les modalités, effectivement, il y a, on peut discuter de beaucoup des modalités, de comment améliorer ces modalités de façon à ce que le dialogue soit plus fructueux et plus rapide. Mais voilà, toutes ces questions vont continuer à être discutées pendant le, si le Comité décide de prolonger le groupe de travail, ce que nous souhaitons.

Par contre, il est important de d'assurer des moyens financiers, c'est-à-dire le support pour pouvoir continuer les activités du groupe de travail, mais aussi pour pouvoir établir ces gap analysis. Et donc nous souhaitons avoir, nous lançons un appel aux États parties qui le peuvent de pouvoir soutenir les activités du groupe de travail et les nouveaux gap analysis.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Zambia, followed by Viet Nam.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving us the floor.

First of all, I would like to acknowledge the great work of the Chairperson and Rapporteur and the entire working group for coming up with key recommendations to move the process forward.

As already highlighted by Kenya on the matter of the establishment of the Africa 2035 Programme, Chairperson, I would wish to request that the programme be established by the World Heritage Centre in partnership with the Africa World Heritage Fund and with the support of Advisory Bodies ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN, the UNESCO Chair for Heritage in Africa and the heritage training and research institutions in Africa such as EPA and CHDA.

We wish to request the inclusion of this recommendation in your report, Chair, for guidance for the relevant parties of the establishment of the Africa 2035 Programme.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Zambia.

I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Viet Nam.

La Délégation du Viet Nam :

Je vous remercie, M le président.

Nous aimerions tout d'abord exprimer notre appréciation vis-à-vis du travail du Président, le Vice-président, du Rapporteur et aussi du Secrétariat pour leur contribution au travail de ce groupe qui ont des mandats très importants. Nous savons tous que les questions qui sont abordées par ce groupe de travail existent depuis longtemps déjà, mais il y a beaucoup à changer. Il y a de nouveaux défis, de nouvelles opportunités, des nouvelles exigences et aussi des nouvelles difficultés. Et c'est pour cela qu'une réflexion innovante est nécessaire pour aider le travail de groupe. Et à cet égard, nous nous sommes réjouis de constater que notre groupe de travail aille dans ce sens. Et j'aimerais inviter le Bureau à continuer à guider le groupe de travail dans ce sens et de trouver des solutions innovantes concernant des questions qui existent depuis longtemps.

Et à cet égard, nous apprécions la réflexion par le Secrétariat concernant la réduction du temps de soumettre une Liste indicative, de réduire à au moins un an le temps de soumettre la Liste indicative et le temps de soumettre la demande d'assessment préliminaire. C'est une bonne chose et j'aimerais savoir si c'est faisable pour que le Comité adopte cette décision. Ce Comité ou pas. Et concernant le travail de groupe, j'aimerais aussi avoir le calendrier de travail aussitôt que possible.

Et puis, j'aimerais aussi avoir une question. J'aimerais savoir si le Secrétariat envisage un certain lien entre les discussions de ce groupe de travail avec les discussions concernant la réflexion sur les rapports périodiques que nous venons d'avoir tout à l'heure.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Can you please repeat your questions, Viet Nam? Thank you.

La Délégation du Viet Nam :

Oui. Est-ce que le Secrétariat envisage des synergies entre le travail de ce groupe de travail et la réflexion sur les rapports périodiques ?

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Now that the Member States have spoken, I'll give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre to respond. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

Pour répondre très simplement à Madame, l'Ambassadrice de la Délégation du Viet Nam, que je remercie pour sa question très importante. Les synergies sont évidentes dans la mesure où, si vous vous rappelez déjà les discussions que vous avez eues lors du groupe de travail, il y a beaucoup de membres de ce groupe de travail qui ont évoqué la question de l'état de conservation. Or, le suivi des rapports périodiques et sur le suivi effectivement des facteurs qui affectent l'état de conservation des biens du patrimoine mondial, parce que beaucoup de discussions que vous avez eues ont montré qu'il ne s'agit pas simplement d'inscrire des sites, mais aussi d'assurer leur conservation. Donc, ce qui fait que quand nous allons aborder la question de la réflexion que vous nous avez demandée tout au long de l'année, cette question effectivement d'assurer l'arrivée sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial des sites avec un état de conservation satisfaisant sera une question effectivement qui fera partie des discussions que vous aurez à la fois, que nous aurons, nous, lors de la réflexion tout au long de l'année. Mais de toute façon que vous aurez déjà et que vous continuerez d'avoir dans vos discussions dans le groupe de travail à composition non limitée, si vous décidez de prolonger son mandat.

Merci beaucoup, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Lazare.

Now that Committee members have spoken and we are at 12:45, we still have some more requests from the Observer States Parties to speak.

We had mentioned that we would not like to have an afternoon session if we finish off early. However, if we do not finish, then we would have to call you at 3:00 pm. Alternatively, we can extend this session up to 2:00 pm so that after 2:00 pm, we can free you and you can have the afternoon free. So, would you support us to extend this session till 2:00 pm? I see no objections.

I give the floor to Brazil, to be followed by Nigeria.

The Observer Delegation of Brazil:

Thank you, Chair.

The spirit of multilateral collaboration that fostered the creation of the World Heritage Convention seems to be fading, replaced by a focus on national priorities. This shift has resulted in a significant geographical imbalance. Since 2019, we see that Group I countries consistently register a majority of the new sites. This trend marginalizes regions like Latin America, which had only one site considered this year. This imbalance undermines the very foundation of the Convention, its universality. A World Heritage List that fails to represent the entirety of the world loses legitimacy and credibility. A weakened Convention becomes susceptible to political pressures and economic pressures.

For a Brazilian perspective, two key measures can be addressed. Address this disparity. Firstly, the Preliminary Assessment phase requires re-evaluation. We strongly support Indians' and African countries' proposals to either reshape this phase or make it voluntary. Secondly, streamlining working methods is essential. Brazil, along with the Rapporteur, proposed optimizing process to reduce bureaucracy costs and the duplication of effort. This proposal received strong support in the working group, particularly from global south countries. It highlights the need for common gateways to various safeguard mechanisms and programmes for natural sites.

Numerous natural sites in underrepresented regions such as Latin America, Africa and Asia possess the merit for World Heritage status but remain unrecognized and vulnerable. The positive outcomes from our joint event with UNESCO, IUCN and Brazil offer a glimmer of hope.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Nigeria followed by Togo.

The Observer Delegation of Nigeria:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

And this is the first time I'm taking the floor. I would like to seize this opportunity on behalf of my Delegation to congratulate you on the successful hosting of this session and all the achievements, especially on the additional side for Africa.

Nigeria notes with great attention the report of the Open-ended Working Group and thanks the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its leadership, the Vice-Chairs and members for the work done and the recommendations on this report.

Having said this, I would like to stress, among other issues, that time will not permit me to speak on. The request of the Advisory Bodies to undertake a review and produce an update of the 2004 Gap Analysis. This exercise is very essential as a headway to address the issue of imbalance of the List as aptly raised by Member States. We therefore eagerly look forward to the road map to be submitted at the next session of the Committee, as well as other critical actions prescribed for the 48th session, which most importantly include an implementation action plan.

Similarly, Nigeria strongly backs the establishment of Africa 2035 Programme with recommended strategic objectives to be carried out as a matter of urgency, which may include measures to prioritise Africa in the Preliminary Assessment procedures. We welcome the extension of the mandate of the working Group.

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I now give the floor to Togo, followed by Slovenia.

La Délégation du Togo (Observateur) :

Merci, M. le Président. *Namaste*.

Je saisis cette occasion pour faire de brefs commentaires puisque c'est notre première prise de parole.

Le Togo, après ces chaleureuses félicitations à l'Inde pour l'excellente organisation de la 46^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial et lui exprime sa gratitude pour son hospitalité. C'est un réel plaisir de participer à cette session du Comité du patrimoine mondial au pays de la sagesse Gandhienne qui est sans nul doute le fondement de votre leadership. Nous vous félicitons, M. le Président, pour la dextérité avec laquelle vous conduisez nos travaux. Permettez-moi également d'adresser les remerciements des autorités Togolaises au Sous-directeur général pour la Culture et au Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial qui ne cessent d'appuyer les efforts du Togo pour la protection et la conservation de son patrimoine naturel et culturel.

Le Togo se réjouit d'avoir participé aux travaux du groupe de travail à composition non limitée et se félicite de l'esprit de consensus qui a guidé nos travaux. Nous adressons nos sincères remerciements au Président du groupe de travail et son équipe, au Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial ainsi qu'aux États parties qui ont pris part à la réflexion sur la représentativité, la crédibilité et l'amélioration de l'équilibre de la Liste du patrimoine mondial.

Le Togo réaffirme son engagement de continuer à travailler en étroite collaboration avec tous les États parties et sollicite leur précieux soutien à sa candidature lors des élections prévues en novembre 2025 afin de siéger pour la première fois au Comité. Je vous remercie de votre aimable attention.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Slovenia, followed by Czechia.

The Observer Delegation of Slovenia:

Mr Chair, thank you for giving us the floor.

I would kindly ask for your indulgence, since I am making this statement on behalf of 15 States Parties to the Convention, namely Australia, Austria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Lithuania, New Zealand, Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

Our countries have been actively participating in the activities connected to the reform of the World Heritage System. As members of the Ad-hoc Working Groups or the current Open-ended Working Group, we have strived to ensure credibility, transparency and respect of procedures for all parties involved. This inclusive process has, over the years, offered opportunities for open discussions on often difficult issues, welcoming different views to be expressed or concerns to be put forward. The large participation of States Parties that have contributed to the discussions shows the importance of such a forum and is an expression of our shared responsibilities for the Convention.

We welcome the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group that was able to develop clear recommendations that we fully support. Therefore, we are pleased with the proposed mandate allowing to continue the reflections on a number of relevant issues that need to be further discussed in depth.

We especially notice the need for further capacity-building in order to share the same understanding of our common instruments and to avoid any confusion, for example between Preliminary Assessment and Upstream Process.

The mechanism of Preliminary Assessment as a mandatory part of a two-phase nomination process is indeed of great relevance. It was created as a response to States Parties requests for enhanced and structured dialogue with the Advisory Bodies. It was developed over four years within a comprehensive, multi-stage process, that is several expert and working meetings, including three sessions of the Committee. Its implementation after the testing period will contribute to a more efficient nomination process and use of resources, high quality dossiers and fewer state of conservation issues.

Mr Chair, as the side event held during this Committee session clearly showed that there are a number of countries that already made use of this new mechanism with success. These are the experiences and good practices that we can collectively build upon, to make full use of its potential and strengthen the implementation of our Convention, as well as the global strategy for a more credible, balanced and representative World Heritage List.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Slovenia.

I now give the floor to Czechia, followed by Barbados.

The Observer Delegation of Czechia:

Thank you, Mr Chair, for giving me the floor.

As this is the first time that the Czech Republic is taking the floor, I would like to thank the Government of India for its generous hospitality and to congratulate it for the excellent organisation of the World Heritage Committee meeting.

The Czech Republic has actively participated on all meetings of the Open-ended Working Group as we consider it meaningful to openly discuss together the challenges we are currently facing. In this context, we would like to thank to the War Heritage Centre for the well-prepared background document that enabled us to understand the overall context, and Advisory Bodies for their involvement.

The Convention is the most successful instrument in the field of conservation and protection of the World Heritage. It is clear that views on individual issues differ, as do our approaches and capacities. How we work through a constructive approach, a number of recommendations were formulated, and consensus was found, but given the number of questions we have addressed, it is clear that not all of them have been answered yet. Therefore, we would like to express our support to the continuation of this working group until the next session of the Committee in order to finalise a small number of remaining issues.

In this regard, we support the common statement on behalf of several States Parties, which was read by Slovenia, which highlights the important role of the Preliminary Assessment mechanism that enhances and structures the dialogue with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies. We appreciate the constructive approach and results achieved by the Open-ended Working Group. In order to accomplish a broad ownership by the States Parties, we emphasize the need to submit the final recommendations for endorsement to the General Assembly of the States Parties of the World Heritage Convention.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to South Africa.

The Observer Delegation of South Africa:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Thank you for giving South Africa the floor to make input into this particular matter. South Africa supports the review of the 2004 Gap Analysis, but further requests that the implementation of the outcomes of these studies be taken into consideration. South Africa also believes that there is a need to streamline Preliminary Assessment and Upstream Processes, while also looking into the role of capacity-building, especially into these matters.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

I give the floor now to Barbados, you have spoken, am I right? No. You have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Barbados:

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you and to the Host Country for this excellent occasion at which we are able to participate in the work of the Organization. I wish to take this opportunity also to thank the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group. Your Excellency has been really very precise and very ethical in ensuring the ability of States Parties to be able to fully participate in the work of the Open-ended Working Group. And this has been precisely what we have required. I also wish to thank the Rapporteur for her excellent report on and summarizing where we are today.

Mr Chair, I think before us, what we have are the results of both an ongoing process with all of the States Parties who have an interest in exploring other methodologies and other ways in which we can seek to fully participate in the work of this Convention.

But it equally points out to me that this report, along with the previous report on the Periodic Reporting, have something of a relationship with each other. They should be speaking more in dialogue, and that the results of the Open-ended Working Group should possibly be considered as part of the reflection on where we go with the Periodic Reporting over the next two years, as was adverted.

Mr Chair, I think that a number of the statements that have been made earlier are reflect the position of Barbados. But most particularly, we do feel that 20 years is long enough for a gap analysis. That really requires attention, and attention, particularly, to those new areas of knowledge which have not been fully accommodated within that report.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to IUCN, followed by ICOMOS. IUCN, you have the floor.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

IUCN would like to express our appreciation of the work of the Open-ended Working Group and the value of having such an established inter-sessional mechanism, which enables an inclusive dialogue on solutions to major challenges.

We welcome and support the recommendations proposed for approval here, including the proposed update of the global gap analysis, noting the need for sufficient identified resources for implementation, as many previous interventions have emphasised. We look forward to the further deliberations, including proposals on several needed transformations under the headings of nature, finance and Indigenous Peoples, including, we hope, to increase the priority for nature in the Convention, where we see a pattern of high quality but still limited quantity of nominations, and we hope the aspirations to expedite and speed up support for natural and mixed sites already identified as priorities in gap studies and located in under and unrepresented countries can be turned into action. We also hope to see reflection on the revision of processes, to recognise the rights and values of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and to address the chronic financing shortfalls which, as Belgium and others have noted, are long recognised, but where solutions always seem to escape us.

Mr Chair, our side event here in Delhi with the World Heritage Centre and Brazil considered some of the questions on nature and finance, and will make the results of that more widely available, and we look forward to contributing to the further reflections and finding new solutions, which will ensure the sustainability and relevance of the contribution of World Heritage to the future of conservation.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to ICOMOS.

ICOMOS :

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

L'ICOMOS remercie les États parties pour les discussions constructives et les résultats obtenus durant les réunions du groupe de travail à composition non limitée. Nous nous engageons à travailler à la mise en œuvre des recommandations formulées et notamment la mise à jour du Gap Report, tout en tenant compte du fait qu'il s'agit de mener une réflexion globale sur cette étude, une mise à jour qualitative participative et renforcer sa dimension régionale et sous régionale.

Nous nous engageons à travailler également à la révision du Manuel pour la préparation des dossiers de proposition d'inscription et à contribuer, avec le Centre du patrimoine mondial, à la révision du format du dossier de proposition d'inscription et à soutenir les États parties dans leur travail pour améliorer la représentativité de la Liste du patrimoine mondial, notamment les régions et les pays sous représentés, à travers des activités de renforcement de capacités, notamment avec les Centres de catégorie 2.

Comme souligné par certains membres du Comité, des ressources financières suffisantes seront nécessaires pour nous permettre de répondre de façon effective et en temps voulu à la mise en œuvre de ces recommandations.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Our World Heritage NGO as all members, Committee members have spoken, and Observer States Parties have spoken, Advisory Bodies have spoken. So, I will now give the floor to the request by Our World Heritage NGO. You have the floor. Before that, the name of the NGO is Our World Heritage, right? That's the proper noun? You have the floor.

NGO Our World Heritage (Observer):

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson, for giving the floor to Our World Heritage, a foundation whose aim is to express the voice of civil society organisations within the framework of the 1972 Convention.

Our compliments to the Open-ended Working Group, its Chair, Rapporteur and all the States Parties involved.

I would like to present our proposal for a revision of the *Operational Guidelines* to enable civil society organizations' effective participation in the decision process of the World Heritage Committee. For many years, the UN as well as UNESCO, reiterate in their policies the importance of an effective participation of civil society organisations within their activities. However, in practical terms, the voice of civil society in the World Heritage Convention is still too weak. The 2003 Convention and the 2005 Convention have done a much better job of establishing procedures that enable the meaningful participation of civil society in decision making.

To that end, we would like to urge the World Heritage Committee to consider requesting a report on ways and means to enhance the participation of civil society organisations in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, including specific recommendations for the necessary changes to the Rules of Procedure of its governing bodies and to *Operational Guidelines*. Our foundation would be happy to contribute to the elaboration of this report.

Mr Chairperson, I would like to request that this statement be included in the summary records of the meeting.

Thank you for your attention.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Now I will give the floor to Mr Lazare, if there are any further comments to be made, and then we will go to the draft decision. Thank you.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

I have no further comments. And I think most of the Committee members and States Parties who have taken the floor have clearly supported the report by the Chairperson and the Rapporteur. And there also seems to be an understanding, a clear expectation to have the working group mandate extended to continue the work and complete it, so that the full report can be presented at the 47th session.

So let me thank all the members of the Open-ended Working Group for their contribution and also the Committee members.

I just would like to take this opportunity to recall that we have noted your request for a calendar so that you can organise yourself. We will soon be proposing this calendar, but as you have seen, the work of the Open-ended Working Group can only be possible if we have a sufficient extrabudgetary funds. And as of today, you know, even some States Parties who have pledged or expressed their intention to fund us have not yet finalized their pledge. And we would really like to appeal to everyone, to all the States Parties to support financially the work of the Open-ended Working Group. I would really like to take this opportunity to really make this appeal. Without it, we cannot start the next Open-ended Working Group. I think I would like to be very clear that we need this fund. We have exhausted all our financial capacities at this stage. So, we will give you a calendar, but we can only start if we have the funds that we need to continue the work of the Open-ended Working Group.

Thank you very much, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Mr Lazare.

Now, if there are no further requests, we will go to the draft decision.

But before I do that, I will thank the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group, Mr. Alaidaroos and the Rapporteur, Ms Haddad. Thank you. You may now leave the podium. Thank you.

I see that there are no more questions and comments.

I will now invite you to examine and adopt draft Decision **46 COM 11**, but before doing so, I will ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le projet de Décision **46 COM 11** qui reflète donc les 19 mesures qui avaient été adoptées lors du dernier groupe de travail qui s'est tenu à Paris.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments or questions? I see none.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 11** adopted. [gave]

Thank you very much. Item 11 is now closed.

14. OTHER BUSINESS // QUESTIONS DIVERSES

The Chairperson:

We go to Item 14.

Dear colleagues,

As you will remember, following a request made by the Distinguished Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines during the first meeting of the Bureau on Sunday last week, a discussion related to the Small Island Developing States with the consideration of a proposed draft decision was added under Agenda Item 14, Other Business. As this addition was requested by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. I would like to give the floor to them to present the rationale before opening the discussion.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with Jamaica have the honour to submit a draft resolution on the implementation of UNESCO's Operational Strategy for 2024-2029 for the SIDS in the context of the World Heritage.

The aim of this resolution is to highlight the specific attention needed for Small Island Developing States in terms of capacity-building, in the preparation of the nomination files, management plans, as well as in the protection and conservation of the properties inscribed on the World Heritage List and or on the Tentative List. Indeed, the growing threats of climate change and multiple and frequently occurring natural hazards are affecting the daily life of the Small Island Developing States. On July 1st, 2024, Hurricane Beryl left a trail of devastation across the islands of the Grenadines' sites already inscribed on the UNESCO Tentative Lists. On affected Grenadine islands of Grenada, namely Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and also Saint Vincent, namely Réunion Island, Canouan and Mayreau being the worst affected. Damage assessments are being undertaken and the rebuilding and recovery processes have begun amidst the reality that over 90% of the built environment was destroyed.

To properly implement the strategy and the World Heritage Thematic Programme, we would like to underline the need for adequate financial resources and technical assistance through UNESCO's regular budget voluntary funds, including the funds in trust and the importance of the technical and other kind of contribution from the Group of Friends of the SIDS at UNESCO. In addition, we would like to be informed regularly within this Committee on the actions undertaken and the progress made in the implementation of the strategy.

Thank you, Mr President.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for this explanation.

I would now like to know whether there are any comments on this item.

Belgium, you have the floor, to be followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Belgium:

Thank you, Mr President.

We would like to thank, first of all, the Delegations of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as Jamaica, for proposing this. We fully subscribe and support this initiative. And also, we echo what was just said by the Distinguished Delegates from Saint Vincent. We, in addition to that, would like to add that we are, as a member of the Group of Friends of the SIDS, also in favour of raising attention to this matter. We also saw that actually when we examined 7B on the state of conservation, that it is indeed needed to keep raising attention for these threats that the SIDS are facing. We are in favour also for a thematic approach and also for more attention for natural heritage and the loss of biodiversity that is often a threat that is faced, that the SIDS are facing.

So, for these reasons, we wholeheartedly support this initiative.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

I thank you.

I give the floor to the Republic of Korea, followed by Jamaica.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I would like to extend a sincere gratitude to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Jamaica for this important proposal. The Republic of Korea supports UNESCO's prioritization of SIDS and its SIDS Operational Strategy, recognizing the importance of maintaining its visibility and enhancing its implementation.

In keeping with this commitment, the Republic of Korea is pleased to announce our collaboration with the Secretariat to fund two significant capacity-building projects for SIDS with a total contribution of US\$ 1 million. These initiatives will focus on strengthening heritage disaster and climate resilience, as well as promoting resilient communities through sustainable tourism. We reaffirm the Republic of Korea's unwavering commitment to the UNESCO SIDS Operational Strategy.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Jamaica, followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair.

Jamaica, as a Caribbean small island state, appreciates this draft decision and in its simplicity and transparency. When we consider SIDS, often issues of capacity-building for not only developing World Heritage nominations, but also addressing all heritage resources, including underwater cultural heritage and historic urban landscapes come to the fore.

All SIDS are faced with situations that can so easily put our economies back decades. It includes those severe negative climate impacts such as hurricanes, the most recent being Beryl, which so severely impacted those in the Caribbean, resulting in lives and livelihoods lost and a vast majority of heritage sites, documentary and artefactual heritage being decimated. The impact of severe weather events is not the only significant stressor for Caribbean and other states. We also face volcanoes, earthquakes and internal civil unrest, all of which have the potential to destroy our heritage resources.

We take the opportunity to thank the Centre, the Group of Friends of Small Island Developing States in UNESCO and other Member States that have supported SIDS, and ask for your continued support. And I thank the Republic of Korea and Belgium and others who have continually poured resources into the work of SIDS.

We continue our call for the continuing, tangible and intangible support for cluster offices where SIDS countries are located, allowing for smooth rollout of various initiatives. As a priority group, and in light of the SIDS Operational Strategy, particularly its Accelerator Programme 3, Small Island States need consistent monitoring and support in the implementation of this strategy. As such, we ask the Committee to support this draft decision that has been put forward by Saint Vincent and Grenadines with our co-sponsorship.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Qatar, followed by Greece.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous voulons tout d'abord remercier notre collègue de Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines de proposer cet amendement très important. C'est la raison pour laquelle le Qatar s'exprime, le soutien de cet amendement qui n'est pas seulement, reflète notre préoccupation dans le contexte, le monde de notre Comité mais aussi dans tous les programmes et dans les stratégies de l'UNESCO pour bien sûr renforcer les efforts de tous les organes de l'UNESCO mais aussi le Comité par les États membres.

C'est pour ça, le Qatar soutien l'amendement de Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines.

Merci M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Greece, followed by Bulgaria.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Greece would like to join previous speakers in supporting the proposal submitted by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and supported by other Committee members.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Bulgaria, followed by Kenya.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Thank you, Chair.

We would like also to support the proposal by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. All SIDS face severe threats of climate change to the islands and their heritage properties. So, we need to strengthen our efforts.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Kenya, followed by Kazakhstan.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair.

We wish to appreciate Saint Vincent and Grenadines and Jamaica for this initiative. We concur with the need that we need to, the fact that we need to report on the implementation of the Operational Strategy for SIDS and quite regularly to see what, as a Committee, we could do to support this strategy.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Kazakhstan, followed by Viet Nam.

The Delegation of Kazakhstan:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We appreciate the efforts of the Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the development of this proposal, and also the Delegation of Jamaica on the implementation of the Operational Strategy for SIDS. And we would like also our name to be added to the list of countries co-authoring this proposal.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Mr Rapporteur, please make a note of that request.

I now give the floor to Viet Nam, followed by Mexico.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I just want to express our support to this proposal, because we think that this is certainly in line with the Operational Strategy for SIDS, for the period 2023-2029.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Mexico, followed by Rwanda.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Chair.

Mr Chairman, my Delegation would also like to support the amendment tabled by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Jamaica. In this regard, the implementation of the Operational Strategy for SIDS is of great importance.

In Mexico, in the past, we've been supporting the technical safeguarding initiatives in this regard, as well as the assistance for the nomination files to be sent in from this group of countries, and we shall continue to do so going forward. We too, are victims of the effects of climate change. We share many of the same concerns as Small Island Developing States, particularly of the Caribbean, but also of other parts of the world as well. And we will continue working to mitigate the effects of these climate disruptions.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Rwanda, followed by Senegal.

La Délégation du Rwanda :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous souhaitons appuyer la proposition de Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines et souhaitons être co-auteurs de l'amendement.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Senegal.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Sénégal se joint aux pays souteneurs de l'amendement de Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines. Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Japan, followed by Italy.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chairman.

Japan would also like to support the proposal, since it is in line with the activities Japan is implementing.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Italy.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr President.

Just very briefly, Italy would like also to mark its support for the draft decision. It is indeed a supremely interesting issue that we are debating today. And we really see, we are very much interested in this to be pursued. So, we totally support it.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see no further plates from Committee members to take the floor. I see no further.

Yes. Republic of Korea, you have the floor.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

I just would like to request that our name is added to the list.

The Chairperson:

Okay.

Any other Member States that want their names added, you may just lift your name plate and we will add them. Please add Lebanon. Please add Türkiye. Any other Member State that would like its name to be added? You may raise your name plate. Please add Zambia. So now we have 18 Member States have added their names. Eighteen out of 21 have added their names. Okay.

I see no further requests for the supporting the amendment to the draft decision.

I see, whoever else wants to take the floor, but you're not a Committee member, I will give you the floor. Please keep your name plate perpendicular to your table. Once we adopt this decision, I'll give you the floor.

I would like to ask the Rapporteur if he has received any amendments on the draft decision proposed.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Nous n'avons pas reçu d'amendement concernant le projet de décision qui vient d'être présenté par la Déléguée de Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines. Le projet de décision qui avait été, qui avait été circulé parmi les délégations du Comité dès le 27 juillet dernier, et avec la liste des 18 auteurs et co-auteurs que vous avez énumérés à l'instant.

Je vous remercie.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Before I go to the adoption of the draft decision, the Director of the World Heritage Centre has requested the floor. Mr Lazare, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

No, I just want to thank all the Committee members who have spoken for this particular point, which is very important. And first to recall that, of course, among the thematic programmes that were adopted by the World Heritage Committee, we used to report every two years on the SIDS' activities because they are integrated, they were integrated in various documents, the report by the Secretariat, but also in the Periodic Reporting documents. So I think the proposal by the Delegation of Saint Vincent, it's absolutely welcome in that sense, that it will allow us to now regularly inform the World Heritage Committee, one, already on the implementation of the, as part of the UNESCO SIDS Operational Strategy, which is important, you know, if everyone, as the Delegate of Saint Vincent has clearly said about the accelerator programmes, which is important.

I also want to take the opportunity to say that, of course, we are already trying to implement a number of projects which we launched as a, being a part of the preparation of a World Heritage Strategy for the SIDS. And we will be carrying this work in consultation with the SIDS States Parties in line with the SIDS Operational Strategy, as it has been said, but also the latter's regional framework action plans of the different SIDS regions resulting from the Third Cycle of the Periodic Reporting exercise and also the World Heritage Strategy for Africa. And we have been doing it.

I'd like to take this opportunity really to thank Germany, Ireland, Australia, Japan, the Netherlands, Oman and the Republic of Korea and Saudi Arabia already for supporting this World Heritage activities in the SIDS region on identification, conservation, management of heritage, as well as supporting capacity-building and enhancing. But as you have seen, this regular report of course, and what is being asked, which is welcome, will of course require more resources. And I want to take this opportunity of course, to again invite all States Parties to continue providing voluntary contributions. Because if you all recall, when we celebrated the 50 years anniversary, one of the outcomes of this celebration was, of course, to reinforce the work that we are, the support that we would like to provide for the SIDS, and if we have to do it and ensure a full implementation of the World Heritage Convention in this region, it is

really important that we continue to receive more voluntary contributions to support this important work, because this is absolutely a very important decision that you are taking to continue reinforcing the World Heritage Convention. So, I would like to thank the Delegate of the Delegation of Saint Vincent for putting this decision.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

Is there any objection for adopting? Viet Nam, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

I don't have any objection for the adoption of this very important decision. I just want to make a minor amendment with regards to paragraph 7. Yes. So, I don't think that we can "request" stakeholders outside UNESCO and to do something. So, I would like to just to replace the word "request" by "calling upon" relevant stakeholders.

The Chairperson:

Calls upon all relevant stakeholders.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Yes. And if the Committee agrees with this minor amendment, then in paragraph 8 we need to remove also the word "answer" at the beginning.

The Chairperson:

Are there any objections to this amendment by Viet Nam to para 7? I see no objections.

Are there any objections to the amendment by Viet Nam for para 8? I see no objections.

Let's go to para 1. Okay.

Is there any objection for this entire decision to be adopted, as amended? I see no objections.

This draft Decision **46 COM 14** is adopted as amended. *[gave]*

Thank you.

I see that Observer States Parties have raised their plate. I therefore give the floor to Grenada, followed by Barbados.

The Observer Delegation of Grenada:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Grenada, as a Small Island Developing State, thanks Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Jamaica for initiating this important and timely draft resolution. And thanks all the members of the Committee who joined them, showing a strong support of the Committee to SIDS. I would like also to thank the Republic of Korea for its new proposals and all other donors mentioned by the Director of the World Heritage for the support they gave to the Small Island Developing States. As mentioned by Mr Lazare, it is never sufficient. So, we look forward to more and more programmes directed to SIDS to help them to be better represented on the World Heritage List.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I see Argentina has raised the plate, so I'll give the floor to, because you are a Committee member. I'll give you the floor, followed by Barbados.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you.

We would like to express our delight at this draft decision, but we would like to add something under the Item 14, and then we will close this item. But I would like to take the floor directly after the Item 14, if I may.

The Chairperson:

I'll give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, because you said that you would want to add something to Item 14 after we had adopted the draft Decision **46 COM 14**, as amended, and hit the gavel. So, I'll give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre. After you can clarify your request. So first I'll give the floor to you. Please clarify. What is it that precisely you are seeking?

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you.

No, we are not taking the floor for. This is. Item 14 is a very important item that we want to draw all in the Committee to. And, but we would like to share something that will not require a decision, something that's very relevant to us all. But it's just so that you do not close Item 14.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

I give the floor to Barbados, followed by Palau.

The Observer Delegation of Barbados:

Thank you, Chair.

Mr Chair, in Barbados and in other parts of the Caribbean subregion, the name Janet, as in Hurricane Janet, which occurred in 1955, so before I was born, believe it or not, still has resonance today, still raises terror and lack of vision around the ways in which these climate actions can devastate communities, devastate memories, devastate histories, devastate peoples, devastate places, and devastate nature.

So, I would wish, on behalf of my Delegation, to thank Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Jamaica for making the effort to ensure that this item on SIDS does not have to appear under Other Business in future on the World Heritage Agenda. And indeed, I look forward to the ways in which we can make sure that the work of a number of the areas that have been raised across different items on this Agenda come together in a very cogent and useful way to support the work of small Delegations, small countries which actually play big roles in the past and in the future.

Thank you, Chair, and thank you also to the Republic of Korea for making this a central cause. And thank you also to the States Parties, which the Director of the World Heritage Centre has raised earlier. We do recall them and recall their generosity, and we very much benefited from this. But we want to ensure that in the future this item does not have to be raised as an occasional issue. It is not for the rest of us.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Palau, to be followed by Guinea.

The Observer Delegation of Palau:

Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to take this opportunity and just express Palau's appreciation for the warm and wonderful hospitality and support from the Government of India throughout this whole meeting.

I would just like to take an opportunity and thank Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Jamaica for this very important amendment. As a Small Island Developing State, it's very important that we understand that a majority of our management, of our sites, are very community driven and very community based, and for the opportunity for capacity development that could train us in those roles and what and how to really combat the impacts of climate change upon the sites, and what those sites mean to the sustainability and resilience of the communities that are dependent upon them.

So, I would like to also thank Korea for the provision of the funding to help in this effort.

Thank you very much, from Palau, a Small Island Developing State.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Palau.

As Prime Minister Modi had said, you know, you are large ocean states. So, it's a change of perspective that, you know, you are large in our hearts. And, you know, the Indian diaspora is spread all over the SIDS. So, there are large island developing states or large ocean developing states. Sorry.

I now give the floor to Guinea, followed by Seychelles.

La Délégation de Guinée (Observateur) :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je souhaite juste soutenir l'amendement de Saint-Vincent-et-les Grenadines et de la Jamaïque, et souhaite aussi être co-auteur de ce même amendement.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Okay.

I now give the floor to Seychelles.

The Observer Delegation of Seychelles:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

It's the first time that Seychelles is addressing the Committee. I would like to thank India for their hospitality. Seychelles supports Saint Vincent and the Grenadines proposal. We are small island nations, and we are very much into the environment and climate change. We think that the proposal will help Seychelles in preserving its heritage.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Seychelles, for your intervention.

Now that all Member States have exhausted the list, let's proceed to the next item.

But before I do that, I have received a request from Argentina. You have the floor.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

We are not going to take up much time, but we would just like to share with this august Assembly for dialogue, for work, that tomorrow is a very special day. It is World Ranger Day. So, forest guards, wildlife guards, they are angels of wildlife. Rangers. They have many names. They are at the front line when there is a threat to nature. They are the first line of protection of the sites that we inscribe as properties. Now, 1 million and a half probably, they represent, 1% of them are women. And in many countries, they are professionals. Some of them, though, however, are just members of communities, of local communities that work out of the love of the places in which they live. So, I believe that it is time, it's a timely moment to draw attention to them, to give them our recognition. And if the planet is our home, each park is a brick, and each ranger is a builder or a carer for this home. And it is important to recall at this time that it is the, that it is World Ranger Day, tomorrow.

And I think that this topic must be a theme for us, a theme for work. We need to know who these rangers are and what is happening to them. Yesterday, five rangers lost their lives. It is a very serious issue. Most of them do not even have any equipment or training. They don't have anything, just the love for what we inscribe, which is why we need to, it is important to recognize this, to thank them and to share this with the media, because it is something that concerns us. We must realize who they are, who these people are on the front line.

Thank you very much, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Argentina.

I now give the floor to Bulgaria.

La Délégation de la Bulgarie :

Merci, M.

Je souhaiterais faire une annonce quand l'Item 14 sera clôturé. Dites-moi si je peux le faire maintenant ou après la clôture.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Item 14 is closed so now you can make your announcement.

La Délégation de la Bulgarie :

Merci.

Cher Président, cher Sous-directeur général pour la culture, cher Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial, Excellences, chers collègues et amis,

Alors que cette session arrive bientôt à sa fin, je souhaiterais remercier notre hôte pour son hospitalité et pour la chance d'avoir pu découvrir la diversité de l'Inde. J'exprime également notre gratitude au Président. Votre sagesse nous a permis d'avoir des échanges constructifs et agréables.

Si je prends la parole, c'est pour annoncer notre volonté d'accueillir la 47^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial en 2025. C'est en effet un immense plaisir de présenter la candidature de M. Nikolay Nenov, professeur en ethnologie et en muséologie. Le professeur Nikolay Nenov est à ce jour Directeur du Musée régional d'histoire de Ruse et manager des Églises rupestres d'Ivanovo, site classé au patrimoine mondial.

Excellences, chers collègues,

Ce serait un honneur pour la République de Bulgarie de vous faire découvrir notre hospitalité, ainsi que la richesse du patrimoine bulgare à Sredets Serdica, de nos jours connue comme Sofia, lieu habité depuis plus de 7 000 ans. Vous êtes les bienvenus. *Dobrodosli*.

Merci. [applaudissements]

The Chairperson:

Thank you for this important announcement.

Dear colleagues, I would like to propose that we resume the session tomorrow morning with the examination of Item 15 for the election of the next Bureau of the Committee and Item 16 related to the Provisional Agenda of the 47th sessions, before moving to the adoption of the decisions report under Item 17, and the closing of the 46th session under Item 18. The Provisional Agenda of the 47th session will be circulated shortly to you by the Secretariat.

Let me also recall that the closing ceremony announced by the Host Country will take place tonight at 6:30 pm at Bharat Mandapam, the present venue. I wish you all a very good afternoon and look forward to seeing you here tonight, but I will give the floor to the Host Country with regards to the specific room number in which the closing ceremony will take place. The Host Country, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Chair.

This closing ceremony followed by a performance will take place in auditorium 2 on the level 2 of the Bharat Mandapam. Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

I repeat: auditorium 2, level 2. Auditorium 2, level 2 that's what the distinguished representative of the Host Country has announced. 6:30 pm today. The honourable minister and dignitaries are expected. I look forward to seeing you. There will also be a cultural show and this meeting is therefore...

Yes, before I say 'adjourn', the Director of the World Heritage Centre wants to take the floor again.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson. It is again a quick one. It is just to invite all the Delegate to visit the Includible India exhibition. It's really a fantastic area. And, really, if you haven't seen it, there are so many good surprises and you will really enjoy it. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Mr. Lazare, with such beautiful announcements, you can keep taking the floor as much you want. And with this, the meeting is adjourned. [gavel]

The meeting rose at 1:44 pm. // La séance a été levée à 13h44.

NINTH DAY
Tuesday, 30 July 2024
Afternoon
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

NEUVIÈME JOUR
Mardi 30 juillet 2024
Après-midi
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

No plenary session / Pas de session plénière

TENTH DAY
Wednesday, 31 July 2024
SIXTEENTH PLENARY MEETING
10:14 am – 12:31 pm
Chairperson:
H.E. Mr Vishal V. Sharma

DIXIÈME JOUR
Mercredi 31 juillet 2024
SEIZIÈME SÉANCE PLÉNIÈRE
10h14 – 12h31
Président :
S.E.M. Vishal V. Sharma

The Chairperson:

Before we start with the examination of the items of the agenda, let me recall that the closing ceremony that was held yesterday was a wonderful ceremony, and we thank the Ministry of Culture. I would also like to call on the volunteers in groups of 50, the college students who have been helping with these arrangements over the past so many days, and I will request the Host Country to come and announce their names so that we have three lots of 50. They come up on the stage, they take a group photograph, they go down and the next lot comes up. So, announce their names.

Are you ready? Host country, are you ready?

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Yes.

The Chairperson:

All right. Please start with the first lot.

La Délégation de Bulgarie :

Merci beaucoup.

C'est donc un plaisir d'annoncer une fois encore la candidature.

The Chairperson:

Hello. You are not the Host Country as yet.

The Delegation of Bulgaria:

Oh, sorry, I thought.

The Chairperson:

Host country, India. India. Are you ready with the names of the volunteers?

The Delegation of India:

Thank you. And a very good morning, Mr Chair.

I would request you, if you could give us five or seven minutes more. Because we have requested all the volunteers to come here, because this number is sizeable. So, they are coming. So, if you could just give us five more minutes, please.

15. ELECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON, VICE-CHAIRPERSONS AND RAPPORTEUR OF THE 47TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE // ÉLECTION DU PRÉSIDENT, DES VICE-PRÉSIDENTS ET DU RAPPORTEUR DE LA 47^E SESSION DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We will have to examine Item 15, which concerns the election of the new Chairperson of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee, and also proceed with the elections of the Vice-Chairperson and the Rapporteur of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee.

As you know, Bulgaria has generously invited the next session of the World Heritage Committee to take place in 2025 in Sofia, Bulgaria. I would like to know if you all agree with this proposal. I see no.

Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Japan fully supports the candidacy of Bulgaria to the Chairperson of next World Heritage Committee. With its steady conservation of World Heritage sites for long years, as well as its real contribution as a member of World Heritage Committee and as Vice-Chair of this Committee. We are looking forward to visiting your beautiful country next year.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Japan, you are not the Vice-Chair as yet.

The Delegation of Japan:

Yes, just want to support Bulgaria.

The Chairperson:

Yes. But then you said, you as a Vice-Chair, you would like to visit Bulgaria, but that may not be possible because we already have another Member State from the Asia Pacific region that has already expressed its desire to be the Vice-Chair from the aspect region.

The Delegation of Japan:

No, I mean, Bulgaria is the Vice-Chair of this Committee. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Alright. Thank you.

Türkiye, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Türkiye welcomes the decision of Bulgaria and thanks to the Bulgarian authorities for their interest to host the 47th World Heritage Committee. Considering the intensification of the agenda and the content each year, we are aware that hosting the Committee meeting is becoming increasingly challenging. However, we have no doubt that the next Committee will be a successful and well organised as this one and we are looking forward to visit our neighbour on this occasion.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency and I hope you had a wonderful trip to the Taj.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Yes, we did, thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

You're most welcome.

Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Chair.

Is to welcome the candidates of Bulgaria for the next presidency of our Committee. And we are sure that despite the challenges that this position has to face, Bulgaria will have a very successful presidency. And we are going to all of us meet in one year in Sofia.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Any other Member State would like to raise the plate? You have the opportunity to do so.

Zambia, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Zambia would also want to join those who have already come on the floor in support of the Chairmanship of Bulgaria.

The Chairperson:

Yes.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor, followed by Viet Nam.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also welcomes the candidature of Bulgaria to host the next 47th session of the World Heritage Committee and to Chair the Committee.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Viet Nam, you have the floor, followed by Senegal.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We also welcome the decision by Bulgaria to host the next Committee. We strongly believe that the next Committee will be a successful one, despite the growing challenging of the work of the Committee.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Senegal, you have the floor, followed by Ukraine.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Sénégal se félicite de la candidature de la Bulgarie. Et donc soutient sa candidature à la présidence.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Ukraine, you have the floor, followed by Mexico.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Ukraine welcomes the decision of having Bulgaria as the next hosting country. And we sincerely congratulate Bulgaria.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Mexico, you have the floor, followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

Mexico would also like to welcome the proposal by Bulgaria to assume the chairmanship of our meeting for the upcoming session. And we appreciate all of the work that Bulgaria has done over the last few years. And we recall the General Assembly decision to elect Bulgaria, and we are sure that we will be able to successfully overcome all of the challenges facing the upcoming Committee sessions.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Qatar, you have the floor, followed by Argentina.

The Delegation of Qatar:

Thank you, Chair.

Qatar welcomes the host and candidatures of Bulgaria. And of course, will be very happy to be in Sofia for the 47th session of the Committee.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Argentina, you have the floor followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chair.

We also welcome this wonderful offer to host the upcoming session in Bulgaria. And we have a very, very dedicated person as a proposed Chair. And if we had known that this was the person who was going to be assuming the Chairmanship, we would have given even more support if we could, as we are sure that we will have very successful work under your leadership.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Republic of Korea, you have the floor, followed by Jamaica.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Republic of Korea fully supports the chairmanship of Bulgaria and looking forward to visit Sofia next year for the 47th WHC.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Jamaica, you have the floor, followed by Italy.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair. Jamaica also supports the candidature of Bulgaria as the next host of the 47th session.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Italy, you have the floor.

La Délégation de l'Italie :

Merci M. le Président.

Aussi l'Italie soutient la candidature de la Bulgarie pour la prochaine année du Comité du patrimoine mondial.
Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.
Now that the Member States have spoken.
Kenya, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair.
Kenya fully supports the chairmanship of Bulgaria, and we wish them the very best as we plan to visit and enjoy their courtesies.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Kenya.
As I see no further requests for the floor, this is so decided. Congratulations, Bulgaria, for hosting the next session, 47th session in 2025. [applause]
As regards to the chairpersonship of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee, the State Party of Bulgaria proposes Professor Nikolay Nenov as the Chairperson of the 47th session. I would like to know whether you all agree with this proposal. I understand that this proposal is accepted unanimously. The newly elected Chairperson of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee is Professor Nikolay Nenov. Let me congratulate Professor Nenov for his election, and let me express all my best wishes for his task ahead.

Before giving the floor back to the State Party of Bulgaria for some words regarding our next session, I would like to proceed with the election of the Vice-Chairpersons of the Committee and the Rapporteur of the 47th session.

Dear Committee members, I would like to know whether a Delegation from Group I would like to present a candidate to represent it.

Greece, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you, Chairperson.
Greece would like to suggest for the position of the Vice-Chair from our group, Group number I, Belgium.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.
Shall I take it that the Committee agrees with this proposal? I see no objections. It is so decided. [gavel] Thank you. Congratulations, Belgium. [applause]
Group II. The Chair itself for the 47th session is from Bulgaria.
So, we go to Group III. I would now like to know whether a Delegation would like to present a candidate to represent Group III.
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.
For Group III, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would like to propose Mexico as Vice-Chair for the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee.
Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.
Shall I take it that the Committee agrees with this proposal? I see no objections.
It is so decided. [gavel] Thank you and congratulations, Mexico. [applause]

For Group IV, I would like to know whether a Delegation would like to present a candidate to represent it in Group IV. India, you have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

We would like to.

Thank you, Chair. And good morning, everyone.

We would like to propose ROK as Vice-Chair from Group IV.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Delegation of India proposes the Republic of Korea as Vice-Chairperson. Shall I take it that the Committee agrees with this proposal? I see no objections.

It is so decided. *[gavel]*

Thank you and congratulations, Republic of Korea. *[applause]*

For Group V(a), I would like to know whether a Delegation would like to present a candidate in representation of Group V(a).

The Delegation of Senegal:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

It is my pleasant duty.

The Chairperson:

I have not given you the floor.

The Delegation of Senegal:

Sorry.

The Chairperson:

Senegal, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Senegal:

Yes, Chair.

I'm sure he would say the same thing. Uh, my brother, Professor Peter, has done a so great job. So good job, that Senegal thinks, we think, that Kenya has to keep doing that great job they are doing. Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Senegal proposes the name of Kenya.

But Kenya, you want to take the floor as well? You have it.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

There's really no conflict, but we had consulted and mutually agreed that Zambia will take the Vice-Chairmanship for Group V(a). Of course, we really appreciate Senegal's appreciation of the work that we have done. And we gladly propose Zambia as the Vice-Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Uh, shall I take it that the Committee agrees with the proposal of Senegal? You have the floor.

The Delegation of Senegal:

Yes, we of course agree with the decision of the Group, you know. But to our friend, our brother of Kenya first. And then congratulations to Zambia.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you. Shall I take it that the Committee agrees with the proposal to propose Zambia as a Vice-Chairperson from Group V(a) for the Bureau of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee? I see no objections.

It is so decided. *[gavel]*

Thank you. Congratulations, Zambia. *[applause]*

I would now like to know for Group V(b) whether a Delegation would like to present a candidate to represent the group.

Lebanon, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Lebanon:

Thank you, sir.

We would like to propose the Delegate of Qatar for this position.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Are you proposing the Delegate of Qatar or the Delegation of?

The Delegation of Lebanon:

The Delegation of Qatar.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Shall I take it that the Committee agrees with the proposal that the Delegation of Qatar will represent Group V(b) in the Bureau of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee? I see no objections.

It is so decided. *[gavel]*

Thank you. Congratulations, Qatar, for continuing in the Bureau. *[applause]*

Excellencies and colleagues,

We go to the next to the Rapporteur of the next session. We now have to elect the Rapporteur of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee. Is there a Committee member that wishes to propose a candidate for the position of Rapporteur?

Kenya, we were informed that you would like to take the floor to propose the name of the Rapporteur. Were we informed correctly? You have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

We would want to propose Rwanda, Madame Joelle Bucyana as the Rapporteur for the World Heritage Committee.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Kenya.

Kenya proposes the name of Ms Joelle Bucyana from Rwanda as the Rapporteur of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee. Shall I take it that the Committee agrees with this proposal?

Qatar, you have the floor.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

Le Qatar bien sûr soutient la proposition de Kenya pour le poste de Rapporteur. Et je voudrais bien sûr féliciter Rwanda, pour la performance des personnes qui est proposée.

Merci, M. le Président.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for supporting. Shall I take it?

Senegal, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Senegal:

Yes, Chair.

Just one word, you know. We are very grateful to Rwanda, and Joelle has done a very great job in supporting the whole members of the Africa Group in this Committee, and for that reason, we strongly support her candidacy.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Is there any further desire to take the floor by anyone? I see none.

It is so decided. *[gavel]*

Thank you and congratulations, *[applause]* Ms Joelle Bucyana from Rwanda, on your election as Rapporteur of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee.

The recap of the Bureau is:

Chairperson of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee, Professor Nikolay Nenov of Bulgaria.

The Vice-Chairpersons are:

- Belgium from Group I.
- Mexico from Group III.
- Republic of Korea from Group IV.
- Zambia from Group V(a).
- And Qatar from Group V(b).

The rapporteur is Ms Joelle Bucyana from Rwanda.

As I indicated earlier on, I now have the pleasure to ask the Delegation of Belgium to take the floor regarding the 47th session to be organized in 2025.

Sorry, Bulgaria, to take the floor. Bulgaria, you have the floor.

La Délégation de la Bulgarie :

Merci, M. le Président. Excellences, chers collègues,

Je voudrais une fois encore remercier notre hôte pour cette session. Merci à notre Président, merci au Secrétariat pour leur travail acharné. Merci à l'ensemble des pays membres du Comité pour leur soutien. Croyez-moi, cela touche profondément la République de Bulgarie.

Nous sommes particulièrement heureux d'accueillir la 47^e session du Comité du patrimoine mondial en 2025. La session se tiendra du 6 au 16 juillet à Sofia au Palais national pour la culture, qui a déjà accueilli l'UNESCO il y a de cela 40 ans. Nous sommes persuadés que le Professeur Nikolay Nenov sera un excellent président et nous nous engageons à organiser une session réussie en faveur de la préservation et de la valorisation du patrimoine mondial. Nous sommes persuadés que l'esprit de dialogue qui a caractérisé cette session saura se transporter à Sofia et je me permets de rappeler que l'une des priorités de la Bulgarie reste l'inscription de biens provenant de pays et de zones géographiques qui demeurent sous représentés dans la Liste du patrimoine mondial. Nous sommes impatients, comme vous l'avez vu plus tôt, de vous accueillir. Vous êtes les bienvenus.

Merci beaucoup !

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much and let me congratulate you again. We are all looking forward to coming to your beautiful country next year.

Dear colleagues, I now declare Item 15 closed.

I now ask the Host Country, is the first group of volunteers ready? If you can announce their names, they can come up on the stage for a group photograph. Host country.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

I think. Yes, the volunteers are all ready. And if we announce their names, they will all come one by one.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, would you want me to start announcing the names, please?

The Chairperson:

Yes, they would be. They are all college students, and they have volunteered their time and efforts, and we are very grateful for them. So, if they could climb up from there and stand for a group photograph, and then, after the photograph is taken, they could go down from this side, so that the next group could come.

The Delegation of India:

So, what I propose in that case is that, given the limitation of the space here, we can call them in the batch of about. There are about 56 or 57 of them. So may I request all the volunteers who are here in this room, who've helped us throughout this meeting, to come one by one and, you know, stand there at the stage and then we can have a group photograph with the Chair and the Secretariat. And then there's a certificate, you know, distribution could happen. So, I'll start.

The Chairperson:

We have them. They could also stand behind.

The Delegation of India:

So, I'll start with the names. *[Delegate reads out names] [applause]*

So, they are all the ones who are here, you know. So, congratulations and thank you very much for your constant support that you have provided to us.

The Chairperson:

So, this is the first lot and we'll be ready. Please come together so we can take a photograph and then your other colleagues. Then you can go down from the stage and your other colleagues could join us. So, we are ready for the photograph with the first lot. Okay. Three. Two. One. Thank you. All right. Now may I request.

Thank you so much for your help. *[applause]*

Now, can you request the second lot to come up, please?

The Delegation of India:

You know, before, in fact, we do not have the names of all the, you know, young professionals who were, who sort of volunteered here. But what I would like to mention is that I would like to invite all the volunteers who were stationed and positioned on level 1 and level 2 of Bharat Mandapam, as well as in the exhibition hall number 14. So, since I unfortunately do not have individual names present with me.

The Chairperson:

Now we have the list of all of them because we don't want more than 50 people on the stage. If you have all together on the stage, you know there is a risk the stage may. So, we don't want to take that risk. So, we have, there are 150 names we have given, out of which 50, the first lot is over now.

The Delegation of India:

So, what I'm doing is I'm requesting the second lot. Okay. You know, instead of reading all the individual names, second lot to come and the way the first lot stood behind you, the second lot of 50 to come and stand behind you. So that is the request I am making. So, may I request, all the volunteers to come? *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Yeah, but we need to take their names to acknowledge them if possible. There are 42 in that lot.

The Delegation of India:

No, I will, while they are all coming on the stage. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Secretary, Ministry of Tourism. Actually, I think she was the one who was behind it in requesting all the institutes of hotel management. These are all premier institutions of the country where they all are studying in their graduate and postgraduate programmes, for them to all come here for ten days. So, we all, we hope from our side that they have had this unprecedented opportunity of being here, learning, you know, how to handle situations. So, I hope it was a very good opportunity.

But we would also like to compliment the Ministry of Tourism for this, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

So, we have the second lot on the stage. We request the photographers to please take your photos. These are all students from the leading hotel management institutes of India. [applause] We have been experiencing their wonderful hospitality.

Okay. So now, three, two, one. Thank you. All right. [applause] The second lot can leave the stage and request the third lot to come up. Please.

So, we have students here from the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management, the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management. We have students from there as well. We thank you and we welcome you. And thank you so much for your help and presence here. It's your presence that has made this 46th session of the World Heritage Committee an outstanding success. Thank you so much. [applause]

All right. Three, two, one. Thank you. All right. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you all.

Dear colleagues,

I would now like to invite Mr Eloundou Assomo to present us the Provisional Agenda of the 47th session of the World Heritage Committee. Mr Director, you have the floor.

16. PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE 47TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE // ORDRE DU JOUR PROVISOIRE DE LA 47^E SESSION DU COMITÉ DU PATRIMOINE MONDIAL

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Document 46.COM/16 was circulated to all the Committee members yesterday, and you will have seen in this document that in addition to the standing items, the Committee will have to examine next year, including the state of conservation report and nomination to the World Heritage List, we have added first Items 5D related to sustainable development, which is an item the Committee had requested to review every second year. And of course, you also have an Item 5E related to the Small Island Developing States has also been included to the Provisional Agenda as a result of the decision that you took during the current session.

So under Item 7 related to the state of conservation, I would like to already inform you that as an outcome of all decisions adopted over the past few years on specific properties for their state of conservation report, but also as a result of the decision taken for the nomination of certain properties, including those that you have done during this session, there will be a total for next year of 247 state of conservation reports to be examined by the Committee next year in Bulgaria, 247 reports. Fifty-six reports on the properties inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger and 191 reports on other properties.

So, I apologize if I have to do it again. I really, really would like to take this opportunity to urge all States Parties concerned to submit their reports by the requested statutory deadlines. Otherwise, it will be difficult for us to finalize all the reports in time. So that's, overall, Mr Chairperson, what I could say on the Provisional Agenda of next year, knowing that, of course, we could, from now until the next year, adjust some of the titles and correct what needs to be corrected.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

The Chairperson:

Thank you for your presentation.

Is there any comment concerning this Provisional Agenda?

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

And I would like to thank the Secretariat for the Provisional Agenda proposed.

Mr Chair, after consultation with my colleague from Jamaica, we would prefer to add in the title of the item regarding the Small Island Developing States 5E after SIDS, "including the operational strategy for the SIDS 2023-2029 in the context of the World Heritage", and the rationale is that there are two things in our in the implementation of the World Heritage context for the SIDS, the thematic programme of the World Heritage and the Operational Strategy adopted by the General Conference.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

The Secretariat informs me that they have noted your request. Are there any further comments? I see none.

Kenya, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chairman.

We would want with humility, to request for inclusion of two items that the Africa 5A Group would want to report on at the next Committee. The first one is a progress in the implementation of the Africa 2035 Programme. And the second one would be the outputs or the outcome of the Heritage and Authenticity Initiative that we'll be managing between now and May next year.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any further comments?

I would like to give the floor to the Director of the World Heritage Centre. You have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Chairperson.

And I would like to request the Distinguished Ambassador of Kenya, maybe to explain more slowly the addition. I heard about the one on the progress report on the workshop. The Conference on Heritage and Authenticity in Africa, and the other one I didn't understand clearly.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair.

I think the second one is clear. The first one was on progress on the implementation of the Africa 2035 Programme.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Okay. Thank you.

What I would like to, I want to reassure His Excellency the Ambassador that under Item 5C, which is the progress report on the implementation of the strategy for Africa, we will include a separate INF document on the progress report on the Conference on Heritage and Authenticity, which will be a separate document. And of course, there will be a decision included in the report.

With regard to the implementation of the Africa 2035 Programme, you remember that this is part of the decision that was taken under Item 11 yesterday and as a recommendation. So, we will also include this within the report that will be making under Item 5C separately on this one. So, I think it's just to try to have the two under one single report than to have three separate reports. So, I think, I don't know if this will be satisfactory to His Excellency, Ambassador, if we put it that way, because I think the most important thing is that it is important that the report on the two subjects be presented to the Committee.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any comments? I see no more requests for comments or questions.

I therefore declare draft Decision **46 COM 16** adopted. [gavel]

Thank you. Item 16 is now closed.

17. ADOPTION OF DECISIONS // ADOPTION DES DECISIONS

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues, dear Committee members, dear friends,

I hope you all had a good rest yesterday and appreciated the closing ceremony hosted by the Host Country.

We now come to our final task the formal adoption of the report of the decisions. We will go through the report which has been prepared on time and circulated to you in two parts. Let me congratulate the Rapporteur and the Secretariat for such a professional work.

Before I give the floor to our dear Rapporteur, I would like to recall that the decisions included in this report have already been adopted by the Committee over the past ten days, and the task before us today is essentially an editorial one. We will not reopen the debate on the content of the decisions, in line with Rule 34.2 of the Rules of Procedure.

I would like to invite our Rapporteur, Mr Martin Ouaklani, to briefly explain the process of preparation of the report and provide additional guidance for you to consider as you review it. Mr Rapporteur, you have the floor.

Le Rapporteur :

Merci, M. le Président.

Alors que cette session du Comité du patrimoine mondial touche à sa fin, il m'est donné l'opportunité de pouvoir vous rendre compte des données et faits marquants de nos travaux, en tant que Rapporteur de cette session

Un Comité, c'est avant tout une affaire de chiffres. 46^e session, 21 pays membres et trois Organisations consultatives, dix jours, 18 points à l'Agenda, huit réunions du Bureau, cinq langues officielles des Nations Unies et de nombreuses autres, 196 décisions, dont plus d'une quarantaine débattues et 32 finalement amendées, 24 nouvelles inscriptions, dont 20 % sont des nominations africaines, et le seuil des 1 200 sites inscrits sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial est désormais atteint avec l'exceptionnel Site des moidams. Le tout relaté sur 287 pages de rapport disponible en deux langues que vous avez reçues hier soir. Et bien sûr, plusieurs semaines, voire plusieurs mois de préparation, tant de la part du Secrétariat et du pays hôte que des délégations.

Si ce Comité aura exprimé tantôt sa réjouissance, tantôt sa déploration et ses vives inquiétudes ; il aura surtout été marqué par ces messages forts envoyés au monde, à commencer par son adoption des premières recommandations du groupe de travail à composition non limitée pour tendre vers une Liste du patrimoine mondial plus représentative et inclusive au profit d'une Convention protégée, consolidée, efficace et donc crédible, notre priorité absolue à toutes et à tous.

De manière très claire, le Comité a également souligné son inquiétude face aux défis croissants rencontrés pour mettre en œuvre de façon adéquate cette Convention qui nous rassemble tous ici. Pour contrer cela, le Comité en a d'ailleurs appelé à, je cite, « renforcer le Centre du patrimoine mondial, notamment en allouant davantage de ressources financières et humaines ».

Toujours dans une optique de valorisation du travail de terrain et de renforcement des capacités, cette session a été marquée par son tout premier segment consacré aux rapports d'activités des Centres de catégorie 2 actifs dans le patrimoine, appelé à devenir régulier pour les années à venir.

Enfin, il est à souligner que les membres du Comité de New Delhi se sont exprimés à la quasi-unanimité, voire à l'unanimité, pour apporter un soutien franc en corédigeant certaines décisions emblématiques et qui feront date, comme l'introduction d'un rapport d'avancement fréquent sur la mise en œuvre de la stratégie pour les petits États insulaires en développement concernant le patrimoine mondial, qui avait reçu 18 soutiens, 18 coauteurs. La procédure en urgence pour la sauvegarde du monastère Saint Hilarion à Gaza, en Palestine, désormais sur la Liste du patrimoine mondial en péril, 19 soutiens. Et bien sûr l'inscription des Sites de mémoire sur l'héritage de Nelson Mandela en Afrique du Sud, corédigé à l'unanimité par les membres du Comité.

Pour réaliser tout ce travail en tant que Rapporteur, je me dois de remercier le Secrétariat et les humains d'une immense qualité qui m'ont accompagné dans cette aventure. Ernesto Ottone, Lazare Eloundou Assomo, Jyoti Hosagrahar, la maestra Frédérique Aubert, Richard Veillon, Alessandro Balsamo, Santiago Villalpando, Chantal Claxton-Proust et bien sûr Luba, Anatole, Olivia et Jean Marc. De façon générale, je souhaite remercier

toutes les personnes du Centre du patrimoine mondial et du Secteur Culture impliqués, mais également ma propre équipe à Paris, en particulier Amandine Van Zuylen.

De ce côté-ci du podium, j'ai observé la grande rigueur avec laquelle le Secrétariat prend note des déclarations des États parties tout en travaillant à l'organisation du Comité, aux scénarios, aux documents de travail, etc. Idem pour les side events.

En tant que fervent défenseur de la francophonie, je suis ravi d'avoir pu exercer mon rôle en français et j'en profite pour remercier les équipes d'interprètes.

En un mot comme en 100, je ne peux qu'encourager mes collègues à se lancer pour devenir rapporteurs. C'est une expérience exigeante mais unique et j'adresse mes félicitations à Joelle du Rwanda, qui sera évidemment excellente l'an prochain à Sofia.

Enfin, comment conclure sans témoigner ma gratitude envers le Gouvernement indien pour son accueil. Le vertige que ce pays, l'Inde, nous a procuré de bout en bout, devant ses millénaires d'histoire, ses beautés, ses richesses et ses sourires. L'Inde est une incarnation de la diversité culturelle et de la valeur universelle du patrimoine, si chère à l'UNESCO et aux délégations qui la composent. À ce titre, il y a une personne que je remercierai tout spécialement, c'est bien sûr vous, Monsieur le Président et Délégué Permanent de l'Inde auprès de l'UNESCO, Monsieur Vishal Sharma, pour le succès de cette session qui restera gravée dans bien des mémoires. ^[parle en hindi] Depuis New Delhi, réalisons que ce Comité est unique dans le multilatéralisme mondial de par son retentissement, l'attention que ses décisions suscitent à travers les continents qui sont parfois l'aboutissement d'une vie entière pour certaines personnes gestionnaires de sites. Cela nous oblige à être toujours plus à l'écoute des besoins du patrimoine culturel et naturel.

M. le Président, je me permets de terminer très brièvement, en ma qualité de Représentant des gouvernements francophones de Belgique auprès de l'UNESCO pour rendre hommage à Gislaine Devillers, experte du patrimoine mondial pour la Wallonie, qui est déjà partie de New Delhi la nuit dernière, mais qui nous regarde, j'en suis sûre. La plupart des experts du Comité et du Secrétariat connaissent Gislaine car elle a officié à son poste durant près de 30 ans et c'était son dernier Comité cette année. Gislaine Devillers a réussi à mettre la Wallonie sur la carte du patrimoine mondial avec des inscriptions extrêmement novatrices, allant des grands sites miniers et industriels jusqu'à très récemment avec les sites funéraires de la Première Guerre mondiale et a toujours été au service des autres pays. En ma très modeste position, je te dis bravo pour ton apport exceptionnel pour ta région, pour ton pays et pour la Convention de 1972, chère Gislaine.

Merci pour votre attention. Je me tiens bien sûr à votre disposition pour répondre aux questions et aux observations du draft qui, je le rappelle, est un draft que vous avez reçu hier soir, qui n'est pas encore la version finale du rapport.

Merci beaucoup.

The Chairperson:

Thank you very much.

I would now like to ask whether, in order to be as efficient as possible, the Committee members could indicate to us whether they have identified any editorial errors that could be corrected so that we can deal with them.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

First of all, I would like to thank the Rapporteur for his excellent report. Thank you, dear Martin. It was very informative and also very reflecting the session we had in this room. I would like also to thank the Secretariat for the decisions provided.

Just, I would like to ask if you can align the French version with the English version. Just I would like to underline in the decision regarding the SIDS, the amendment presented by Viet Nam. And I would like to thank the Ambassador for this, for this amendment, paragraph 7, just to align it in the French version and to put the title in the English version in bold. "Implementation of the Operational Strategy". Just to verify the French version and the English version. It is paragraph 7 when we say "calls upon all relevant stakeholders to continue strengthening the implementation of the World Heritage Small Island Developing States Thematic Programme" and in French version, maybe we should say « également appelle à toutes les parties prenantes pertinentes de continuer », etc.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Are there any further requests for the floor?

Kenya, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Kenya:

Thank you, Chair. Good morning.

We also wish to congratulate the Rapporteur on the excellent work done, which really facilitated the proceedings of this meeting.

With reference to the Decision, I believe it's **46 COM 7B.18**, on Stonehenge, we noticed in paragraph 10 that there's a slight editorial issue there, which changes the meaning of the paragraph. So, but we understand this is a draft and that it will be aligned.

Thank you very much.

The Rapporteur:

Thank you. We already noted this one.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Right. As the Rapporteur has informed that it has been noted. And she was referring to the English version. Thank you.

Please also note that formatting issues will be fixed at a later stage by the Rapporteur and the Secretariat during the finalisation of the report. If there is no objection, I suggest that we adopt the report section by section. I see no objections. Let's adopt the report section by section.

We will first go to Items 2 to 7B.

Dear colleagues, you all had the chance to review the first part of the report covering Agenda Item 2 to Agenda Item 7B, if there is no objection, I suggest we adopt as a whole part 1. Do you have any remarks or comments on this part? I see none.

The first part of the report of the decisions is therefore adopted. [gavel]

Part 2. We now move to part 2 of the report which covers Agenda Items 8 to 16. You have all had the chance to review the second part of the report covering Agenda Items 8 to 16. If there is no objection, I suggest we adopt as a whole the part 2. Do you have any remarks or comments on this part? I see none.

The second part of the report of decisions is therefore adopted. [gavel]

I now propose that we adopt the Report of decisions as a whole. Are there any objections? I see none.

I declare the Report of decisions of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee adopted and Item 17 closed. [gavel]

Director WHC, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Dear Committee members,

As you have just adopted the decision, as already announced last night by the ADG Culture, I am extremely pleased to inform you again that the World Heritage family has just grown bigger, reaching one step further towards universality, as ADG Culture has said it yesterday. The State of Nauru has indeed deposited its instrument of ratification of the World Heritage Convention with the UNESCO Director-General on 26th July, and I'm speaking under the guidance of the legal advisor, pursuant to Article 33 of the Convention, Nauru will become the 196th State Party to the Convention on 22nd of October 2024. I would like to wholeheartedly congratulate again Nauru on behalf of UNESCO for this ratification.

And with your permission, Mr Chairperson, a video message has been sent by the Honourable Chairman, Charmaine Eraidinomo Scotty, MP, Minister of National Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Nauru Museums of Nauru.

The Chairperson:

You are permitted to play that video.

Video Message from the State of Nauru:

Excellencies, Distinguished members of the World Heritage Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen, greetings and warm regards from Nauru and Comoros.

It is my privilege to address this World Heritage Committee meeting in my capacity as Minister for National Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Nauru Museum of the Republic of Nauru. I thank the Committee, for the kind invitation to share a message to this esteemed gathering.

Nauru, a small island state, part of Micronesia in the Central Pacific and the third smallest country in the world, with a population around 11,000 people living in 21 square kilometres of land surrounded by a coral reef, has a unique cultural heritage. When I was sworn in as the Minister for National Heritage, Culture, Tourism and Nauru Museum, I took the responsibility of preserving Nauru's rich culture and heritage for future generations.

Now, I am extremely honoured and happy to announce that Nauru is joining its Pacific brothers and sisters in ratifying the 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. As mentioned in the preamble of the Pacific Regional Cultural Strategy 2022-2032, we, as Pacific islanders, proudly acknowledge our role as custodians of the world's largest, most peaceful and abundant ocean, its many islands and its rich diversity of cultures. Hence, our mission is to preserve, educate and showcase both the intangible and tangible cultural heritage of our nation, allowing the world to experience our unique cultures.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have witnessed and are now living with the significant negative effects from the extraction of phosphates, including the extensive environmental degradation that has occurred. Climate change is recognized as one of the greatest threats in the Pacific region today, and poses both immediate and long-term threats to cultural continuity and survival.

The World Heritage Convention stands as a beacon of hope and commitment, dedicated to conserving nature and preserving cultural properties. Our decision to ratify the World Heritage Convention is rooted in our deep commitments to preserving our unique heritage. We understand and recognize the importance of belonging to an international community of appreciation and concern for natural and cultural heritage sites of Outstanding Universal Value. We commit to this international community that this preservation will serve as an educational resource for research, learning and dissemination of knowledge about the various cultural heritage in Nauru, fostering the promotion of our culture.

As one of the nations most affected by climate change yet contributing very little to it, I conclude my words by emphasising the urgency of climate action, not just for the betterment of Nauru, but for the whole world. We seek as the newest member of this global family your support in increasing capacity for the effective implementation of the Convention in Nauru, and look forward to joining hands with all of you to protect the world's irreplaceable cultural and natural treasures for future generations.

I thank you.

18. CLOSING SESSION // SÉANCE DE CLÔTURE

The Chairperson:

Dear colleagues,

We have now come to the end of our work. But before we close, allow me to say a few words.

The members of the World Heritage Committee, Distinguished colleagues and friends, Representatives of States Parties, ICCROM, IUCN, ICOMOS, Representatives of local communities, non-governmental organisations, media personnel and volunteers,

As we conclude the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee here in New Delhi, I am honoured to address this Distinguished Assembly. Over the past ten days, and in fact from 13th and 14th July onwards, when we had the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum, from 14th to 23rd July and thereafter the World Heritage Site Managers' Forum from 18th to 25th of July, and then the world, the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee from 21st July to 31st July 2024, we have gathered to deliberate on matters of immense importance to our global heritage, and I am proud of the achievements we have made together.

Firstly, I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to all the participants. The sessions saw the participation of over 1,500 individuals from various parts of the world, including Committee members, Observer States Parties, Observers from civil society and NGOs, Observers from academic institutions and members of the media and the press. This remarkable attendance underscores the growing global commitment to the preservation and protection of our shared heritage.

Dear Committee members,

Our discussions have been intense, constructive and enriching. We have reviewed the state of conservation of numerous properties and inscribed 24 new sites onto the World Heritage List, encompassing both cultural and natural treasures. These decisions were made with a collective spirit of cooperation, transparency and collaboration, and a shared commitment to the World Heritage Convention.

I would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts and individual contributions of each and every member of the Committee. Your collective and individual dedication has ensured the smooth running of this session, and facilitated

decisions that will benefit our heritage sites for generations to come. I am also particularly grateful for the support and expertise provided by the Advisory Bodies, whose evaluations and guidance have been instrumental.

The involvement of the youth in our activities has also been particularly inspiring. The Young Professionals Forum, held in conjunction with the session, highlighted the passion and commitment of the next generation towards heritage conservation, and we all clearly heard their message on the first day of the session. Their participation assures us that the future of our heritage is in capable and caring hands. ^[applause]

I would also like to highlight the Site Managers' Forum which was held alongside our session. This forum provided an invaluable platform for nearly 100 heritage professionals from around the world to share their experiences, challenges and best practices in managing World Heritage sites. It also facilitated a rich exchange of knowledge and fostered a sense of community among those major actors of the Convention tasked with the crucial responsibility of safeguarding our cultural and natural heritage sites.

The insights gained from these interactions will undoubtedly inform and enhance our future efforts in heritage conservation. I extend my sincere thanks to the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay, for her unwavering support and presence during our opening ceremony. My gratitude also goes to the Assistant Director-General for culture, Mr Ernesto Ottone, and the Director of the World Heritage Centre, my dear friend Lazare Eloundou Assomo. Their leadership and dedication have been pivotal in our work. A special thanks to our Vice-Chairpersons Bulgaria, Greece, Kenya, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and to our Rapporteur Martin Ouaklani from Belgium. And I remember the very first day when we had our briefing out in the open, in the sun. I sincerely thank you all for that and for your diligent efforts and guidance throughout the session. Your contributions have been invaluable, and I am deeply appreciative of your effort.

We must also thank and recognize the Government of the Republic of India and the city of New Delhi for their exceptional hospitality and meticulous organization. The success of this session would not have been possible without the efforts of the Archaeological Survey of India and its Director-General and Additional Director-General, the focal points, the volunteers, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of External Affairs, the National Commission under the Ministry of Education and the Honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, as well as the countless individuals working behind the scenes, the interpreters, technicians, media personnel, volunteers and all the support staff. And last but not the least, all those delegates who have come here, who stayed with us, and the volunteers, and the college students from all over India.

Dear Committee members and colleagues,

As we look to the future, it is imperative that we continue to uphold the values and objectives of the World Heritage Convention. Our work does not end here. It is our duty to ensure that the sites we have inscribed retain their Outstanding Universal Value. This responsibility extends beyond this session and requires ongoing vigilance and commitment. As we conclude, let us take a moment to reflect on the significance of our collective efforts. We have made strides in preserving our shared heritage, but there is much work ahead. Let us continue to work together, fostering trust, cooperation and respect for the principles of the Convention.

Finally, it has been an honour to serve you as your Chairperson. I extend my best wishes to my successor and offer my continued support in the journey ahead. I hope you all had, you all enjoyed your time in New Delhi, and you carry back fond memories of this vibrant city. Till the time that the World Heritage Committee meets again in 2025, in the 47th session in Bulgaria, goodbye and have safe travels.

Thank you. ^[applause]

Dear colleagues,

I would now like to give the floor to my dear friend, the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo. Mr Director, you have the floor.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Thank you for your really touching words.

Distinguished members of the Committee, as we draw the 46th session of this Committee to a close, I stand before you filled with immense pride and hope for the future.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation to the host, for our Host Country, India, whose hospitality and impeccable organization have made this session a resounding success. We all have to remember that this session was organized in a very limited time, since mid-June, and what we have seen from the Host Country has really been magic in such a short time. It was almost unbelievable. I really would like here to say first, thank you to Prime Minister Modi for hosting us. I would like to also say, really thank you to the Minister of Culture. And thank you to the Secretary of the Ministry of Culture also. And of course, I cannot continue without expressing my sincere gratitude to the Archaeological Survey of India and in particular to, their leaders who I called now my friends, Shri Yadubir Singh Rawat, as the Director-General of ASI and Shri Janhwi Sharma, the Additional Director-General as well as the entire team of ASI for their commitment, their availability during the weekend, at night. You know, we couldn't sometimes, you know, avoid to understand the difference of three and half hours when we were trying to reach out to them just because we wanted everything to be done. And they have been there, the

entire team every day, their commitment with all our meetings online, every time, just to make a progress, always being very positive with us to ensure a smooth running of the session. As you have seen. Really, really, really, on behalf of UNESCO, I can say you've done an incredible job. Thank you very much. [applause]

I would like to say that over the past days, dear Committee members, you have engaged in fruitful discussions, passionate debates, you have made critical decisions, as it has been said, by the Rapporteur and Mr Chairperson. I think your decisions have once more shape the future of our world's most treasured sites, and this has been a testament to the resilience and collaborative spirit of the global community. You have navigated through complex challenges, and you have emerged with renewed commitment to the principles that bind us. The inscription of new sites, the careful deliberation over properties in danger, and the extensive dialogue on conservation strategies reflect our collective dedication to safeguard humanity's shared heritage.

I want to say that this Committee is historic in the sense that the first World Heritage sites, since 1978, when the first inscriptions happened that start, the names start with human rights, happened in New Delhi, the first one. [applause] It shows your commitment. And during this session, we had the privilege of reviewing so many documents. We have examined, you will not remember, 50 documents. You have adopted 196 decisions. And these decisions will impact at various levels the course of history of generations to come. You have added, as the Chair has said, 24 new sites to the World Heritage List, recognizing their values and the need to join efforts for their protection. You have also monitored and supported the conservation efforts by the different States Parties of 123 properties, ensuring that they continue to thrive. You have removed one World Heritage site from the List, the World Heritage List in Danger, from Senegal after 17 years of efforts. And you did recognize this effort. And in doing so, you have taken meaningful steps toward fulfilling the ideals of UNESCO, which seeks to force the international cooperation and promote peace.

Mr Chairperson,

The beautiful city of New Delhi has welcomed us with open arms and over 1,520 participants from 136 countries. And this city has blessed us with a rich cultural experience, since our arrival here. The traditions and the kindness of everyone of incredible India will definitely remain in everyone's memory.

In closing, Mr Chairperson, let me again, now really thank and extend my heartfelt appreciation to all the Committee members. And the Secretariat will continue to do what it has to do to be at your disposal to ensure that you continue to do your work. But allow me to really thank the Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mr Ernesto Ottone, whose presence here has really, really helped us to go over a number of complex issues. And I really want to thank him as he is heading back to Paris for other duties. It is really, I mean, I really want to thank him for the confidence that he placed on me and the confidence that he placed on the Secretariat. Thank you. Ernesto, and have a safe trip back.

I would also like to thank my colleagues from the Secretariat, those that you have been seeing here and those that are in the back and even in some of the office that you don't see. Of course, my Deputy Director, Jyoti, and the Legal Advisors, Santiago Villalpando, who is there, and Chantal Claxton, who has gone back to Paris. But my colleagues from the World Heritage Centre, Frédérique Aubert and her team, Richard Veillon, Alessandro Balsamo and his team, all the chiefs of the regional units and their teams, Muhammad Juma, Himalchuli Gurung, Berta de Sancristobal, Guy Debonnet, Mauro Rosi, May Shaer and all their teams. Those who have been assisting you for following all your issues. But more importantly, those without whom you could not have your decisions, your rooms ready and all the nitty gritty and all the small details for the logistics. The team of our conference and global monitoring, and particularly David Martel and Caroline Varnet. I really want to thank them. [applause] They have been working until 2:00 or 3:00 am in the night to make sure that everything is okay and working with the excellent team of ASI. They have done.

The Chairperson:

Yesterday, Caroline was in a sari.

The Director of the World Heritage Centre / Le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial :

Yes, and Caroline was in the sari yesterday.

So, I really wish really to thank also the interpreters who accepted to work longer than expected, the team of Ingrid, Ingrid and colleagues, really thank you so much for your amazing work. [applause] Yes, it's, each of them, their professionalism and commitment has been key to the efficient running of the meeting.

Now, a personal thank to one of our colleagues at the Secretariat. She did not expect it. After 13 years at the World Heritage Centre, including four as the chief of Policy and Statutory Meeting Unit, my dear friend Frédérique Aubert whom you all know as Fred. [applause] She will be leaving the Centre after this Committee. It is her last World Heritage Committee to become the Chief of the Culture Unit of the UNESCO Venice office, and I would like you all that we heartily thank her on behalf of all, for the work that she has done in managing the highly complex tasks with great professionalism. No doubt that we will all greatly miss you, Fred, and I'm sure everyone in this room will join me in wishing you all the best of success in your new responsibility. [applause]

And I want to thank again like you did, Mr Chairperson, the local staff, the security officers, we should not forget. And all the volunteers that came here on stage with us. Everyone with a smile. This is what I call the spirit of

incredible India, that we will carry with us back. Always with their best smile. Really behind the scenes, in the room, to make this session a success.

Et bien sûr, Martin, notre Rapporteur. Je voudrais vraiment te remercier, Martin. Nous avons régulièrement fait appel à toi pour nous aider, nous guider dans toutes les décisions, notamment les plus complexes. Merci beaucoup également, cher Martin, pour ce travail efficace et impeccable dans la production du dernier rapport qui a été distribué hier.

Et je ne voudrais pas oublier nos trois Organisations consultatives. Merci beaucoup, vraiment à l'ICOMOS, à l'UICN et à l'ICCROM pour toute l'excellente coopération que nous avons depuis plusieurs années et qui nous permettent effectivement de continuer à travailler ensemble. Maintenant, Monsieur le Président, mes derniers mots vont vers vous.

You know, dear Vishal, Your Excellency Ambassador, I want to offer you my heartfelt thanks for your exemplary leadership, your wisdom, your unwavering commitment to have guided all our discussions with efficiency, which you have seen. But what you don't know is that at the same time the Chairperson was guiding our discussion, he was making sure that all the technicalities and all the small things were being dealt with. Even the sound on the YouTube link. So, he's a man of multiple tasks and that has been incredible. And I could witness it from here. And really, your sensitivity, Mr Chairperson, to the diverse issues, the culture, the perspectives, including the linguistic effort that you made for all, nomination to all Delegates, your attention that I have seen, and concerns of others have been crucial to the success of this session, and that's why everything went smoothly. You have fostered a collaborative and respectful atmosphere that has enabled us to navigate complex issues with understanding and unity.

Mr Chairperson,

We are really, really grateful and thank you for all what you have taught me about the culture of India. In our discussions, every time, you will bring me some of the few things for me to understand this culture. And it has been for me a great moment and I'm really, really grateful. I will never forget this. I am grateful for your dedication. I am grateful for your hard work. I am grateful for responding to each concern, even by WhatsApp, by everything, to all Committee members. And I think what I would like to say here is that you said something about your relation to Africa and that, and the relation between India and Africa, and I think I could see it and I hope you and me we have demonstrated it very well. And thank you again for having had trust in me, in the team, the whole team of UNESCO, having trust the Legal Advisor, the ADG Culture, everyone who has been supporting and I want to do something which of course I am taking from you. I understand that there is an Indian proverb that said *[speaks in Hindi]* *[applause]* Good company always brings happiness. Something like that. And so, for the past days, by your side, I have been very, very proud, and happy to see you all in Bulgaria, in Sofia.

Safe travel to all and I look forward to our continued work together in the years to come. *Namaste*.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Lazare.

Dear colleagues, are there any Committee members who would like to take the floor? I see no requests.

Viet Nam, followed by Zambia.

The Delegation of Viet Nam:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

We would like, first of all, to welcome the ratification by Nauru of the 1972 Convention. We are glad that with Nauru joining the Convention, the Convention becomes one of the most universal international instruments in the world, showing the great interest by the international community to join hands in the preservation and protection of our shared heritage.

My Delegation would like to express our most sincere thanks to the Government and people of India, especially the Ministry of Culture, for their warm hospitality, generosity and excellent organization of this session. We had an excellent opportunity to experience a gram of India's tangible and intangible culture. Yes, we did talk to very smiling and kind Indian people. We did taste good Indian food. We did visit some wonderful sites. We did take pictures and we will tag you, Mr Chairman. We thank our dear Chairman, Mr Vishal Sharma, for his very able and exemplary leadership. Our thanks also go to the Rapporteur, cher Martin, and other members of the Bureau for their hard work and their great contribution to the success of the session. We would also like to extend our special thanks to ADG Culture, Ernesto Ottone, Director Lazare Eloundou Assomo and the whole team for their efforts in facilitating dialogue and finding consensus amongst States Parties and for their dedication, professionalism and efficiency in preparing for the session. We also commend the great work done by ICOMOS, IUCN and ICCROM.

We can be proud of what we have done in strengthening the credibility and balance of the World Heritage List, ensuring effective conservation of the World Heritage properties and promoting capacity-building for States Parties, especially Africa and SIDS.

Viet Nam will continue to work closely with other members of the Committee, the Heritage Centre, Advisory Bodies and other States Parties for the full implementation of the Convention, contributing to the sustainable development in the world.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Viet Nam.

Zambia, you have the floor, followed by Greece.

The Delegation of Zambia:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Zambia is very grateful for the amount of work that has been done by this Committee. But first of all, Zambia will be failing in its duties by not recognizing the wise leadership of your Chairmanship. Mr Chairman, you have shown that, you know, India is able to do what Napoleon failed to do during his time. Mr Chairman, for this, I want to give you a special, that is, a congratulatory message. But at the same time, I would like to congratulate the State Party of India for the friendship that we have enjoyed around here, and not just the friendship, but the green environments that have really been, that is, been wonderful to some of us. I used to think that New Delhi is a dirty town, or New Delhi is a crowded town. But what I have observed is something different.

And most of all, Mr Chairman would like to also express our gratitude for the enjoyment that we have had as a State Party of Zambia at Taj Mahal, a World Heritage site which is one of the cultural wonders of the world. And, you know, we share something in common with Zambia because we also have one of the only natural wonders of the world on the continent of Africa, the Victoria Falls, which is at 1,708 metres wide and 100 metres deep.

Mr Chairman, I will be also failing in my duties by not recognising the role played by the Secretariat, the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies and also the Category 2 Centres and in this case, I mean specifically, I would like to pay special tribute to the African World Heritage Fund, which has made it very possible for the African group to have the numbers of the World Heritage sites which we have on the on the continent of Africa.

For this, Mr Chairman, I would like to also make sure that we as a State Party of Zambia, we recognise the role that each and every Committee member has made in this wonderful session. This is the session we will never forget as a State Party of Zambia, even for having given us an opportunity to be the Vice-Chair on the World Heritage Committee.

Thank you, Mr Chairman. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Greece, to be followed by Jamaica.

The Delegation of Greece:

Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

The 46th session of the World Heritage Committee, it was for me the first time participating in this Committee. And I assure you and all the Delegates that I enjoyed each and every moment of this unique experience.

Our Committee's work and decisions constitute a precious and vital contribution to the cultural and natural heritage of humanity. The members of our Delegation and myself are proud of having participated and contributed with our ample forces to the great success of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee held here in New Delhi, the capital of a great country, India, representing an ancient and outstanding civilization. Greece knows, of its own experience, how difficult and challenging is for a nation, for a country, to be the custodian of an ancient civilization and bear the responsibility to safeguard, promote it and transfer it to future generations.

We would like to warmly thank and congratulate the Government of India for the generous hospitality and the impeccable organisation of this session. We would like as well to thank in particular our President, His Excellency, Ambassador Vishal Sharma, for steering this Committee with his unique way and the results that he was instrumental to bring. Many thanks as well to the ADG Ottone and the Director of World Heritage Committee, Mr Eloundou, for their relentless efforts both in the forefront and the behind the scenes, what was a critical contribution to the consensus reached during our session. I would like also to thank our Rapporteur and all the colleagues who participated with their contributions in our session. I'm glad to say that I leave with much more friends than when I arrived in New Delhi.

Thank you very much. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

I now give the floor to Jamaica, to be followed by Qatar.

The Delegation of Jamaica:

Thank you, Chair.

Jamaica expresses our sincere thanks to the Government of India for their wonderful hospitality received during this session. We have enjoyed the wonderful culture, food and express our appreciation for how we have been received and warmly treated throughout our stay. We express our thanks to you, Mr Chair, for how you have ably managed this meeting and to the World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies. Our special appreciation to the volunteer assigned to Jamaica, Ashish, who have treated us like family and who have also been imprinted on our hearts. We look forward to serving together with our colleague countries on the World Heritage Committee, as we look forward to the 47th session.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to Qatar, to be followed by Kenya.

La Délégation du Qatar :

Merci, M. le Président.

Je voudrais tout d'abord vous féliciter pour votre leadership qui a facilité les travaux de ce Comité et les travaux de ce Comité ont progressé avec toute la flexibilité dont chacun a pu témoigner. À celui qui travaillait jour et nuit sans s'arrêter, Merci Martin, merci beaucoup. Et ce Comité a réussi, bien sûr, à surmonter de nombreuses questions compliquées, grâce aux efforts de tous, je voudrais remercier les pays concernés et le soutien du Secrétariat, bien sûr. Et je voudrais aussi remercier M. Lazare pour consolider avec tout le Secrétariat représenté par M. Ottone, le dialogue en faveur d'une compréhension commune. Bien sûr, je voudrais remercier profondément les organes consultatifs et tout le monde de la jeunesse indienne qui nous accueille tous les jours avec un grand sourire.

Monsieur le Président,

Je ne peux pas, je ne peux manquer de remercier le Gouvernement ami de l'Inde, pour la merveilleuse organisation des travaux du Comité de patrimoine. Notre présence dans votre pays nous a donné l'occasion de découvrir l'hospitalité et la gentillesse du peuple indien, en plus de sa culture et de sa civilisation historique, ce qu'on a vu ici à New Delhi et à Taj Mahal. C'était pour nous un rêve de visiter le Taj Mahal et on a réalisé grâce à ce Comité.

Merci M. le Président. *[applaudissements]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

I give the floor to Kenya, followed by Argentina

The Delegation of Kenya:

Mr Chairman,

I want to, on the outset, to express our deepest gratitude on behalf of Group V(a) in Africa for your extraordinary leadership, your wisdom, your energy, your focus and your respect for the 195 States Parties that belong to the prestigious World Heritage Committee. As we debated with my colleagues, we said that one has undertaken such a humongous assignment, they deserve a national honour. We want to thank you most sincerely.

We want to thank the World Heritage Centre, led by Doctor Lazare Assomo. We want to thank the Rapporteur for a great job. We want to thank all the volunteers. We want to thank the Government of India. Looking at the preparation, we can be able to appreciate the human resources deployed, the financial investment, the time and the energy. We also admire the creativity that was put, not just for the flowers, the screens, the artwork and the creativity that we have seen in New Delhi, but more importantly, the warmth and the friendship of the people of India. We will go back to our capitals with a good heart and good memories of New Delhi. We would also want to thank the Government of India for pledging US\$ 1 million to be used for capacity-building in Africa. On the same strength, we express our deepest gratitude to many other countries that stepped forward and have pledged resources that will be used to help Africa to scale up capacity-building and increase the number of inscriptions.

We want to pledge as Group V(a) that we will do everything that is within our powers to make sure that the inscribed resources are conserved and preserved, and that many more dossiers will be processed by our experts. On the overall, we go home very, very happy with good memories of New Delhi.

Thank you, New Delhi. Thank you, Chairman. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency.

I now give the floor to Argentina, followed by Belgium.

The Delegation of Argentina:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you, Chairman.

As I said on several occasions, this was a meeting based on dialogue. And here I'd like to thank the World Heritage Centre, Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo, who was always ready to help us with a smile, our dear Rapporteur, who's always been available, the Secretariat and the Legal Advisor who's always ready to provide wise advice to help us move forward.

We'd also like to thank, in particular, the Government of India, who has made us feel very at home. We'd like to thank the interpreters who are always listening and helping us, and we also thank you. And here we thank you, dear Chair and dear friend, who have been paying attention to every single detail, not just related to the meeting, but on a personal basis as well. And once again, we wish to thank the young volunteers who have treated us as members of a family, not just as members of the Committee. They have taken great care of us throughout this meeting, and we believe that India as a whole is World Heritage, and we will carry it with us in our hearts.

Thank you very much for this wonderful meeting.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Belgium, followed by Türkiye.

The Delegation of Belgium / La Délégation de la Belgique :

Chair,

As we come to the close of the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee, I would like to thank and take the opportunity on behalf of the entire Belgian Delegation to thank you, Chair, and the Government of India, for inviting us to come to incredible India. It was a particularly efficient session, Chairman, thanks to your wise and attentive leadership. But we also got to know and appreciate your sense of humour, which was most welcome considering the long days we spent together in this plenary hall.

Our work was fruitful, our discussions were rich, and our decisions were taken by consensus and based on mutual understanding.

Our thanks also go to the World Heritage Centre, the Secretariat of the Convention, cher Martin, notre compatriote et collègue, nos compliments évidemment pour un excellent travail. Bravo! We are probably only half aware of how much work goes into both the preparation of this session and our work here in Delhi. So, thank you. The same goes to the Advisory Bodies who provided us with the hundreds of reports presented as countless points and patiently answered all our questions, as did the World Heritage Centre Director and his entire staff. A sincere thank you to all of you from Team Belgium.

Chair,

I would like to end where I began. I would like to pay tribute to Team India as well for the logistical challenges, that is an intergovernmental meeting of this scale. You were able to present an impressive and flawless organization. Of course, there are many parties involved in such an organization. So, I hope you will forgive me for mentioning a few here with the accompanying message that the thanks are therefore meant for all the other partners involved as well. So, thanks to the Ministry of Culture, to the Archaeological Survey of India and Delhi Tourism. We also express our profound appreciation for the interpreters, room clerks and all the supporting staff who have done a great job. We all go home with fond memories of beautiful Delhi and India in our hearts. This certainly also has to do with our liaison officer parts and all the other volunteers in the room who helped us and supported us immensely.

Nos félicitations à vous tous, chers amis et spécialement aussi à Frédérique Aubert. On vous souhaite bonne chance dans votre nouveau rôle.

Et on se réjouit bien évidemment d'être au Bureau l'année prochaine à Sofia.

As we are among friends here, I hope you will allow me to conclude with *[speaks in Hindi]* **Namaste.** *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

And allow me to respond. *Dhanyavad. Namaste.* Thank you.

I now give the floor to Türkiye, followed by Italy.

The Delegation of Türkiye:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

First of all, a huge thanks to you, Mr Chair, for chairing this 46th World Heritage Committee so diligently with your unique and warm sense of humour. Big thanks to the Host Country of India and the Government of India for this marvellous organization. To the Archaeological Survey of India and their Director-General for their contributions to this session, and for kindly organizing our unforgettable visit to the Taj Mahal. Thanks to the Secretariat and Advisory Bodies for compiling the reports. We also commend the excellent work of the Rapporteur and the World Heritage Centre and its Director, Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo, for all of their hard work. And thank you very much to ADG Culture, Mr Ernesto Ottone, for his contributions to this session. It has truly been a remarkably successful Committee meeting.

As Türkiye, we were very glad to be here as a new member of the Committee and look forward to working with you and all our fellow Committee members next year in Bulgaria.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Italy, followed by the Republic of Korea.

The Delegation of Italy:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

Italy would like to warmly commend the Host Country, India, for the outstanding organization of this 46th session of the World Heritage Committee. This success testifies the great commitment of India in the 1972 Convention. And we appreciate the wise leadership you, Mr Chair, have demonstrated over these ten days, enabling the Committee to achieve excellent results. We thank ^[unclear], Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur for their precious and dedicated work. Italy would also like to extend its gratitude to ADG Culture, the Director of the World Heritage Centre and the whole Secretariat for the professional and always efficient efforts without which the work of the Committee would not be possible. Let us furthermore reiterate our appreciation to the Advisory Bodies for their constant commitment to the values and objectives of the Convention, which have enabled us to have carried out interesting discussions and fundamental exchanges of views. We finally thank the logistics personnel, translators and everyone who worked day and night making this session possible.

It was our great honour to work as a Committee member together with the other Delegations, and we celebrate and commend the very cooperative spirit to go about the session. We have taken part in interesting and passionate discussions and constructive exchanges that we hope will always be guided by the principles and values underlying the Convention. We congratulate all States Parties that have inscribed new sites on the World Heritage List, in particular African countries that we hope will become more and more present on the List.

Mr Chair,

Italy will continue to put the greatest effort and commitment to preserve our common cultural and natural heritage. We strongly believe that World Heritage embodies our history, and it's also a bridge between the past, the present and the future. We cannot ignore the challenges that we face for the safeguarding of our common heritage, and we are ready to address such challenges, also through a constant reflection on the 1972 Convention and how it can evolve and progress.

Thank you, Mr Chair. *Namaste.*

The Chairperson:

Thank you and *Namaste. Tutto aposto.*

I now give the floor to the Republic of Korea, followed by Rwanda.

The Delegation of the Republic of Korea:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Now that the 46th WHC is coming to an end, we once again realize how lucky we have been to participate in this successful meeting in India, the cradle of spirituality for the humanity. I thank the meticulous arrangements and hospitality and the effective and efficient leadership of the Chair, His Excellency Vishal Sharma. In particular, I would

like to commend the hard work and sincere assistance of the young volunteers who have been simply excellent. They indeed represent a bright future of India.

Through the discussions and decision-making process, all Delegations have shown what UNESCO is meant to be. The process reaching to a consensus has been equally important as the outcome. I have a profound respect for all the Committee members for taking part in this precious process of consensus building. It hasn't been always easy, but it is all the more crucial at this time in this world. I have deep respect for the Advisory Bodies and their professionalism and I also appreciate the able work of the Secretariat whose competence shined at the most important moment. Lastly, realizing the remarkable diversity in India, I know I will definitely come back to this beautiful country.

Thank you. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency, for your beautiful words. Thank you and we will look forward to welcoming you again.

I now give the floor to Rwanda, followed by Japan.

The Delegation of Rwanda / La Délégation du Rwanda :

Thank you, Chair.

Chair, as we conclude this significant session of the World Heritage Committee, I would like to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude, first to the Government of India for hosting this exceptional 46th session, to you, Mr Chairperson, for your leadership and the positive atmosphere you fostered throughout the proceedings. Thank you, Chair.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Director of the World Heritage Centre, the Secretariat and the interpreters for the invaluable support and work. My gratitude also goes to my dear friend Martin, our excellent Rapporteur. I should have said that in French. For his stunning report and his kind words towards me. J'espère faire la moitié de ce que tu as fait pendant cette session, et je te félicite encore à nouveau. Merci, Martin.

A round of applause for the people of India for their hospitality. We will surely miss India and its rich gastronomy. Congratulations to Bulgaria for hosting next year's session.

See you all in Sofia and *Namaskar*. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Namaste.

I now give the floor to Japan, followed by Saint Vincent. Japan, you have the floor.

The Delegation of Japan:

Thank you, Chair.

Japan would like to thank Chairman for the strong leadership and thank Secretariat and all supporting staff for making this Committee a very successful and organized one. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of India and all the volunteers for hospitality and kindness.

Namaste. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Namaste.

I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, followed by Ukraine.

The Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Mr Chair,

Firstly, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes Nauru to the family of sister Small Island Developing States.

We also give thanks to the Committee and all who supported the SIDS during this session in our various interventions. We express our thanks to the Director of the World Heritage Centre and the World Heritage Secretariat for their professionalism and commitment so well demonstrated once again. To you, Mr Chair, for the excellent way you have conducted the sessions, including your light moments.

We thank Bulgaria for accepting the challenge of hosting the 47th session in 2025.

To the Government and people of India for hosting us. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay in New Delhi and enjoyed the visits to your sites and your exhibitions. I, however, summarise New Delhi's experience in three words: the Shillong Chamber Choir.

May we all return safely to our respective countries, and we see you next year in Sofia. Thank you. *[applause]*

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Ukraine, followed by Mexico.

The Delegation of Ukraine:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

We are very thankful for the organizers for such a great event that took place in the spirit of common desire to protect really priceless pearls of humanity.

Ukraine was, is and will be devoted to the principles of the Convention concerning the protection of the World Heritage, Cultural and Natural Heritage. It was our debut as a Member State, and we hope it was successful.

We thank you, Mr Chair, for your professional conducting of the session. We thank the Bureau members, the members of the Secretariat who helped, advised, stimulated and supported. It was a real honour to cooperate with you. We congratulate newly elected Bureau members and wish them good luck in the further work in the field of protection the real gems of the World Heritage.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Mexico.

The Delegation of Mexico:

[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

We would like to echo the previous speakers in thanking the Government of India for its generous and flawless organization of this event and for undertaking the daunting challenge of organizing the Committee meeting. Our congratulations to you, Mr Chairman, for your outstanding work at the helm of our work, without which we would not have been able to have continued the good tradition started in Riyadh, and we want to thank you for your leadership.

We wanted to underscore the work of the Rapporteur, which has more than satisfied all of our expectations when it comes up to the work of all those who safeguard World Heritage. For all of your work done. And also we want to commend the cooperation of civil society and Member States and the newly elected members of the Bureau. Our thanks go to the World Heritage Centre who has worked hand in hand with the States Parties, the Advisory Bodies, with local communities, with the site managers and NGOs, so as to consolidate the correct implementation of this Convention and highlight good practices for implementation and safeguarding of World Heritage. Our thanks also go to the Member States, because this meeting has shown once again that this Convention is the very best instrument for protecting humanity's heritage and upholding multilateralism. Multilateralism that is part of the spirit of UNESCO. Finally, we wanted to thank you for your support and for all of those who have worked tirelessly in the Advisory Bodies.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of Senegal.

La Délégation du Sénégal :

M. le Président, mon cher Vishal, mon cher ami,

Je voudrais à nouveau te rendre un grand hommage. Je te tutoie parce que tu es un ami, un voisin avec qui j'ai entretenu des relations qui vont au-delà des relations professionnelles, des relations, je dirais amicales et même familiales, puisque nos enfants se connaissent. Et en venant ici, cela m'a permis en même temps de découvrir ce que je savais de toi déjà, ta grande culture, ta grande humanité, ton leadership immense. Et ce que je t'ai dit hier, je t'ai dit hier à travers des mots, pour moi, l'Inde représente le futur et l'exemple pour l'humanité, parce que l'Inde représente ce que l'humanité devrait être pour nous.

Je suis doublement fier puisque c'est aussi ici en Inde, dans ton pays, que le Niokolo-Koba a été sorti du Patrimoine mondial en péril et cela représente un grand symbole pour moi et une immense fierté. Et en venant ici, je me suis dit peut-être que l'Inde c'est le bon endroit, c'est le bon moment. Et donc je suis doublement fier, en plus d'avoir évidemment goûté aux épices et aux délices de l'Inde à travers vos repas succulents. Et je voudrais te dire grand merci de nous avoir accueilli ici, mon cher Vishal.

Et j'associe M. Lazare Eloundou à ces félicitations, puisque en le soutenant à ce poste, nous avons, nous Africains aussi, le souci d'avoir quelqu'un de sensible, d'une grande sensibilité pour la situation de l'Afrique et la cause africaine sur les questions de patrimoine.

J'ai la fierté d'avoir inscrit le Thiéboudienne, plat national, et aujourd'hui, au bout de cinq ans de mission à l'UNESCO, d'avoir sorti le Niokolo-Koba, notre fierté, du Patrimoine mondial en péril. Et je voudrais dire aux membres du Comité ici présents et aux observateurs, qu'avec la fin de cette session du Comité prend aussi fin ma mission en tant qu'Ambassadeur du Sénégal auprès de l'UNESCO. Je voudrais dire un grand merci à tous les ambassadeurs, à tous ceux qui m'ont soutenu, porté et tous ceux qui ont montré de la joie et à travers moi, le Sénégal, que j'ai représenté.

Je vous dis donc merci. Je dis merci à tout le monde et au revoir à vous tous. *[applaudissements]*

The Chairperson / Le Président :

Je vous remercie, mon frère.

I now give the floor. I'll give floor India at the last. Because there's some Observer States also, they have raised their plates, including the Advisory Bodies. So, now that the Committee members have spoken, with the exception of India, I give the floor to Palau.

The Observer Delegation of Palau:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

I would like to take this opportunity and offer our thanks and gratitude to the Government of India for the wonderful arrangements and hospitality. I would like to particularly congratulate you and thank you for your wise leadership and your chairmanship of these meetings, the Director of the World Heritage Centre, ADG Culture, the Advisory Bodies and all the collective leadership and management that has resulted in the success of the 46th World Heritage Committee meetings. I would like to extend that gratitude towards all the volunteers, to include all the transport folks that have worked tirelessly outside in the heat to ensure that we get back and forth to our hotels and back to the venue. I also, from a security background, I would like to acknowledge the wonderful work that is being provided by all the security personnel, all the different screening and all the different measures that they're putting together. We feel very safe.

I would like to also welcome our sister state, Nauru, from our region in Micronesia, for ratifying the World Heritage Convention. And we look forward to strengthening our collaborative efforts in that region as fellow guardians of our natural and cultural heritage towards the larger World Heritage global stage.

Republic of Korea, thank you very much for the funding support towards capacity development, particularly in the area of disaster risk management as we grapple with the impacts of climate change in our sites and the communities that are reliant on those sites for their livelihood, sustenance and cultural legacy.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not recognize, I put away my hat as a State Party and put on my hat as a site manager for Palau's sole mixed UNESCO World Heritage site, the Rock Islands Southern Lagoon, who is policed and monitored by over 50 rangers. And I would like to give a special shout out to those rangers on this day, the World Ranger Day, and wish them a very happy and safe Ranger Day from across the world in India. From your Director to the guardians of the Rock Islands Southern Lagoon, Happy World Ranger Day.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Barbados, to be followed by Ecuador.

The Observer Delegation of Barbados:

Thank you, Mr Chair. And good morning.

I wanted to take the floor very simply, to say how much Barbados has appreciated the hospitality that has been extended to us while we were here in your country. We particularly enjoyed the range of menus leading us to explore different parts of India through the cuisine. That has been a wondrous experience. We also very much appreciated the help and support given to us on the ground, both within this building with the various volunteers, and I very much salute them for the way in which they have participated and presented their country as professionally and personably as they could. And we have enjoyed every encounter. But I also want to take this opportunity to thank

those of us who have ensured our safe transportation back and forth to our hotel, and here; they have also been meticulous and supportive in all they have done.

It would be remiss of me if I did not end this intervention by saying, I want to take this opportunity to say a personal thank you to Fred. ^[applause] Because, Fred, you have been such an important part of our work at the World Heritage Centre and we have appreciated the interaction, the guidance, support, the vision, the energy. All the best in Venice. I guess I'll just have to come to Venice to see you. But thank you for your work.

But finally, Chair, we also very much appreciate the opportunity to welcome a new Member State, and it's very precious to us, it being Nauru. And thank you very much for ensuring that they have joined and are now the 196th Member State of this Convention. That is extremely encouraging for the future.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Ecuador, followed by Grenada.

The Observer Delegation of Ecuador:

^[interpretation from Spanish] Thank you.

We would be remiss if we did not add our voices to all of this chorus, thanking India for its excellent organization of this meeting. It has been an impeccably organized meeting, Mr Chairman, but also it's been outstanding in terms of the outcomes after all of the hard work, given the broader participation by 150 Member States and all of the announcements of additional voluntary funds as well, it's been a very successful meeting.

Furthermore, Mr Chairman, we wanted to extend our thanks to the ADG for Culture, for all of the work. And in particular to the World Heritage Centre and its Director, Mr Lazare Eloundou Assomo, and his entire team. Our thanks also go to all of the support staff, some of whom are here in this room. We want to thank them for their warmth. We want to thank India for its hospitality more generally. And a special thanks go to you, Mr Chairman, my dear brother, for the way in which you have conducted our work here. You've been effective, and this is attested to by the outstanding results that we've achieved.

All of us are going to leave with India deeply entrenched in our hearts. And it will always have a special place in our hearts. We also wanted to thank the Kingdom of Spain, which generously enabled Spanish interpretation so that I could participate in my mother tongue.

And thank you to one and all. *Namaste*.

The Chairperson:

Namaste and thank you for your presence, Excellency. *Muchas gracias*.

I now give the floor to Grenada to be followed by Bhutan.

The Observer Delegation of Grenada:

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

I would like to add the voice of Grenada to all that has been said by the members of the Committee and Observer States Parties, to thank and congratulate you, Mr Chairperson, for your wise leadership and thank the Government of India and the people of India for their incredible and warm welcome. This 46th session of the World Heritage Committee will remain in our hearts and memories. I would also like to thank the entire team of the World Heritage Centre, under the leadership of the Director of the World Heritage Centre, for the excellent preparation of the Committee and wish Frédérique Aubert, dear Fred, the best in her new endeavours.

I thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I now give the floor to Bhutan, followed by China. Bhutan, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of Bhutan:

Good afternoon, his Excellency the Chairperson, Honourable Dignitaries, respected Delegates and esteemed colleagues,

Bhutan is very tiny Himalayan landlocked country located between India and China, rich in cultural and natural heritage diversity. On behalf of the Department of Culture, the Royal Government of Bhutan, we are honoured to

extend our heartfelt appreciation to the Government of India for their outstanding efforts in successfully hosting the 46th UNESCO World Heritage Committee here in New Delhi. Your meticulous planning and warm hospitality have made this event a resounding success. India, with its profound cultural diversity and rich historical heritage, provides an inspiring backdrop for this prestigious event. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for the invaluable opportunity to participate in this 46th session. This gathering has been a remarkable platform for exchanging knowledge and celebrating our shared commitment to preserving the rich cultural and natural heritage that unites us all.

Bhutan is a nation deeply rooted in its unique culture and natural splendour. Our heritage is a testament to the harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature, exemplified by our prestigious landscape, vibrant tradition and architectural marvels. The profound similarities we share with culture and nature sites worldwide underscore the universal value of our cultural collective heritage. Throughout this session, we have gained invaluable insight and learned best practices that will greatly assist us in our ongoing effort to safeguard and promote our own cultural and natural treasures.

We are inspired by the dedication and collaboration demonstrated by all Delegates, experts and participants and we aspire to follow in his footsteps. We would like to congratulate all the countries that have successfully inscribed their heritage during this fantastic session. The hard work and effort of every individual, local community and expert involved in this is truly commendable. It is our fervent hope that one day, Bhutan will proudly nominate its own culture and nature site for inclusion in the World Heritage List. Such recognition would not only honour our heritage but also strengthen our bonds with the international community, allowing us to celebrate our shared legacy and cherish the world's wonder as a united whole.

Further, we would like to express our profound thanks to the Permanent Delegation of India to the UNESCO Office, yourself, His Excellency Chair, in Paris, and the UNESCO office, New Delhi, for your gracious support and assistance in making this possible for us to attend this session. Thank you once again for this enlightening experience. We look forward to continue collaboration, collective efforts to preserve the prestigious heritage belongs to all of humanity.

Thank you.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

I give the floor to the Distinguished Representative of the People's Republic of China. Excellency, you have the floor.

The Observer Delegation of China:

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

On behalf of the Chinese Delegation, I want to congratulate the members of the Committee and the Secretary for a very successful session. And my congratulations also to Mr Chairperson for your leadership and wisdom, for your great job you have been doing. And I also want to provide our attitude to the great help provided by the Host Country, India, for your hospitality and also to those volunteers who have been so helpful. And thank you so much for that. We also had a very good experience in New Delhi for the past days. We even had some chance to visit your wonderful, wonderful sites.

And China, as always, will support the work of the Committee and the Secretariat and provide our contribution, as always, to the priorities of Africa and in terms of the World Heritage capacity-building. And we would like to support also SIDS countries for the capacity-building in World Heritage.

Thank you so much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Excellency. *[speaks in Hindi]*

I now give the floor to. Now that the Observer States Parties have spoken, I'll give the floor to the Advisory Bodies. First to ICCROM, followed by IUCN.

ICCROM :

Merci, M. le Président.

L'ICCROM souhaite remercier le Gouvernement de l'Inde pour son incroyable hospitalité et l'accueil chaleureux. Et remercier également le Centre du patrimoine mondial, son Directeur Lazare Eloundou et toute son équipe pour l'excellente organisation de cette session du Comité. Nous remercions également le Rapporteur pour son travail impeccable. Tous nos meilleurs souhaits pour Fred, pour son nouveau rôle où nous espérons continuer la collaboration étroite avec le Bureau de l'UNESCO à Venise.

Nous nous réjouissons également de l'arrivée de Nauru. Ceci complète le concert des nations au sein de la Convention du patrimoine mondial et nous espérons que les bénéfices de cette Convention continueront à promouvoir la collaboration entre les nations avec le respect de la diversité des cultures et des traditions.

L'ICCROM reste à la disposition de tous les États parties pour continuer à travailler pour la conservation et la gestion durable de nos sites du patrimoine mondial qui doivent être les phares pour la conservation du patrimoine dans tous nos pays.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, ICCROM.

I give the floor to IUCN, to be followed by ICOMOS.

IUCN:

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Before I return the thanks, let me also firstly note, as was mentioned by Palau, that today is World Ranger Day, when we recognize the world's rangers. The women, men, indigenous guardians, government employees, private sector workers, community members and volunteers who conserve nature and culture. And on World Ranger Day especially, we remember, and we pay our respects to those that have died at work in the last year through accidents, illness and sadly and unacceptably regularly facing violence and murder, including in World Heritage areas.

But Mr Chair let me give thanks warm thanks to India and all of your authorities for the stunning welcome. Mr Chair, thanks to you for your humour and friendship and navigating the time to even give us a day off. And thanks to the Committee members, to all of the States Parties. Merci, à notre Rapporteur and thanks to the NGOs, the Indigenous Peoples, the communities, the site managers and all those involved in the success not only of this meeting, but of the whole World Heritage movement, including our young volunteers.

A very warm welcome, Mr Chair, to Nauru. Let me thank especially our Director of the World Heritage Centre, but our dear, dear friend Lazare and all of his team for the brilliant work, which is work that we do throughout the year, but also here in Delhi. And let me really say a huge thanks to Fred, our dear, dear friend and brilliant colleague Frédérique Aubert, for all of the great times down, down the many years, and all good wishes to you for the new life in Venice.

As IUCN, let me also give a shout out to Guy Debonnet and the team in the Natural Heritage Unit of the World Heritage Centre, and thanks to our sister Advisory Bodies and to the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum for our great and collegial work together.

Mr Chair, I'd like to really welcome the positive atmosphere of dialogue that's been a hallmark of the present session and in fact, the whole year, including the Open-ended Working Group. We're fully committed to strengthening that even further. Mr Chair, thanks for your kind description of the Advisory Bodies on day one, as the Convention's guardian angels, we try to live up to that, but we're equally your partners and we're committed to supporting this Convention and its partners and sites. And so please don't hesitate to be in touch for any question, issue or idea you may have. We aim at this Olympic time to be a great and a big team. Mr Chair.

With renewed thanks, we look forward to seeing you in Bulgaria next year, but throughout the year ahead.

Thank you very much.

The Chairperson:

Thank you, Tim.

I now give the floor to ICOMOS.

ICOMOS :

Merci, M. le Président.

L'ICOMOS saisit l'occasion qui lui est donnée pour remercier l'État partie de l'Inde pour l'excellente organisation de la réunion qui a facilité notre travail. L'ICOMOS remercie également l'ICCROM et l'IUCN pour la bonne coopération, ainsi que le Directeur du Centre du patrimoine mondial et toute son équipe. L'ICOMOS souhaite également le meilleur à Mme Frédérique Aubert pour ses nouvelles positions.

Et de manière générale, l'ICOMOS souhaiterait remercier le Comité du patrimoine mondial pour l'esprit de coopération qui a prévalu dans notre travail tous ces derniers mois et renouvelle sa disponibilité à poursuivre ce travail de mise en œuvre de la Convention dans un esprit de dialogue avec les États parties.

Merci.

The Chairperson:

Thank you.

Now that all Committee members, Observer States Parties, Advisory Bodies have spoken, I'll give finally the floor to the Host Country, India. You have the floor.

The Delegation of India:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr Chair.

Mr Chair, you always, I've noticed, give us a very difficult task, to speak when we somehow stand between the Delegates and their lunch or dinner or whatever. And I think right now we're in a similar state.

I don't know where to begin, but first of all, my Delegation would like to thank everyone who spoke here today for your very warm and appreciating words towards India. We are truly honoured. We are overwhelmed with your appreciation and with your responses. Last evening, when our Honourable Minister, in his brief speech, he said all good things must come to an end. Of course, he was quoting Geoffrey Chaucer from his epic poem Troilus and Criseyde, that 14th century poem. Yes. It's unbelievable that this meeting is coming to an end. But it has to. And I think, you know, for the first time, you found us, caught us napping because today we thought this session will be over in an hour and we all will go back. But here we have stretched ourselves to lunch so we don't have a scripted, I would say, speech, but allow me to now also start my thanking.

First of all, congratulating Nauru for being the 196th Member State joining the World Heritage Committee, only shows how popular this World Heritage, you know, Convention is. To you Chair, you have been exemplary. You defined, created benchmarks. You've been strict, you've been witty. You made it sure that whatever time that was lost for a couple of reasons that we would sort of, you know, make up for it. You were kind enough to give a day off so that Delegates could visit the monuments. So overall, the kind of atmosphere that you created was, was very interesting.

To the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Lazare, and your entire Secretariat, you know, you all were simply amazing. You know, the way you guided us, your, all the focal points who interacted with our focal points. It was it was simply amazing because obviously we had no experience of what this meeting entailed. What kind of, you know, details for the preparation of this meeting. So, you supported us. So, we would like to thank you and the entire Secretariat, all the focal points, that, you know, helped us.

To the fellow World Heritage Committee members. I would again like to thank all of you for being here. It was very enriching to be a part of this discussion, to be part of this Committee, to participate in the very rich debates and discussions that happened. And, you know, that was something very, very nice. Thank you very much to all the Advisory Bodies, the three Advisory Bodies, you do a lot of work, you do a lot of hard work. And, you know, the documents that you prepare, your professional arguments. Well, that that really helps the Committee. That really helps the, you know, the decisions and the discussions in the process. So, thank you very much to all three of you.

To all the Member States, who made it a point to come to India to participate in this Committee meeting. We would like to thank all of you. To all the NGOs who were present here.

We all obviously unanimously thanked the volunteers who've done phenomenal service. But I would also take this opportunity to thanking the ITPO who is in charge of this venue, you know, the support that they provided us. And as I said, many things that we did at very short notice, to the ITC because everybody, you know, talked about the food and the experience that they gave from different parts of the country. I think ITC is given credit for that. And ITDC, who was the event management partner for this meeting, we would like to thank them also for their contribution. For that little glitch on the, you know, regarding that internet happened on, I think, the third day, if I'm not mistaken, the Railtel, you know, their entire staff, including their highest office, descended here to ensure that the minimal loss of time happens. So, my big thanks to them, you know, for providing the flawless service.

To Fred, you were my co-focal point. It was amazing working with you. We learned a lot from you and the kind of, you know, support that you provided. Now that you're going in for your new assignment, we would like to congratulate you, and we wish you all the very best for your new assignment and your new role.

To my fellow World Heritage Committee member, Bulgaria, congratulations hosting the 47th COM. We wish you all the very best for the meeting, and I'm sure it will be a wonderful and memorable experience as well.

To, I would also take this opportunity, because we haven't talked about them, but the two fora, the Site Managers' Forum and the Young Professionals Forum, there was a separate team of, you know, of professionals, of my colleagues who were there, you know, trying to kind of take care of ensuring that those two fora are also successful. To the Director of the Institute of Archaeology, I would want to thank him for that. I would also like to thank the CEO of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. So, they were quite instrumental in ensuring both the fora are a big success. But last and not the least, my Ministry, my Minister, my Secretary, my Joint-Secretary, my Additional-Secretary, everyone stood behind us, rock behind us. You were right. Five weeks. The first decision was on 11th of June. Prior to that, of course, preparations were going on, but the decisions were not there. So, we, you know, we would like to thank that they, you know, they stood behind us and, you know, they, in such a short span of time, we were able to achieve what we possibly could. To my entire ASI family. We are a 5,000 strong family or, you know, or maybe more, that

they all were behind the scene, working diligently, tirelessly. We had no idea of day and night. We were working to ensure that this meeting goes on smoothly. It's impossible to take the names individually, but the whole team, led by the Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this meeting.

To my World Heritage section. We are we are a 7- or 8-member team who is sitting with me, you know. And everyone also worked tirelessly, made notes, you know. So, my big thanks to them as well.

And last, I would say, my big thanks also to the Honourable Prime Minister and his office for also giving us the support that we needed. And to your, to the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India, your office also helped us a lot. We would like to thank everyone from your office as well for giving us necessary support and direction. Mr Chair, I think this is where my note ends, but if you have time of 2.5 minutes, there is a little snapshot video that we have created just kind of recapping the memories. So, if you have time, allow us. We would like to play it for everyone who is present here.

Thank you very much, Mr Chair. [applause]

The Chairperson:

Thank you. You will play the video. Switch off the lights, please. Or dim them.

[video plays]

The Chairperson:

Since there are no more further requests for the floor, thank you all very much.

I now declare the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee closed. [gavel] [applause]

The meeting rose at 12:31 pm. // La séance a été levée à 12h31